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In-Sight People

In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal

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Editor-in-Chief: Listing

(Updated January 1, 2021)

1. Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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(Updated January 1, 2021)

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3. Dr. Daniel Bernstein
4. Dr. Herb Silverman
5. Ismail Hamaamin Hamalaw
6. Dr. Kathy Bullock
7. J.J. Middleway
8. Dr. Lloyd Hawkeye Robertson
9. Marissa Torres Langseth, B.S.N., R.N., M.S.N., ANP-BC (retired)
10. Rod Taylor
11. Dr. Sally Satel, M.D.
12. Stacey Piercey
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14. Prof. Imam Syed B. Soharwardy
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*Long-form biographical sketch with name, title, associations, biography, and photograph as provided.*

**Editor-in-Chief: Profile**

_(Updated January 1, 2021)_

![Scott Douglas Jacobsen](image)

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen**

*Founder, In-Sight Publishing*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen is the Founder of In-Sight Publishing and Editor-in-Chief of In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal (ISSN 2369-6885). Jacobsen works for science and human rights, especially women’s and children’s rights. He considers the modern scientific and technological world the foundation for the provision of the basics of human life throughout the world and the advancement of human rights as the universal movement among peoples everywhere.
Dr. Aubrey de Grey

Chief Science Officer & Co-Founder, SENS Research Foundation; Editor-In-Chief, Rejuvenation Research

Dr. Aubrey de Grey is a biomedical gerontologist based in Cambridge, UK and Mountain View, California, USA, and is the Chief Science Officer of SENS Research Foundation, a California-based 501(c) (3) charity dedicated to combating the aging process. He is also Editor-in-Chief of Rejuvenation Research, the world’s highest-impact peer-reviewed journal focused on intervention in aging.

He received his BA and Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge in 1985 and 2000 respectively. His research interests encompass the characterisation of all the accumulating and eventually pathogenic molecular and cellular side-effects of metabolism (“damage”) that constitute mammalian aging and the design of interventions to repair and/or obviate that damage. Dr. de Grey is a Fellow of both the Gerontological Society of America and the American Aging Association, and sits on the editorial and scientific advisory boards of numerous journals and organisations.
Professor Azra Raza, M.D.

Columbia University, Medicine, Professor; Myelodysplastic Syndrome Center, Director

Dr. Azra Raza is Professor of Medicine and Director of the MDS Center at Columbia University in New York, NY. She started her research in Myelodysplastic Syndromes (MDS) in 1982 and moved to Rush University, Chicago, Illinois in 1992, where she was the Charles Arthur Weaver Professor in Oncology and Director, Division of Myeloid Diseases.

The MDS program, along with a Tissue Repository containing more than 60,000 samples from MDS and acute leukemia patients was successfully relocated to Columbia University in 2010. Before moving to New York, Dr. Raza was the Chief of Hematology Oncology and the Gladys Smith Martin Professor of Oncology at the University of Massachusetts.

She has published the results of her laboratory research and clinical trials in prestigious, peer reviewed journals such as The New England Journal of Medicine, Nature, Molecular Cell, Blood, PNAS, Cancer, Cancer Research, British Journal of Hematology, Leukemia, Leukemia Research. She is also the co-author of GHALIB: Epistemologies of Elegance, a book on the works of the famous Urdu poet. Dr. Raza has mentored hundreds of medical students, residents, oncology fellows, doctoral and post-doctoral students in the last three decades.

She serves on numerous National and International panels as a reviewer, consultant and advisor and is the recipient of a number of awards including The First Lifetime Achievement Award from APPNA, Award in Academic Excellence twice (2007 and 2010) from Dogana, and Woman of the Year Award from Safeer e Pakistan, CA and The Hope Award in Cancer Research 2012 (shared with the Nobel Laureate Dr. Elizabeth Blackburn).

Dr. Raza has been named as one of the 100 Women Who Matter by Newsweek Pakistan in March 2012. In 2015, Dr. Raza was a member of the Founder Group at Jackson Hole, Wyoming, designing Breakthrough Developments in Science and Technology with President Bill Clinton. On December 1, 2015, Dr. Raza was part of a core group of cancer researchers who met with Vice President Joe Biden to discuss the Cancer Moonshot initiative.
Dr. Daniel Bernstein

Tier 2 Canada Research Chair, Lifespan Cognition; Principle Investigator, Lifespan Cognition Lab; Instructor, Psychology, Kwantlen Polytechnic University; Inaugural Member, Royal Society of Canada’s College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists

Dr. Daniel M Bernstein works as the Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Lifespan Cognition for the Psychology department of Kwantlen Polytechnic University. He is the principal investigator for the Lifespan Cognition Lab. Dr. Bernstein earned his Bachelor of Arts at the University of California, Berkeley, Master’s at Brock University, PhD at Simon Fraser University, and did Post-Doctoral work at the University of Washington. His research interests lie in “belief and memory; developmental metacognition; hindsight bias; mild head injury; sleep and dreams.”
Ismail Hamaamin Hamalaw

Novelist & Writer; Editor; Indigenous Middle East (Kurdish); Editor-in-Chief, Culture Project

Ismail Hamaamin Hamalaw is a distinguished Kurdish writer, novelist, and poet born in 1967 in South Kurdistan. He has a B.A. in Psychology and Education Science. He is a cofounder of Culture Project and editor-in-chief of its publication called Culture Magazine, a Kurdish magazine published in print and online.

Published works in Kurdish:

- My Hat is Full of Rain and Flowers – Poems – 1998
- The Fall of the Wolf – Novel – 2001
- A Glimpse from The Myth of Clay – Novella – 2004
- Beyond the Border, folding through moon forests – Novel- 2011
- The Lost Acrobat – Essays – 2012
- Sloterdijk From Close – Essays – 2015
- The Mould of Fascism – 2019
Dr. Herb Silverman

Founding President, Secular Coalition for America; Founder, Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry; Founder and (First) Faculty Advisor, (College of Charleston) Student Atheist/Humanist Alliance; Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Mathematics, College of Charleston.

Herb Silverman is founding president of the Secular Coalition for America, founder of the Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry in Charleston, SC, and founder and first faculty advisor to the College of Charleston student Atheist/Humanist Alliance. Herb is Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at the College of Charleston. He has published over 100 research papers in mathematics journals, a couple of books on Complex Variables, and is the recipient of the Distinguished Research Award.

Herb ran for Governor in 1990 to challenge the provision in the South Carolina State Constitution that prohibited atheists from holding public office. After an eight-year battle, Herb won a unanimous decision in the South Carolina Supreme Court, striking down this religious test requirement.

Herb has written for the Washington Post, Huffington Post, The Humanist, Free Inquiry, Humanistic Judaism, and other magazines and blogs. Herb is a recipient of the American Humanist Association Lifetime Achievement Award. Herb has appeared in debates on topics like: Can We Be Moral Without God? Does God Exist? Is America a Christian Nation? He has also debated at the Oxford Union in Oxford, England on the topic: Does American Religion Undermine American Values?

Dr. Kathy Bullock

Past Chair, Islamic Society of North America-Canada (ISNA-Canada); Lecturer, Political Science, University of Toronto at Mississauga; Past President, Tessellate Institute; President, Compass Books

Katherine Bullock received her Ph.D. in political science from the University of Toronto (1999). She is a Lecturer in the Department of Political Science, University of Toronto at Mississauga. Her teaching focus is political Islam from a global perspective, and her research focuses on Muslims in Canada, their history, contemporary lived experiences, political and civic engagement, debates on the veil, and media representations of Islam and Muslims.

Her publications include: Muslim Women Activists in North America: Speaking for Ourselves, and Rethinking Muslim Women and the Veil: Challenging Historical and Modern Stereotypes which has been translated into Arabic, French, Malayalam, and Turkish. Bullock is President of Compass Books, dedicated to publishing top-quality books about Islam and Muslims in English.

She is past President of The Tessellate Institute, a non-profit research institute in Canada, and of the Islamic Society of North America-Canada. She served as editor of the American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences (AJISS) from 2003 – 2008. She was Vice President of the North American Association of Islamic and Muslim Studies (NAAIMS) from 2013-2017. Originally from Australia, she lives in Oakville, Canada with her husband and children. She embraced Islam in 1994.
J.J. Middleway

Member, Order of Bards Ovates and Druids (OBOD); Member, Mankind Project – (MKP UK)

JJ Middleway is a Druid member of OBOD, where he served for seventeen years as tutor/mentor. He is a Celebrant, delivering ceremonies to mark Birth, Marriage and Death (Naming, Handfasting ans Parting), across the full spectrum of society. His ritual and ceremonial work encompasses marking the eight seasonal festivals of the ‘Wheel of the Year’ and is focused on a deep reverence for the Earth along with a laugh and a smile.

He developed and leads regular sessions of Enchanting the Void; a Western form of devotional chanting, geared toward the honoring and healing of the Land. He is an ‘Elder’ of several communities across UK and Europe, as well as leading singing groups and teaching extensively. His earlier claims to fame, were being born and brought up in a neighbouring street to Ozzy Osbourne, of playing maracas with The Incredible String Band and of sleeping through two thirds of Jimi Hendrix’s last ever live concert.
Dr. Lloyd Hawkeye Robertson

Lead Psychologist, Collaborative Centre for Justice and Safety, University of Regina; Founder, Hawkeye Associates; Vice-President, Humanist Canada

Dr. Lloyd Hawkeye Robertson is a Registered Doctoral Psychologist with expertise in Counselling Psychology, Educational Psychology, and Human Resource Development. He earned qualifications in Social Work too. Duly note, he has five postsecondary degrees, which is a lot, of which 3 are undergraduate level. His research interests include memes as applied to self-knowledge, the evolution of religion and spirituality, the aboriginal self’s structure, residential school syndrome, prior learning recognition and assessment, and the treatment of attention deficit disorder and suicide ideation.

He is interested in the study of the self and cross-cultural worldviews in which selves are imbedded with a focus on Adlerian psychotherapy, humanism, cognitive-behaviouralism, and neo-Freudianism in an eclectic approach. His competences exist in counselling psychology, educational psychology (including ability assessments), and human resource development. Dr. Robertson’s social work degree included specializations in life skills coaching and community development.

He has written on residential school syndrome, the structure of the aboriginal self, the application of memes to self-understanding, the evolution of spirituality and religion, prior learning assessment and recognition, the treatment of suicide ideation and attention deficit disorder, and works on anxiety and trauma, addictions, and psycho-educational assessment, and relationship, family, and group counselling.
Marissa Torres Langseth, B.S.N., R.N., M.S.N., ANP-BC (retired)

Founder and Emeritus Chairperson, Humanist Alliance Philippines, International; Creator, HAPI-SHADE (Secular Humanist Advocacy Development Education)

Langseth is the Founder and Emeritus Chairperson to and is an avid philanthropist to HAPI (Humanist Alliance Philippines, International), the Creator of HAPI-SHADE (Secular Humanist Advocacy Development Education), a pioneer in SEC-registered and non-religious societies in the Philippines, a trailblazer in promoting education and community outreach in selected areas to promote humanism and critical thinking in the Philippines, was responsible for the very first atheist convention in South East Asia in 2012 (PATAS convention in Bayview, Manila, Philippines) and HAPI international affiliations with IHEU and FBBN, and the Creator of HAPI humanist curriculum.

Langseth graduated Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of San Carlos in Cebu, Philippines, graduated from Lehman College (CUNY) in Bronx NY with a Masters in Adult Health Nursing where she wrote a thesis about Domestic Violence, graduated with a GPA 4.0 at College of Mount Saint Vincent in Riverdale, NY and has a Post-Master’s Certificate for Adult Nurse Practitioner while also having prescriptive privileges and Board Certification.

In previous posts, she was an Adult Nurse Practitioner for UNH (United Health Group)/Evercare (1999-2015), an Adjunct Professor at Queensboro Community College (2005-2006), a Certified Emergency Room Nurse at Lincoln Hospital, Bronx, NY (1993-1999), a Nursing Care Coordinator/Supervisor (1990-1993), a Registered Nurse in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (1985-1989), a Territorial Manager for Carlo Erba (1980-1985).

Her personal blog since 2009 has been against the tyranny of the Philippine government and fraudulent banking practices, which has evolved into a page to vent frustrations around non-religious activism. She as Admin for Atheist Against Pseudoscientific Nonsense since 2016, a Member of the American Humanist Association since 2011, and a Member of IHEU since 2015.

She is featured in the books Godless Grace: How Nonbelievers Make the World Safer, Personal Paths to Humanism, From Superstition to Reason, An Interview with Marissa Torres Langseth, B.S/N., M.S.N., and No Outside Intelligence.
Rod Taylor

National Leader, CHP Canada

Rod Taylor is the National Leader of CHP Canada, the Christian Heritage Party of Canada. He was born in 1951 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In the 1960s, his family was involved in the US Civil Rights movement among other social justice issues so he was exposed to political activism at a young age. After graduating from high school in California, he moved with his parents and siblings to Vancouver, BC in 1968. He became a Canadian citizen in 1976.

Rod met his wife, Elaine in Fauquier, BC. They were married in 1974 and celebrated 45 years of marriage this past summer. They have two married children and four grandchildren. Rod has worked with his hands most of his adult life in Alberta and BC, maintaining track and roadbed for the CNR and working on farms and in the oil and gas fields and later, in the lumber industry. From 1987 until 2009, Rod was involved in lumber grading and lumber quality control in Smithers, BC, while Elaine operated a local Christian bookstore. In 2000, Rod won the BC Interior Lumber Grading Championship and spent the next 9 years teaching lumber grading and serving as QC Supervisor at Kyahwood Forest Products in Moricetown, BC, a joint venture between Canfor and the Wetsuweten First Nation.

Rod has served as a first aid attendant, a union shop steward, a secretary and chairman of workplace safety committees, a department supervisor, a director of the Bulkley Valley District Hospital Society, Chairman of the Bulkley Valley Christian Literature Society and a director, for over 25 years, of the Smithers Prolife Society.

Rod has been active in both provincial and federal politics, advancing the causes of Life, Family and Freedom. In 2001, he ran as a provincial candidate for the BC Unity Party and in 2004, 2006, 2008, 2011 and 2019, he represented the CHP in the federal riding of Skeena-Bulkley Valley, one of Canada’s largest electoral districts. In 2013 and 2017, Rod ran provincially as a candidate for CHP-BC, the Christian Heritage Party of British Columbia.

Rod and Elaine have been members of CHP Canada since before its founding convention, with Elaine serving on the first riding association board for Skeena. Rod served as the CHP Deputy Leader from November, 2008 until January, 2014 and in November of 2014, became National Leader. From 2009 until the present, Rod has worked full-time for the Christian Heritage Party, first as the Western Development Director and later as the National Development Director and since 2014 as CHP Leader.

Rod also participated in the creation of CHP-BC—the first provincial wing of the Christian Heritage Party—which involved the reconfiguring of an existing party, the BC Heritage Party. Rod has served as the CHP-BC Leader and for a time as President of the federal BC Council of the CHP.
Rod is committed to the restoration of justice, the defence of personal freedoms, especially freedom of speech and religion and the protection of innocent human life. He believes in the traditional family and believes that Canada’s moral values and national prosperity are rooted in our Christian heritage. He reminds citizens that our Charter of Rights and Freedoms begins with these words: “…Canada is founded on principles that recognise the supremacy of God and the rule of law…” He is concerned that our freedoms are under attack and that government control and sponsorship of media will ultimately result in censorship of important ideas and perspectives.

In the Spring of 2019, Rod published his first book, The Substance of Things Hoped For, a collection of his articles written over the past 10 or 15 years. He travels the country extensively, speaking and encouraging all those who are working to protect Life, Family and Freedom.
Dr. Sally Satel, M.D.

Lecturer, Medicine, Yale University; W.H. Brady Fellow, American Enterprise Institute

Dr. Sally Satel is a resident scholar at AEI and the staff psychiatrist at a local methadone clinic in D.C. Dr. Satel was an assistant professor of psychiatry at Yale University from 1988 to 1993 and remains a lecturer at Yale. From 1993 to 1994 she was a Robert Wood Johnson policy fellow with the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee.

She has written widely in academic journals on topics in psychiatry and medicine, and has published articles on cultural aspects of medicine and science in numerous magazines and journals. She has testified before Congress on veterans’ issues, mental health policy, drug courts, and health disparities.


Her recent book, co-authored with Emory psychologist Scott Lilienfeld is Brainwashed: The Seductive Appeal of Mindless Neuroscience (Basic, 2013). Brainwashed was a finalist for the 2013 Los Angeles Times Book Prize in Science.
Stacey Piercey

Founder & CEO, Stuff2Digital INC.; Co-Chair, Status of Women Sub-Committee of Human Rights; Member, Standing Committee, Advocacy with the Canadian Federation of University Women; Section Chair, National Women’s Liberal Commission, Newfoundland and Labrador; Member, Provincial Executive Board, Liberal Party of Canada

Stacey is a highly accomplished senior executive, business owner entrepreneur and, public policy and administration advisor. With 25 years of extensive career success in business, economics, finance, government, media and, technology. She is an asset for companies looking for insight in business problem solving, regulatory compliance and, executive advice. Her areas of expertise include communication, development, and strategy for gender, inclusion and diversity policies at all levels of government in Canada.

In her executive career, Stacey is currently in three leadership positions. As the CEO and founder of Stuff2Digital INC, she is responsible for this successful start-up management consulting corporation. She is a leader in change management best practices and emphasizes an effective program based on her experiences as a female business executive. She is currently the Co-Chair, Status of Women Sub-Committee of Human Rights and, on the Standing Committee on Advocacy with the Canadian Federation of University Women. She is Section Chair, National Women’s Liberal Commission representing Newfoundland and Labrador and, a member of the Provincial Executive Board with the Liberal Party of Canada.

Stacey is the former BC Liberal Party MLA Candidate for Victoria-Swan Lake in the 2017 British Columbia provincial election. She obtained a B.A. in Economics and Business Administration from the Memorial University; and a Diploma in Accounting, Business, and Computer Applications from Eastern College.

Hobbies include listening to the radio, writing short stories and, French cuisine.
Professor Sven van de Wetering

Head/Professor, Psychology, University of the Fraser Valley

Dr. Sven van de Wetering works as an Instructor for the Psychology Department of University of the Fraser Valley. Dr. van de Wetering earned his BSc in Biology at The University of British Columbia, and Bachelors of Arts, Master of Arts, and PhD in Psychology from Simon Fraser University. His research interest lies in “conservation psychology, lay conceptions of evil, relationships between personality variables and political attitudes.”
Prof. Imam Syed B. Soharwardy

Founder, Islamic Supreme Council of Canada; Founder, Muslims Against Terrorism

Prof. Imam Syed B. Soharwardy is the first Muslim Canadian who walked across Canada, more than 6,500 km, leading the Multifaith Walk Against Violence. (April 14 to October 27, 2008).

Imam Syed Soharwardy was born in a highly respected religious family in Karachi, Pakistan. His father, Allama Syed Muhammad Riazuddin Soharwardy (May Allah shower His blessings upon him) was a famous Islamic scholar and the Imam of Jamia Bughdadi Masjid, Martin Road, Karachi where he established Dar-ul-Aloom Soharwardia. Imam Soharwardy’s grandfather, Allama Syed Muhammad Jalaluddin Chishty (May Allah shower His blessings upon him) was the Grand Mufti of Kashmir (Baramula). Allama Jalaluddin Chishty later migrated to Amritser (India) where he served as the head of Dar-ul-Aloom Nizamiah Sirajjah and the Imam of a Mosque.

Imam Syed Soharwardy is one of the direct descendent of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Through Imam Ja’far us-Sadiq (May Allah’s peace upon him), Imam Soharwardy’s lineage reaches Sayyidatunnisaa (leader of all women) Hazrat Fatimah Binte Muhammad Ibn Abdullah (Peace be upon him), the wife of Ameer ul Mo’mineen Sayyidna Imam Ali (May Allah’s peace upon him). His ancestors migrated from Syria to Iran where they settled in Zarrin OR Zarindasht area in Asfahan province.

During 1200s A.H. famous sufi scholar Hazrat Syed Bahauddin Ziryan (May Allah be pleased with him) was born in this family. Later, Hazrat Syed Bahauddin Ziryan migrated to Kashmir (India) and settled, where in his fifth generation, Allama Mufti Syed Muhammad Jalaluddin Chishty (May Allah be pleased with him) was born.

Imam Soharwardy received his early Islamic education from his father, teacher and Murshad (spiritual guide) in the traditional Islamic Madrasah at Bughdadi Masjid, Martin Road, Karachi, Pakistan. Later, he graduated from Dar-ul-Aloom Soharwardia, Karachi. Mr. Soharwardy also earned Bachelor of Arts degree in Islamic Studies from University of Karachi.

Beside his Islamic education, Mr. Soharwardy earned Bachelor of Engineering (Electrical) from N.E.D. University of Engineering & Technology, Karachi, Master of Science in Management Engineering from New Jersey Institute of Technology, Newark, NJ, USA and Master of Engineering in Project Management from University of Calgary, Calgary, Canada.

Imam Syed Soharwardy was appointed as a teacher at Dar-ul-Aloom Soharwardia where he taught various subjects of Islamic studies. Later, he also served as the assistant Imam and Khateeb at Jamia Bughdadi Masjid, Martin Road (1971-1979). Imam Soharwardy has lectured in Pakistan, USA and Saudi Arabia at various universities and institutes for over 12 years.

Prof. Soharwardy is the founder of Muslims Against Terrorism (MAT). He founded MAT in Calgary in January 1998. He is also the founder of Islamic Supreme Council of Canada (ISCC). He has authored several papers on various topics such as, challenges for Muslims in the western world, conflicts within the Muslim community, Intra and Inter religion conflicts, terrorism, political Islam, etc. Mr. Soharwardy has addressed hundreds of gatherings in Pakistan, USA, UK and Canada on various topics of Islamic faith.
Prof. Soharwardy is the Executive Imam at the Al Madinah Calgary Islamic Assembly, Jamia Masjid Noor-e-Madinah, Montreal, Jamia Riyadhul Jannah, Mississauga, Jamia Riyadhul Jannah, Edmonton and Jamia Masjid Aulia Allah, Surrey, B.C. He lectures in Montreal, Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton, Calgary and Vancouver on monthly basis. Imam Soharwardy is the spiritual leader of Jama'at Ahle Sunnat Canada and the World Sufi Mission Canada. He is also the founder of Multifaith Club of Calgary.

Imam Soharwardy has the “Ijazah” in Soharwardy, Qadri and Chishty sufis orders from his Murshad (spiritual guide), Allama Syed Muhammad Riazuddin Soharwardy, Qadri, Chishty (May Allah’s blessings upon him). He is the Khalifah of his Murshad. His students and Murideen (disciples) have spread out all over the world.

Imam Soharwardy is a strong advocate of Islamic Tasawuf (Sufism) and believes that the world will be a better place for everyone, if we follow what Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (Peace be upon him) has said, “You will not have faith unless you like for others what you like for yourself.” He believes that the spiritual weakness in human causes all kinds of problems. Mr. Soharwardy can be contacted at Soharwardy@shaw.ca OR Phone (403)-831-6330 OR 416-994-5467.
Terry Waslow, M.B.A.

Executive Director (Former Board Chair), Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations; President, Old York Road Genealogical Society; Board Member, International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism

Terry Waslow is the Executive Director of the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations. Previously, she served four years as the Board Chair. She currently serves on the Board of the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism and is President of the Board of the Old York Road Genealogical Society.

Terry’s Master’s in Business Administration is focused on Nonprofits and her undergraduate degree is in Human Services/Counseling. She has worked for over 25 years with individuals and families impacted by physical, intellectual and/or economic challenges to build fully inclusive communities.
Tim Moen

President, Libertarian Party of Canada

Tim Moen grew up on a farm in Northern Alberta. He learned the values of freedom, hard work, responsibility, and respect for property and community. He worked as a community business owner, filmmaker, firefighter, paramedic, volunteer, and writer. In 2013, he worked with Neil Young. When Young critiqued the community and oil sands industry, Moen wrote a highly critical article stating hypocrisy in the position of Young. This gained a lot of media attention.

Moen conducted a highly visible by-election in 2014. It caught the attention of CNN, Fox News, Gawker, Reason Magazine, This Hour Has 22 Minutes, and other outlets. His experience lies in leading high-performance teams. He has a graduate degree in leadership with a thesis on ways in which high-performance teams can employ principles of libertarianism. Circa May, 2014, Moen took the reins of the Libertarian Party of Canada with a large growth in engagement, funding, and membership.

Moen has spent his career protecting life and property from mindless destructive forces. He wants to focus attention as the President of the Libertarian Party of Canada on the forces of government deemed destructive by the Libertarian Party of Canada and him. He views the government as an unquenchable entity with a thirst for money and power with the citizenry as the individuals most harmed by it.
Previous Advisory Board Members

Professor Maryanne Garry
Professor, Psychology, Victoria University of Wellington; Deputy Dean, Faculty of Graduate Research, Victoria University of Wellington

Monika Orski
Ordförande/Chairwoman, Mensa Sverige/Mensa Sweden

Hasan Zuberi, M.B.A.
Chairman, Mensa Pakistan

Dr. Sandra Schlick
Fernfachhochschule Schweiz: University of Applied Sciences, the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland, the Kalaidos University of Applied Sciences, and AKAD

Erik Hæreid, M.Sc./Cand.Scient.
Chairman, Actuary Erik Hæreid, M.Sc./Cand.Scient., Actuarial Science; Member, Actuarial Society of Norway (Den Norske Aktuarforening)

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Member, GRIQ Society

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Administrator, Giga Society; Administrator, The Glia Society

Marco Ripà, B.Econ.Sc.
Founder, sPlqr Society; Creator, X-Test

Richard Rosner
Member, The Giga Society; Member, The Mega Society

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Co-Editor, “Phenomenon” (WIN)

Krystal Volney
Editor, “Phenomenon” (WIN)

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Assistant Professor, Family Medicine, McGill University

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Founder: Anadeixi Academy of Abilities Assessment and World Intelligence Network (WIN), and OLYMPIQ, HELLIQ, CIVIQ, GRIQ, QIQ, and IQID (High-IQ Societies)

Professor Cristina Atance
Associate Professor, School of Psychology, University of Ottawa

Professor Adele Diamond, PhD, FRSC
Tier 1 Canada Research Chair Professor, Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience, University of British Columbia

Dr. Jonathan Wai
Research Scientist, Duke University Talent Identification Program

Rev. Dr. George V. Coyne, S.J. (Deceased)
Emeritus Director and President, Vatican Observatory Foundation

YoungHoon Kim (김영훈)
United Sigma Intelligence Association, President/Executive Director

Paul Krassner (Deceased)
The Realist, Founder

Dr. Diane Purvey
Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Dean, Arts

Dr. Wayne Podrouzek
Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Psychology, Instructor

Dr. Manahel Thabet
Founder, Smart Tips Consultants

Dr. Hawa Abdi, M.D.
Hawa Abdi Foundation, Founder

Dr. David Froc
Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Psychology, Instructor

Dr. Cory Pedersen
Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Psychology, Instructor

Dr. Kyle Matsuba
Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Psychology, Instructor

Aislinn Hunter, PhD Candidate

University of Edinburgh, Creative Writing

Dr. Zoe Dennison
University of the Fraser Valley, Psychology, Instructor

Dr. Carla MacLean
Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Psychology, Instructor

Dr. Robert McDonald
Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Psychology, Instructor

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Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Philosophy, Instructor

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Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Modern Languages, Instructor

Dr. Betty Anne Buirs
Kwantlen Polytechnic University, English, Instructor

Professor Elizabeth Loftus
University of California, Irvine Criminology, Law and Society & Psychology and Social Behaviour, Professor

Dr. Betty Rideout
Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Psychology, Instructor
Professor Glen Bodner
*University of Calgary, Psychology, Professor*

Dr. Wayne Fenske
*Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Philosophy, Instructor*
In-Sight Publishing

Publication Location: Fort Langley, British Columbia, Canada
Publisher: In-Sight Publishing

“Search men’s governing principles, and consider the wise, what they shun and what they cleave to.”
-Marcus Aurelius

Publications: People

- African Freethinker
- Apostasia
- Ghana’s 5%
- In Context
- In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal (2369-6885)
- Indigenous Middle East
- Question Time
- World Religions Journal

Publications: Overview

- African Freethinker
- Apostasia
- Ghana’s 5%
- In Context
- In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal
- Indigenous Middle East
- Question Time
- World Religions Journal

In-Sight Publishing Overview

In-Sight Publishing began in Winter 2014. It publishes ebooks, for free and charge, and operates in independent and public interests rather than for private gains, and is committed to publishing, in innovative ways, ways of cultural, community, educational, moral, personal, and social value that seem often deemed insufficiently profitable. It operates inside and outside of the bounds of non-profit/not-for-profit. In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal began in Winter 2012. It publishes interviews, articles, and issues. It operates inside the bounds of non-profit/not-for-profit. It equates to the first international independent interview-based journal. All informal statuses; all proceeds from purchases towards In-Sight Publishing and In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal in their stated objectives to advance cultural, community, educational, moral, personal, and social value.

Open, General Acknowledgement and Appreciation

In-Sight Publishing and In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal exist because of three identifiable sectors of support: academics, contributors, and readers. Therefore, all time and effort does have identifiable people, groups, and organizations. Each earned acknowledgement and appreciation for single or continuous, individual or group, contribution in the construction of In-Sight Publishing and In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal. Many of them without mention of name contributed time and effort to the production of the journal. Some with provision of interviewee recommendations, connection to the interviewee, assistance in social media, social networks, and academic circles, photography or portraits, time for considered and comprehensive responses to
questions, and assertive, constructive, and positive feedback too. Finally, and greatest, readers give the most support. For every person, group, and organization involved in this project, we express deepest gratitude to all types of direct or indirect assistance from every side for contributions to this initiative. Your effort, interest, and time support independent publishing purposed for the encouragement of academic freedom, creativity, diverse voices, and independent thought.

**Design and Development**

- Phase 1, August 1, 2012: foundation with "Independent Interview-Based Undergraduate Journal" status.
- Phase 2, January 1, 2013: production capacity increased with "Tri-Annual" status.
- Phase 3, January 1, 2014: stricture removal, both implied and actual, based on "Undergraduate" status through cessation of "Independent Interview-Based Undergraduate Journal" status and instantiation of "Independent Interview-Based Journal" status.
- Phase 4, January 1, 2014: increased presence through incorporation of social media.
- Phase 6, January 1, 2015: inclusion of footnotes and bibliographic references in full PDF issues, and Chicago/Turabian (16th Edition) and Harvard reference styles, and creation of the ebooks section for the first stages of construction of In-Sight Publishing.
- Phase 8, April 1, 2015: creation of "Academic" and "Casual" sections for ebook publications. "Academic" includes footnotes, bibliographic references, and reference styles. "Casual" does not include footnotes, bibliographic references, and reference styles.
- Phase 9, May 1, 2015: inclusion of footnotes and bibliographic references in website interview publications.
- Phase 10, July 1, 2015: incorporation of common reference styles such as American Medical Association (AMA), American Psychological Association (APA, 6th Edition, 2010), Brazilian National Standards (ABNT), Chicago/Turabian Author-Date (16th Edition), Chicago/Turabian (16th Edition), Harvard, Harvard (Australian), Modern Language Association (MLA, 7th Edition, 2009), and Vancouver/ICMJE reference styles in website interview publications in addition to one complete list of 27 reference styles (manual insertion without access dates).
- Phase 11, August 22, 2015: article website layout refinement: article title, biography, abstract, keywords, common reference style listing, article title, bibliography/references/reference list, footnotes, appendix I: complete reference style listing – if any, other appendices including tables, figures, and images, and license and copyright. Updates to Copyright, General Philosophy, In-Sight Publishing: Overview, Journal Overview: Section B, and License.
- Phase 12, September 1, 2015: previous Letter of Appreciation appreciations moved to Acknowledgements and Appreciation. Major appreciations remain in Letter of Appreciation. In addition, the refinement of interview layout on the website: interview title, interviewee image/photograph/portrait/sketch, abstract, keywords, common reference style listing, interview title, bibliography/references/reference listing, footnotes, appendix I: complete reference style listing, and license and copyright; refinement to interviews in full issues: interview title, interviewee image/photograph/portrait/sketch, contents, abstract, keywords, common reference style listing, interview title, bibliography/references/reference listing, appendix I: complete reference style listing – if any, other appendices including tables, figures, and images, and license and copyright. Footnotes for each page remain in their respective page. An update to ebook inside cover with respect to mandate and copyright. All informal statuses.
Phase 13, September 22, 2015: revision to format of the online publications, introduction of appendices for photographs, transformation of bibliography/references/reference list into bibliography, removal of common reference style listing, and introduction of citation style listing in place of complete reference style listing.

Phase 14, November 1, 2015: Amazon purchase transition with total proceeds to co-authors and In-Sight Publishing and In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal; EBSCO contract signed by Scott Douglas Jacobsen and EBSCO to proliferate In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal for formal institution distribution from the P.D.F. issues.

Phase 15, January 1, 2016: EBSCO co-sign completion with over 150 entries at the time; officiation of the In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal with continued information status of In-Sight Publishing.

Phase 16, February 1, 2016: In-Sight Publishing "academic" books have consistent "casual" counterparts; "academic" will be free on the website to encourage independent thought with footnotes and bibliographic references for personal research, and casual will be for charge with half of interview funds given to the interviewee (and the other half to In-Sight Publishing efforts towards cultural, community, educational, moral, personal, and social value); some e-books will not include the delineation between "academic" and "casual."

Phase 17, May 1, 2016: Update and refine contents for Amazon Kindle products for In-Sight Publishing.

Phase 18, September 18, 2016: attain and maintain 18 member Advisory Board with 1 Editor-in-Chief for the individual interview publications, free and low-cost e-books, and full journal issues.

Phase 19, November 1, 2016: develop and implement early stages of novel venue for solo and collaborative article publications and interview publications in both academic and casual formats outside of the journal through In-Sight Publishing as hyperlinks compatible with P.D.F., Kindle, and iBooks.

Phase 19, November 1, 2016: develop and implement early stages of novel venue for solo and collaborative article publications and interview publications in both academic and casual formats outside of the journal through In-Sight Publishing as hyperlinks compatible with P.D.F., Kindle, and iBooks.

Phase 20, November 1, 2017: expand the range and variety of front cover options of ebooks for more aesthetic appeal.

Phase 21, February 1, 2018: experiment with individual, unique book cover designs.

Phase 22, March 1, 2018: continuation with the previous phase, as this worked.

Phase 23, April 15, 2018: updates to the In-Sight Publishing In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal archives at the University of California, Irvine (UCI) Interdisciplinary Center for the Scientific Study of Ethics and Morality (Ethics Center) Vaughen Archives (Bettye Vaughen): https://www.ethicscenter.uci.edu/vaughen.php.

Phase 24, June 7, 2018: beginnings of more journals with Ghana's 5% and In Context.

Phase 25, June 8, 2018: beginnings of Apostasia.

Phase 26, June 11, 2018: beginnings of Indigenous Middle East.

Phase 27, June 12, 2018: construction of team for Ghana's 5%.

Phase 28, June 24, 2018: construction of team for Indigenous Middle East.

Phase 29, June 18, 2018: beginnings of Canadian Islamic Theology Journal.

Phase 30, September 8, 2018: start publications of Indigenous Middle East and In Context.

Phase 31, September 13, 2018: construction of team for Canadian Islamic Theology Journal.

Phase 32, October 21, 2018: beginnings of African Freethinker.

Phase 33, November 1, 2018: start publications of African Freethinker and Ghana's 5%.
• Phase 34, November 3, 2018: construction of national editorial teams for *African Freethinker*.

• Phase 35, December 1, 2018: add sections in Ebooks tab.

• Phase 36, January 1, 2019: increase of the available chronologies on the website.

• Phase 37, June 1, 2019: experiment with more published ebook material with 2 ebooks published at this time.

• Phase 38, July 1, 2019: collect and compiled disparate written professional productions of insufficient size in a single publication to complete an individual ebook for publication as an ongoing series entitled "Book of Stuff," as, humorously, a book with stuff in it.

• Phase 39, August 1, 2019: alteration of copyright interior of ebooks and further work to expand co-authors.


• Phase 41, February 1, 2020: increased collaborative efforts with others for co-authored books.

• Phase 42, February 1, 2020: ongoing collecting and publishing of extant materials in various publications with small collections insufficient for an entire book alone collated and published as the *Book of Stuff* series.

• Phase 43, February 1, 2020: ongoing refinement and advancement in the sophistication of the ebooks.

• Phase 44, February 1, 2020: ongoing connections between ebooks on In-Sight Publishing main site for free and Amazon Kindle ebooks for low-cost with connection back to the original In-Sight Publishing website.

• Phase 44, April 12, 2020: updates to the Advisory Boards and Update to progress on publications, including *African Freethinker, Apostasia, Ghana’s 5%, In Context, In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal, Indigenous Middle East, Question Time,* and *World Religions Theology Journal*.

• Phase 45, May 1, 2020: incorporation of Publication Chronology for each publication with publications.

• Phase 46, May 1, 2020: inclusion of more article submissions of a variety of authors, including more experimental large-scale discussion groups published together.

• Phase 47, May 8, 2020: experiment with the removal of the number of the questions to simplify some of the interview questions and response presentation.

• Phase 48, September 1, 2020: introduction of new series and changing of some of the formatting of the interviews and the articles.


• Phase 50, January 1, 2021: creation of section "D" for *In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal* as a separate section of the formal issues devoted to group discussions, i.e., 3 or more participants with the "3 or more" inclusive of the moderator.

• Phase 51, January 1, 2021: introduction of yearly renewal invitations to Advisory Board to maintain up-to-date consent of use of name and profile for *In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal*.

• Phase 52, January 1, 2021: updates to various sections of the website copy in content and in the formulation of the structure of the publications and the websites.

• Phase 53, January 1, 2021: improved sophistication and organization of the journal issue contents and form.

Future phases will incorporate donations, paid (low-cost) ebooks, more ebook listings, and re-design and transformations of *In-Sight Publishing*.
In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal

In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal exists as the first international independent interview-based journal. Submissions remain international and interdisciplinary for interviews, articles, and others. Individual publications throughout the year: January 1 to May 1; May 1 to September 1; September 1 to January 1, and so on. Each publication on the 1, 8, 15, and 22 of the month. Tri-annual full issue publications on “Spring,” “Summer,” and “Winter”: January 1, May 1, and September 1, respectively.

General Philosophy

Where imperatives, utility, and virtues interrelate, and where accuracy/authenticity implicates honesty, credibility implicates integrity, fairness/balance implicates justice, and news judgment implicates prudence, honesty, integrity, justice, and prudence converge on the ethical utility in the moral imperative of truth. Truth necessitates honesty, integrity, justice, and prudence. Academic freedom permits the possibility of truth; academic freedom necessitates destitution of dogma or obfuscation. An ability to question anything, pursue implications, and express these implications in spite of harboured biases and fear of backlash. All without alteration or omission to discover knowledge. In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal aims to attain academic freedom through its core interview format.

Advisory Board

Advisory board remains an associative, international, and voluntary collective of individuals invited to join the journal based on accomplishments, credentials, or unique attributes. A minimal commitment to provide feedback on In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal and recommend potential interviewees. Interview views do not equate to positions of Advisory Board members at individual or collective levels.

Format, Overview

In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal formatted by subjects or ideas per issue. Each issue divides into interviews (A), submissions (B), responses (C), group discussions (D), and educational series (E).

Sections A, B, C, D, and E


Subject Issues

• Interview sections contain only experts from one discipline with emphasis on a subject, e.g. “Psychology,” and so on. Submission sections contain only experts from one discipline with emphasis on a subject, e.g. “Psychology,” and so on. Contribution exceptions permitted with sufficient reason sent to the Editor-in-Chief.

Idea Issues

• Interview sections contain many experts from many disciplines with emphasis on an idea, e.g. Women in Academia, Outliers and Outsiders, and so on. Submission sections contain many experts from many disciplines with emphasis on an idea, e.g. Women in Academia, Outliers and Outsiders, and so on. Contribution exceptions permitted with sufficient reason sent to the Editor-in-Chief.

Frequency

• Individual publications throughout the year: January 1 to May 1; May 1 to September 1; September 1 to January 1, and so on. Each publication on the 1, 8, 15, and 22 of the month. Tri-annual full issue publications on “Spring,” “Summer,” and “Winter”: January 1, May 1, and September 1, respectively.
Frequency dependent upon material quantity and completion dates. **Multiple delayed completions will accelerate the publication rate until issue fulfillment.**

**Interview Guidelines (A)**

An overview of the interview process for this section. Interview submissions not accepted from external sources.

**Research**

- Preliminary research required for interview solicitation. If interview consent obtained from interviewee, a **typical, but not absolute, minimum of one day to four weeks** for comprehensive research. This includes purchasing, acquiring, and processing articles, audio-visual material, books, interviews, social media material, and their respective synthesis to produce questions. Some thematic series of interviews may incorporate more standardized or generic first question sets based on consistency in the individual backgrounds and narratives to justify it. Each more standardized or generic first question set can vary with further feedback about it.

**Consent**

- Interviewees either provide written or verbal consent based on an interview request. Written or verbal consent relate to the interviewee having the power to deny/accept the interview, and for final decision of publication as a single interview on the website or in the full issue publication with all other issue-interviews in PDF and on the website. It remains casual in consent. See **Copyright** for information on ownership of publications.

**Conducting**

- Interview form depends on interviewee preference: email with text in email, email via **Microsoft Word** or **Open Office** file, in person, phone call, question set, Zoom, Skype, Google Hangouts, have been utilized in the past. Most prefer question sets in email via **Microsoft Word** or **Open Office**. Most questions mix standardized and specialized formats. Standardized for consistency of journal format. Specialized for relevant-to-interview questions. All questions have design to elicit in-depth and full responses from interviewees.

**Editing Stage One**

- Editing consists of the interviewee's original interview with minimal editing to keep the intended meaning and message of the interviewees intact, even where certain answers may contain controversial or 'politically incorrect' statements, opinions, or information.

**Editing Stage Two**

- Interviewer sends draft back to the interviewee to confirm the originally intended meaning and message seem sustained to the satisfaction of the interviewee. If the interviewee requires any further alterations, omissions, or edits, the interviewer repeats the cycle of edit to confirmation of accuracy of message and meaning to re-edit until the interviewee evaluates the final version of the interview as sufficiently accurate to their intended meaning and message. Any major editing consists of corrections to grammatical and/or spelling errors. This editing aims to optimize the correspondence between the interview and the interviewees intended message and meaning to the satisfaction of the interviewee.

**Submission Guidelines (B)**

**Material**

- Contributor status access restricted to undergraduate students, graduate students, instructors, professors, and experts. Each submission considered on appropriateness of grammar and style, comprehensiveness, coherence, and originality of content.

**Scope**
• Depending on the issue, the accepted submissions consists of articles, book reviews, commentaries, poetry, prose, and art.

Submission

• It must not have publication or pending publication elsewhere. For exceptions, sufficient reason should be sent to the Editor-in-Chief along with the material. For written scholarly material, it must be in 12-point font, Garamond, double-spaced, and with APA or MLA formatting. Length of material ranges from 1,000 to 7,500 words. Material should be sent to the following:
  o Scott.D.Jacobsen@Gmail.com

Response Guidelines (C)

Responses to interviews (B) or essays (B) must have the following format:

Material

• Preferable for respondents to have experience or expertise in area relevant to interview or essay content.

Scope

• Response material should relate to current or prior issue on specific points in one essay or article.

Submission

• Responses must have the following format: APA format, Times New Roman, 12-point font, single-spaced, 6-point after spacing, citation of interviewee and each 'Question-and-Answer' section of response (maximum of 5), and reference list of relevant articles, books, prior interviews, watching of video material, reading of social media material in APA. Length of material should range from 500-1,000 words, exceptions will have consideration with appropriate reasons provided to the Editor-in-Chief. Material should be sent to the following:
  o Scott.D.Jacobsen@Gmail.com

Group Discussion Guidelines (D)

Individuals gathered together based on a theme to discuss particular ranges of issues or the specific theme. Mostly accomplished through email group discussions with a minimum of 3 people with the "3 people" inclusive of the moderator or interviewer. Individuals can recommend group discussion topics or will be invited. In either case, the separate section becomes a new advancement to fractionate the content of In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal into more distinct units.

Educational Series Guidelines (E)

A specified topic proposed and mutually agreed to pursue for an extended duration with a relevant subject matter expert. These develop in a manner of increasing complexity over time from introductory, intermediate, to advanced content, or in terms of a historical developmental timeline of the topic.

Research Ethics

In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal does not answer a research question. Interviews hold control over final published responses for as accurate a representation as possible of an interviewee as possible. Hence, zero mandatory ethics board consent necessitated by its operation. Monetary detachment removes constraint by an institution or individual for published content, despite academic positions or alma maters for the Editor-in-Chief and Advisory Board. Please see Internal and External Funding for monetary information.

Internal and External Funding

Scott Douglas Jacobsen provides complete internal funding In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal. All internal funding includes purchasing of articles, books, chapters, prior interviews, video material, and advertising and marketing efforts of In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal. In the case of external monetary funding,
only monetary funding not restricting academic freedom for In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal will have consideration. At this time, In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal operates with internal funding from Scott Douglas Jacobsen. A small web renewal donation from Rick Rosner before.

Attachments

Attachments means constraints or restraints through functioning out of institutions or groups. For instance, an institution or group would consist of a university, an agency, a think-tank, and/or an interest group of some form. In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal functions autonomous from any institution or group. This provides total freedom of content for consistency with principles of operation for academic freedom.

Advertising Policy

All advertising for the journal exists as open-access for any individual. See "Open Access" for more information.

Open Access

In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal exists as open access for online contents, where any content In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal becomes accessible for reading or downloading to any interested individual/group.
Letter of Appreciation

Year 2021 of the Gregorian Calendar, year 5781 of the Hebrew (or Jewish) Calendar, year 1442 of the Islamic Calendar, year 1399 of the Persian Calendar, 13 baktun 0 katun 8 tun 2 uinal 13 k’in, or 13.0.8.2.13, of the Mayan calendar, year 1942 of the Indian Civil Calendar, année 229 of the French Republican Calendar, day 2,459,215.5 of the Julian Calendar, ushers in a number of advancements in spite of the ongoing hardships for the global population in the darkness of the coronavirus, human rights violations, and uncertainty about humanity’s next generations of children and grandchildren. The uncertainty about the state of the natural world left to them, whether climate catastrophe or nuclear winter if not obliteration, and the status of the sociopolitical context shaping the economic and educational futures for them. A world of higher technology and unification of geopolitical spheres into a truly multipolar discourse. Ongoing advancements in science and, thus, technology continue to lead to unforeseen general trends in knowledge about and mastery of the natural world, including human nature, this happened despite the political changes and the shifts in Global Order. This happened in the 20th century. It seems probable to continue throughout the 21st century.

This is the twentieth issue of Outsiders and Outliers and the first issue of Land of Fire and Ice: Islandia, Snelandia, and Insula Gardari, where this becomes a joint issue, or an experimental issue, coinciding with a number of content, format, procedural, and substantive, advancements and changes to In-Sight Publishing inside of and outside of Insight: Independent Interview-Based Journal. I extend appreciation to the following: Dr. Aubrey de Grey, Professor Azra Raza, M.D., Dr. Daniel Bernstein, Dr. Herb Silverman, Ismail Hamaamin Hamalaw, Dr. Kathy Bullock, J.J. Middleway, Dr. Lloyd Hawkeye Robertson, Marissa Torres Langseth, B.S.N., R.N., M.S.N., ANP-BC (retired), Professor Maryanne Garry, Rod Taylor, Dr. Sally Satel, M.D., Stacey Piercey, Professor Sven van de Wetering, Prof. Imam Syed B. Sohawardy, Terry Waslow, M.B.A., and Tim Moen, as the current Advisory Board members up to January 1, 2021, and to the former Advisory Board members.


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Once more, thank you for the implied love to make the connection, it’s an intriguing trip, altogether.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen
Founder, In-Sight Publishing
Conversation with Richard May ("May-Tzu"/"MayTzu"/"Mayzi") on Some General Background and Generic Views: Co-Editor, “Noesis: The Journal of the Mega Society” (1)

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Abstract

Richard May ("May-Tzu"/"MayTzu"/"Mayzi") is a Member of the Mega Society based on a qualifying score on the Mega Test (before 1995) prior to the compromise of the Mega Test and Co-Editor of Noesis: The Journal of the Mega Society. In self-description, May states: “Not even forgotten in the cosmic microwave background (CMB), I’m an Amish yuppie, born near the rarified regions of Laputa, then and often, above suburban Boston. I’ve done occasional consulting and frequent Sisyphean shlepping. Kafka and Munch have been my therapists and allies. Occasionally I’ve strived to descend from the mists to attain the mythic orientation known as having one’s feet upon the Earth. An ailurophile and a cerebrotonic ectomorph, I write for beings which do not, and never will, exist — writings for no one. I’ve been awarded an M.A. degree, mirabile dictu, in the humanities/philosophy, and U.S. patent for a board game of possible interest to extraterrestrials. I’m a member of the Mega Society, the Omega Society and formerly of Mensa. I’m the founder of the Exa Society, the transfinite Aleph-3 Society and of the renowned Laputans Manqué. I’m a biographee in Who’s Who in the Brane World. My interests include the realization of the idea of humans as incomplete beings with the capacity to complete their own evolution by effecting a change in their being and consciousness. In a moment of presence to myself in inner silence, when I see Richard May’s non-being, ‘I’ am. You can meet me if you go to an empty room.” Some other resources include Stains Upon the Silence: something for no one, McGinnis Genealogy of Crown Point, New York: Hiram Porter McGinnis, Swines List, Solipsist Soliloquies, Board Game, Lulu blog, Memoir of a Non-Irish Non-Jew, and May-Tzu’s posterous. He discusses: growing up; a sense of an extended self; family background; the experience with
peers and schoolmates as a child and an adolescent; the purpose of intelligence tests; high intelligence; geniuses of the past; the greatest geniuses in history; a genius from a profoundly intelligent person; some work experiences and educational certifications; the more important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses; some social and political views; the God concept; science; some of the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations); the range of the scores; and ethical philosophy.

Keywords: general background, generic views, IQ, Mega Society, Richard May.

Conversation with Richard May (“May-Tzu”/“MayTzu”/“Mayzi”) on Some General Background and Generic Views: Co-Editor, “Noesis: The Journal of the Mega Society” (1)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: When you were growing up, what were some of the prominent family stories being told over time?

Richard May[1],[2]*: Mother said that she was an orphan and “didn’t know who her parents were.” But she knew her mother’s sister. It was all very coherent and logical. Once she said her father was a minister. I listened in silence. Once she said we were Danish, after talking to her brother on the phone. Danish had been substituted for Irish, I’m sure. I never interrogated Mother, naively preferring a passive psychoanalytic or Rogerian approach.

Father said his grandfather, who “looked very Jewish and wore a yarmulke in his jewelry business, fooled the Jews, by pretending to be a Jew.” However, we were the Jews we ‘fooled’ on father’s side of the family. “Truth is the safest lie,” is a Yiddish proverb. There were no true family stories of interest. The lies of otherwise honest parents inspired me to research my background.

Jacobsen: Have these stories helped provide a sense of an extended self or a sense of the family legacy?

May: No, belatedly at age 53 finding the hidden truth provided a sense of family legacy.

Jacobsen: What was family background, e.g., geography, culture, language, and religion or lack thereof?

May: Mother was from Northern New York. Father was from Boston, Mass. We spoke English, which was not unusual in those areas at the time. There was not much religion at home. Nothing to rebel against. A children’s book on “Jesus,” when I was very young. An angel candle to protect me from goblins coming down the chimney at night. There was a little lip service to God now and then. We usually said grace before Sunday dinner.

I’ve only gone to church about five times in my life, all during childhood only. Father’s originally Jewish side had become Unitarian, I guess. Mother seemed to think she was some sort of Protestant, alternating in a quantum fashion between Episcopal and Baptist. I correctly perceived this as not even farcical. At one point as a young child I told Mother that I did not believe in church. She cried.

Jacobsen: How was the experience with peers and schoolmates as a child and an adolescent?

May: I had a crush on a girl in the first grade. She liked my art work. It may have been o.k. till puberty. I was always chosen last along with a slightly retarded epileptic for sports teams in high school gym class. I was somewhat proud of this distinction. Guess I didn’t fit in. Almost didn’t graduate from high school and then university because of gym requirements.

Jacobsen: What is the purpose of intelligence tests to you?

May: Maybe the purpose of intelligence tests is to attempt to measure intelligence.

Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?

May: Did SETI finally announce that they made a breakthrough? But SETI has never discovered me, as far as I’m aware.

Jacobsen: When you think of the ways in which the geniuses of have either been mocked, vilified, and condemned if not killed, or praised, flattered, platformed, and revered, what seems like the reason for the extreme reactions to and treatment of geniuses? Many alive today seem camera shy – many, not all.

May: Humans are tribal and primitive even today, to varying degrees. Differences of any kind among us are often not well tolerated.

Jacobsen: Who seem like the greatest geniuses in history to you?

May: Oh, you mean Mensa!

No?

— Archimedes, Euclid, Newton, Gauss, Einstein, and von Neumann come to mind.
Jacobsen: What differentiates a genius from a profoundly intelligent person?

May: Focused hard work in an intellectual discipline(s) over many years, original insights and thinking out of the box. Also the conventions historians used in identifying geniuses in various time periods. Herman Hesse wrote that in his view many geniuses were never noticed or recognized by their contemporaries or even later.

Jacobsen: What have been some work experiences and educational certifications for you?

May: Sisyphean shlepping, including ID checking in a bar, with a B.S. in psychology and a M.A. in Humanities/Philosophy.

Jacobsen: What are some of the more important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses? Those myths that pervade the cultures of the world. What are those myths? What truths dispel them?

May: Myths may not necessarily be false propositions to be dispelled by truths, I think. Otherwise I have no thoughts on this.

Jacobsen: What are some social and political views for you? Why hold them?

I’m a political atheist with regard to ideologies and political process:

“Ideologies

Freedom, peace and prosperity are preferable to their absence or negation. Marxists say that property is theft; Libertarians say that taxation is theft. But ideologies, themselves, are theft: theft of reason; theft of truth; a secular theology of lies; paleomammalian delusions shared by the herd; 1 dimensional maps of hyperdimensional territories of phenomenal processes and individual values; attempts to depict a higher-dimensional polytope on a 1-dimensional line segment; maps far more useful to the mapmaker than the individual trying to find his way. There are no up-wingers or down-wingers; no front-wingers or backwingers. Ideology is a bit of truth simplified to a convenient lie. — May–Tzu”

Humans are unconscious automatons, as G. I. Gurdjieff stressed. In Christian language we are not redeemed, i.e., we are just too F*cked up as a species and we have a Type-O civilization. (We are probably actually less intelligent today than were the ancient Greeks.) It may be worth noting, however, that everything turns into its opposite in the relative world, including in the political arena.

“In Praise Of Stupidity

Homo sapiens is a primitive species whose primary activity is internecine tribal warfare and whose secondary activity is destruction of the ecosystem. Obviously human wisdom and compassion have not evolved as rapidly as the intelligence associated with technology and weaponry. Maybe for this reason “human stupidity” actually has survival value for our species. If the mean absolute I.Q. were 150 rather than 100, and if there were no correspondingly increased levels of wisdom and compassion, then perhaps we would have eradicated our species from the planet. Is stupidity, itself, the long awaited but unrecognized Messiah? — May–Tzu”

“There is infinite hope, but not for us.” — Franz Kafka

Jacobsen: Any thoughts on the God concept or gods idea and philosophy, theology, and religion?

May: There are a quite a few thoughts on the above topics are in my “Stains Upon the Silence — something for no one.” — But having thoughts is not thinking.

Jacobsen: How much does science play into the worldview for you?

May: To the extent that science is an apolitical approximation of truth, science is my ‘religion’ or worldview; Science not scientism. But remember the disinvitation of physics Nobel laureate Brian Josephson from a Cambridge University physics conference and the banning of Rupert Sheldrake and laser physicist Russell Targ, who did research for the C.I.A. for years, from TED Talks.

Jacobsen: What have been some of the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations) for you?

May: I stopped taking IQ tests after the Mega Test on which I scored about 4.7+ sigma, qualifying me for the Mega Society. I took no later-developed tests after that. My score range is between mostly between 3 and 4.7 sigma.

Incidentally I make no claims about my alleged ‘high intelligence’. This is neither humility nor false humility. I was raised to be stupid.

My mother repeatedly said that I was “just like her,”odd given that she appeared to be a female. She would refer to herself as “my stupid mother” and shortly after say, “You’re just like me.” She was orphaned in a rural area and had a 10th, grade formal educational level, although she usually didn’t sound like it.

An uncle on my father’s side, who boasted of having a very high IQ score, gave me a vast dictionary-
encyclopedia in my early teens. I remember avidly looking up and studying various topics for hours. Mother told me that my thirst for knowledge “was just because my brain was developing” and reassured me that I would “get over it.”

My father’s father was said to have been a professorial-sounding brilliant autodidact who had dropped out of elementary school. He was said to have read a book a day, had an extensive vocabulary and corrected people’s grammar. But Grandfather had bipolar disorder. Therefore, my father apparently associated high intelligence and erudition with ‘madness’ and disapproved of my attraction to books, where they could be found.

In short I took these tests to attempt to demonstrate something to myself, not to impress others. I don’t generally feel highly intelligent and usually assume that others are more intelligent than I am, at least until I’ve observed them.

But — in an absolute sense — how brilliant are actual human geniuses standing before the cosmos?

**Jacobsen: What is the range of the scores for you?**

The scores earned on alternative intelligence tests tend to produce a wide smattering of data points rather than clusters, typically.

**May: My score range is mostly between about 3 and 4.7+ sigmas. My lowest score was about 2 sigmas. My friend Grady M Towers claimed that everyone has as many IQs as they have taken IQ tests. Anne Anastasi wrote that IQ is not a property of an organism, but an index of a sample of behavior.**

**Jacobsen: What ethical philosophy makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?**

**May: Buddhist ethics.**

### Appendix I: Footnotes


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.*
Conversation with Paul Cooijmans on Introduction to the Glia Society: Administrator, Glia Society (1)

Abstract

Paul Cooijmans is an Independent Psychometitior and Administrator of the Glia Society, and Administrator of the Giga Society. He discusses: creation of the Glia Society; the 99.9th-percentile; cognitive rarity in the general population does one begin to observe true thinking about a subject matter; what passes for ‘thinking’ in the general population; the Glia Society “nerve-centred” in Europe; the Administrator’s cognitive rarity;
Glia Society “has several hundred members”; other names or titles brainstormed in the earlier stages of development of the Glia Society; the journal Thoth; the tasks performed by the “founder and other members”; and the growth trajectory of the Glia Society since its inception.

Keywords: 99.9th-percentile, Europe, Glia Society, membership, Paul Cooijmans.

Conversation with Paul Cooijmans on Introduction to the Glia Society: Administrator, Glia Society (1)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: This interview will focus on the Glia Society. Several years ago, we focused on the Giga Society. You administrate for the Giga Society. You administrate for the Glia Society. Why create the Glia Society as “an international internet-based organization for friendly contact between intelligent individuals”? (Cooijmans, n.d.a) That is to say, is there a deeper reason than the noble and admirable aim of looking to construct a digitally-based community of intelligent people?

Paul Cooijmans[1],[2]*: First, I must say that it was not the aim to construct a digitally-based community. In 1997, I did not have an Internet connection, and all communication regarding and within the Glia Society was conducted via regular correspondence. I did not have an electronic computer either but used a typewriter, and the first three issues of the journal Thoth were produced on that typewriter. From the fourth issue onward, I used an old computer with M.S. DOS and WordPerfect 5.1 that someone gave me, and an old dot-matrix printer, but still had no Internet. Only in January 2001, I bought a modern computer and got Internet access, and that was the first time I used the Internet and electronic mail. Around midnight of the day on which I got Internet access, I had a web site online, and from that moment on, the Glia Society had an online existence (it had been advertised online by a few friends of mine in the years before already though).

Now to the actual question as to the deeper reason, it was so that I was not fully satisfied with the existing I.Q. societies that I knew at the time. The two main problems I saw were (1) the limited freedom of speech, the censorship, the editorial changes and vicious manipulations, in short the lack of fora for verbatim communication and publication, and (2) the too permissive admissions policies of societies, which were, in my perception, selecting below their proclaimed level, partly on purpose, partly through incompetence in psychometrics. I wanted to do better on both accounts; so, to select truly at the nominal level, and to allow uncensored communication and publication. In my view, I have succeeded, although only a limited audience can appreciate that. The truth seems to be that many people really like censorship and curtailed freedom of speech, and that many people like loose and permissive admissions policies. Such people find the Glia Society too strict and rigid, and really believe that anyone interested should be able to join an I.Q. society and feel intelligent or “gifted” in one’s own way. Some of those people are secretly against selecting by I.Q. altogether, and only join I.Q. societies to keep an eye on what is going on, or to destroy them from the inside, like a kind of moles or wolves in sheep’s clothes.

A consequence of the absolute freedom of speech and absence of censorship, combined with the strictly intelligence-based and otherwise non-discriminatory admission policy, is that the “moles” just referred to are able to join and wreak havoc on the society’s communication fora from time to time. Some highly intelligent people have this anti-intelligence attitude, and join purposely to cause trouble, for instance by passive-aggressively sabotaging discussions and conversations that bona fide members are trying to have. Due to its very open nature, the Glia Society is vulnerable to such abuse. On the whole though, my experience is that a strict admission policy and absolute freedom of speech result in a surprisingly diverse membership and that this is appreciated by people who are not afraid of differences.

Jacobsen: Why focus on the 99.9th-percentile?

Cooijmans: My considerations were that actually the 99.5th centile in intelligence, according to my experience with testing and communicating with people of whom I knew the scores, would suffice for the group I had in mind. However, I was anticipating the inflation that inevitably occurs when people take many tests purposely to qualify. Due to the imperfect correlations between tests, a person’s scores are always spread around one’s true level, with some scores above and some below it, and the more tests a person takes, the wider the range of scores (do notice that a widening of the range is not the same as a rise of scores on the whole). This is true for any kind of measurement, not just I.Q. testing. Also, others told me that a cut-off like 99.5 was so unusual that it would confuse people. 99.9 was more common.

So it became 99.9. Soon I discovered that homogeneous (one-sided) tests were letting through apparently unqualified candidates, and for that reason I put the pass level for such tests at 99.99 for some
years, which worked well, except that people did not understand the reason for it and mistook it for having “two classes of membership”. Eventually, I decided to set it at 99.9 again, but require qualifying scores on each of two homogeneous tests of different contents types (or on one heterogeneous test, of course). This latter system works excellently.

It has astounded me for many years that most other I.Q. societies do not treat homogeneous tests appropriately, and are thus selecting well below their intended level (for this and for several other reasons, which I will not name because the answer becomes too long then).

Jacobsen: What cognitive rarity in the general population does one begin to observe true thinking about a subject matter?

Cooijmans: I believe that occurs at about the level of 1 in 200 in general intelligence. To avoid misunderstanding, and strictly speaking, it is necessary to specify here that meant is the most intelligent 1 in 200, not the least intelligent 1 in 200; after all, with only the first sentence of this answer given, the latter interpretation would also be possible.

Jacobsen: What passes for ‘thinking’ in the general population, where this ‘thinking’ appears more as thought-ing?

Cooijmans: I do not know what thought-ing is, but for instance the mere possession or even availability of knowledge is often mistaken for intelligence. Sometimes you hear the possibility mentioned of connecting the human brain to a computer so that “all the knowledge in the world” will be instantly available, and this is then spoken of in terms like “then we will all be geniuses”, as if there will be no more differences in intelligence left. But of course, the difference between, say, someone of I.Q. 70 and someone of I.Q. 140 will not change the slightest bit when both come to possess all the knowledge in the world; the person with the higher I.Q. will be better able to use that knowledge. One’s intelligence level is not altered by the amount of knowledge available to one; nor by one’s amount of education, for that matter (the notion that an academic style of working and having an academic title guarantee the ability to “think” may also be an example).

Something similar can be said about improving one’s I.Q. test scores by fraud or practising; some think that their intelligence truly becomes higher that way, but the gains are hollow with regard to thinking.

Another example of confusing an activity with “thinking” that is not thinking is “brainstorming”, and really any form of conferencing, be it in person or by video or telephone. When I was working as a programmer for a company in the summer of 2007, a colleague insisted on meeting me to discuss the project we were working on. He collected me by car in the morning and took me to his house. There I sat the entire day, with him rambling uninterruptedly about anything that occurred to him. I could not get a word in edgeway, in fact he only stopped speaking to swallow the odd pill now and then; Ritalin, one presumes. It was a fully wasted day work-wise for both of us, but he did not seem to notice that, and was even flabbergasted when I asked him to drive me home early in the evening; he had probably hoped to keep “working” like that all night!

The next morning he was again standing at my front door ringing the bell; but we had not agreed on another meeting, so I did not answer and hid in the kitchen until he had gone, thus preventing one more wasted day. Half an hour later an electronic mail message from him arrived. It was empty. For reasons like this I believe that companies could work much more efficiently by honouring the principle of “talking is not work” and thus prohibiting any talk-meetings during paid work hours. Extraverted people may not like this, but boy will it increase productivity!

Jacobsen: Why have the Glia Society “nerve-centred” in Europe? (Cooijmans, n.d.b)

Cooijmans: Because I am living in Europe, and because there was no higher-I.Q. society based in Europe yet at the time (1997). They were all in the United States I think, so “nerve-centred in Europe” was what one calls a “unique selling point”. In this context I should mention that I have also claimed to have introduced the concepts of high-range testing and higher-I.Q. societies to Europe; it is hard to show with certainty that this is fully true, but no one has contradicted it in almost a quarter of a century.

Jacobsen: Where does the Administrator’s cognitive rarity lie, whether a singular number or a range? Does this provide the Administrator the basis for reasonable grounds for the administration of hundreds in the Glia Society?

Cooijmans: To my utmost regret, it would undermine my credibility to claim that I possess a specific intelligence level in the high range, when my scientific quest is to find out whether or not it is possible at all to measure intelligence in that range. It is so that in the 1990s I took a number of intelligence tests used by mainstream psychology, including the hardest ones available at the time in my country (the Drenth test series) but also the W.A.I.S. and more, and my scores were the highest that were possible
according to the norm tables, with raw scores that were (much) higher than what was needed for those highest norms. I was told that it was impossible to measure intelligence meaningfully in the range beyond the highest norms. I took this as an inducement to start my high-range test project.

No intelligence level provides grounds for the administration of hundreds in a society; in order to be able to do that, one needs other personality traits next to high intelligence, in particular in the realm of conscientiousness. Perhaps a certain “je ne sais quoi” will help too (but I do not know what).

Jacobsen: The Glia Society “has several hundred members in more than thirty countries on five continents, the lion’s share residing in Europe and North America…” (Coolijmans, n.d.b)

Surprisingly, there exist fewer than 10 in the Netherlands. (Ibid.)

Coolijmans: This is not a question. I will therefore assume that the intended question has accidentally fallen off and read something like, “How on Earth is it possible that there exist so few members in the Netherlands, considering the fact that the society’s founder and Administrator is a Netherlander, and one of the most interesting and brilliant ones at that? One would expect every intelligent inhabitant of the low countries to jump at the chance of joining the society under these tantalizing conditions!”

Well, that is an excellent question, and I could scarcely have formulated it better myself. The fact of the matter is that my country is suffering to an extreme degree under the ideological terror of cultural Marxism, and for several generations now the public has been indoctrinated from childhood on with notions like “intelligence is not important or valuable in itself”, “we do not even know what intelligence is, let alone that we could measure it”, and “all individuals have the same inborn potential and any observed differences result solely from social-environmental influences”. With such fallacies so deeply ingrained in the collective mind, I.Q. societies and I.Q. tests are not enjoying much positive interest. Popular sayings in the Netherlands include “Act normally, then you are already acting crazy enough”, and “No one is allowed to stick out above the mowing field”. Also, a prophet is never honoured in one’s own town.

A sublime illumination of the anti-intellectual nature of current Marxist radicalism was the proposal, one or two years ago, to abolish “het”, one of the two definite articles in Netherlandic. Words need “de” or “het” in front of them, depending on their linguistic sex. Immigrants often get it wrong and say “de” where “het” is required. So, the use of “het” by native Netherlanders is “racist” because it makes immigrants feel stupid, according to these activists, and we should stop using the word altogether. Such ideas are fully serious, and if you as much as bat an eye, this reveals you to be a “racist”.

There is little interest in what I do from people in the Netherlands, and reactions have sometimes been acidic, like “Testing and selecting is where the dividing of people starts!” (the implication being that where it ends is in the gas chambers). I have been studying this anti-test attitude on and off over the years, and suspect it is rooted in the following circumstances: (1) The Netherlands has been very open to immigration for a number of centuries, and as a result has been extensively occupied by a caste of people who have undermined the nation from within; (2) The Netherlands has been deeply involved in worldwide trade for centuries and entertains a huge export surplus, so has a business interest in not emphasizing or ignoring group differences, such as in intelligence; (3) The Netherlands has been involved in the Second World War, and the “never again” reflex to that is so strong that anything or anyone that can be even remotely connected to the Nazis is fair game and can be attacked with all ethical constraints dropped. For instance, in 2002 when a right-wing politician was heading to win the elections, his political opponents and the media openly compared him and his ideas to Nazism, and a far-left activist shot him dead a few days before the elections. The murderer received a nominal sentence of eighteen years but was released after a mere twelve years and is now completely free, despite never having regretted his deed and consistently having violated the conditions of his release.

Jacobsen: The Glia Society was entitled as such because the glia “is a type of brain cell — the glia, glial, or neuroglia cell — that in various ways supports and feeds the neurons. Einstein had many more glia cells per neuron than has the average person. Members are analogous to neurons. The Glia Society is a worldwide network of linked brains; a hyper-brain. What were other names or titles brainstormed in the earlier stages of development of the Glia Society if any? Why those names in particular?

Coolijmans: A variant proposed by someone was “Glial Society”, which supposedly sounded better. Another potential name that did not make it — to my disappointment because I liked it a lot — is one I can not name, for reasons I can not name. If you pay good attention you may come across it on occasion though.
Jacobsen: Why name the journal Thoth? The members, one assumes, are alive.

Cooijmans: Thoth, the Egyptian god, is one of the earliest entities in history to be connected to intellectual matters like science, wisdom, writing, art, magic and so on. He is credited with the invention of writing, mathematics, astronomy, and much more. To find an earlier intellectual, one might need to go back to the days of Atlantis, but I did not think of that at the time.

Jacobsen: What are the tasks performed by the “founder and other members”? (Ibid.) Do those “other members” have roles? (Ibid.)

Cooijmans: These tasks include the making of the journal, the admission of members and keeping of the membership list, the administration of communication fora and admission of members thereto, the verifying whether there are non-members on the fora, the keeping of a list of accepted tests, making and maintaining the public web location, and so on. Other members than the founder have done things like creating and administrating communication fora, making the journal, verifying whether there are non-members on the fora, designing the logo, and serving as Ombudsman.

In this context it may be interesting to note that online communication fora tend to get infested with non-members if one does not regularly clean them up. A requirement that has to be made is that a member’s profile on a forum must be able to be connected to the member’s entry in the society’s member list. Some can or will not understand this, and use anonymous or pseudonymous profiles on fora. When confronted with this by the forum inspector, they may not-understandingly respond like, “But you know me! I am [this or that person]!” But of course, such incidental self-identification when confronted does not help; it must be possible for any member to identify any forum profile by comparing it to the official member list.

Jacobsen: What has been the growth trajectory of the Glia Society since its inception?

Cooijmans: Below is a list of numbers of members that joined per year. One should keep in mind that the society went online in 2001. From 2008 on, the admission policy was tightened by requiring either a qualifying score on a heterogeneous test (with at least two different problem types) or two qualifying scores on two homogeneous (one-sided) tests with different contents types.

1997 5
1998 8
1999 17
2000 19
2001 41
2002 39
2003 31
2004 33
2005 32
2006 24
2007 40
2008 14
2009 14
2010 13
2011 14
2012 6
2013 11
2014 15
2015 20
2016 16
2017 13
2018 13
2019 17
2020 9 (until 29 July)

Year unknown 23

References


Appendix I: Footnotes


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of
honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Conversation with Richard Sheen on the Meaning from Life: Independent Artist, Philosopher, Photographer, and Theologian (6)

Abstract

Richard Sheen is a young independent artist, philosopher, photographer and theologian based in New Zealand. He has studied at Tsinghua University of China and the University of Auckland in New Zealand, and holds degrees in Philosophy and Theological Studies. Originally raised atheist but later came to Christianity, Richard is dedicated to the efforts of human rights and equality, nature conservation, mental health, and to bridge the gap of understanding between the secular and the religious. Richard’s research efforts primarily focus on the epistemic and doxastic frameworks of theism and atheism, the foundations of rational theism and reasonable faith in God, the moral and practical implications of these frameworks of understanding, and the rebuttal of biased and irrational understandings and worship of God. He seeks to reconcile the apparent conflict between science and religion, and to find solutions to problems facing our environmental, societal and existential circumstances as human beings with love and integrity. Richard is also a proponent for healthy, sustainable and eco-friendly lifestyles, and was a frequent participant in competitive sports, fitness training, and strategy gaming. Richard holds publications and awards from Mensa New Zealand and The University of Auckland, and has pending publications for the United Sigma Intelligence Association and CATHOLIQ Society. He discusses: the importance of understanding where other people are coming from in life; passion into ordinary considerations of daily living; love; meaning; these descriptions of love and meaning relate to understanding and compassion; and the meaning of it all – of life and existence.

Keywords: life, meaning, philosophy, Richard Sheen, theology.
Conversation with Richard Sheen on the Meaning from Life: Independent Artist, Philosopher, Photographer, and Theologian (6)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Understanding and compassion reflect different sides of the same coin in humanizing others and oneself, the realization of the gap between seemingly very different people as not quite as big as one thought before. The realization of the frailty of the human frame and flesh. That which, from many religious points of view, God gave Mankind as a gift and blessing while cursed by the fallen nature of Satan and Evil, and the fundamental Sin of Adam and Eve at the beginning of Man in the Garden of Eden with the Redemption of Mankind in the death, burial, and Resurrection of, God made Man in, Jesus Christ. From naturalistic views, that particular organism, primate or human animal, which evolved to be good enough for the perpetuation of form or survival based on various selection pressures in its relevant ancestral environment, where this implies various capacities, limitations, and flaws in a naturalistic, evolved order. In either case, the understanding of human vulnerability remains marked in many ways, probably not in others. This universalization, in a normal person, typically, induces more compassion for other people. While taking into account the in-depth responses on reason and faith, science, metaphysics, ethics, philosophy, society, the human person and humanity, and the like, what brings these together in the acknowledgement of the importance of understanding where other people are coming from in life?

Richard Sheen[1],[2]*: I believe what truly brings people together, regardless of occasion, is the acknowledgement and realisation of universal values – of which the most important and central value is love. From a philosophical perspective, it is sometimes understood that we, as sentient human beings capable of rationality and free will, are “cast” into existence in this world – we are here not by our own volition, we simply open our eyes one day and find that we happen to exist, without even knowing what the concept of “existence” means at first. Our constant struggle to grasp for meaning, purpose, and the contemplation of finality gives us the motivation to continue to unravel the reasons behind our own existence, and ponder upon the eternal curiosity of why there is something rather than nothing. Through this constant struggle with meaning and reason, we come to realise that we are all seeking a common goal – an answer, or perhaps something to soothe the soul’s uncertainty, for the Ultimate Concern, as Paul Tillich would put it.

The Ultimate Concern is the one concern which qualifies all other concerns as preliminary, and in itself provides the answer to the meaning of life. This concern demands total surrender and sacrifice of all other concerns in its pursuit. For Tillich, who is a theologian, this one greatest concern is faith and God, or more precisely, an “ecstatic passion” for God through faith that transcends the profane and ordinary. For many others, it may be the well-being of their parents, their children, their academic and financial success in life, and in the most petty of cases, simple basal pleasure unguided by any principle or faculties of the intellect. There are perhaps as many concerns as there are people who have ever existed, but the one concern that brings us together universally, is love, as the Christian teaching preaches for. To those of us who follow this path, the understanding, pursuit and realisation of love within this limited world through the faith and teachings of Jesus Christ becomes the Ultimate Concern in which we seek to align our words and actions with. At the end of the crossroads, I believe that all concerns ultimately gather at the destination of love, be it love for the self, for others, or for the greater good. This desire for and gradual realisation of love from oneself to one another is what truly brings forth a deepest level of understanding and compassion for one another as human beings. In colloquial terms, in order to understand one another, we need to “be in the shoes of one another”, allowing us to gain insight into the concerns of others, and ultimately, be able to understand and show compassion towards others.

The differential nature of our concerns naturally lead to disagreements, and in many cases, these conflicts cloud our judgement and lead us astray. A concern for the greater good is not universally shared between all of mankind, as there are those who are concerned only for their own personal interest. Dead ends in our pursuit for meaning and purpose occur ubiquitously, particularly within today’s world of social media where distractions and diversions constantly hammer at our capacity to focus. We are met with disagreements, conflicts, and a constant reaffirmation of our egotistical desires, all of which lead us away from the purposes of love. But the power of love brings us together in spite of our differences, it demolishes the ego and restores our faith in the good of the world. Regardless of religious or naturalistic interpretations of our earthly bodies, the capacity and
yearning for love is what we must embrace in order to achieve the kind of understanding and compassion that we both desire for mankind as a whole.

Jacobsen: How does this, to you, bring compassion into ordinary considerations of daily living, where the advanced ideas are brought down to the dirt?

Sheen: The capacity to experience and love one another is our foundational faculty in which compassion stems from. While one does not necessarily have to love another in any colloquial sense to be able to understand and show compassion towards another, one must at least be able to acknowledge each other as persons, rather than objects or mere means to an end in order for such compassion to arise. As such, from a most fundamental level, compassion arises from our purest capacity to love and care for one another as both an emotional response, and as a rational desire to care for another solely for the well-being of the other. This may be slightly different for non-human animals (or non-persons), however the universal pattern is the acknowledgement and acceptance of others not as mere objects or means to an end, but as ends themselves. This way, we allow ourselves to see and experience the world through the perspective of the other, and hence, extend our ability to care for one another based on the needs of the other. This empathy and perspective from the bonding of love and understanding is what I believe brings compassion to reality.

Jacobsen: What is love to you? Some philosophers, even metaphysicians, simply leave this question alone, probably, because of the profound importance in all of our lives of this deep portion of human nature. Something experienced by most or all, yet ineffable in many ways.

Sheen: This is a question that I have wrestled with for many years, but am yet to understand. For me, I often refer to the Bible in terms of understanding what love is, and there seems to be multiple layers to this question. Love can manifest in many ways, in the narrowest sense it would imply some sort of desire within us, a desire or enjoyment of something, such as eating mango. Love can also manifest as a feeling of intimacy or attraction towards someone, such as romantic love. It can also manifest as genuine care for the well-being of another, such as brotherly or parental love. But I believe the greatest of love is Godly love, which is distinct from the former types of love, but lays out the foundation for all other forms of love.

Godly love is unconditional, it does not depend on some quality or characteristic in the object, or demand something in return in order to manifest itself – there is no reciprocal relationship in Godly love. Godly love, according to the Bible, is unconditional, ever-persevering and humble. Unlike all other types of love, Godly love does not involve some sort of emotional desire or transactional relationship (e.g. I love mango because it provides the tasty sensation in my mouth when I eat it). Godly love seeks truth and justice in eternal faith and hope, it denies falsehood and selfishness, and rejects evil in all its forms. Godly love is the unconditional teleological framework of the moral good. It is the love that disarms all hatred and animosity, as we are called to love our enemies by Jesus Christ. In practice, Godly love is the love that wills nothing but the good, unconditionally, for any and all, in accordance to the teleological framework of the highest moral goodness. In this sense, Godly love is selfless, it does not distinguish between the self or the other, nor does it demand any sort of quality or characteristic in order to manifest itself. Godly love wills for the reformation of the criminal, the abstinence of the alcoholic, and the well-being of the single mother. It’s will for good persists eternally, in faith and humility. It is this Godly love that we Christians aspire to learn and practice, and suffice to say, it is hard.

Jacobsen: What is meaning to you? Is this simply a synonym for significance? Those things, along a gradient, more significant than others to an individual or a collective seen as more meaningful reflecting an intrinsic and generated sense of meaning rather than imposed from outside individual people. Or is meaning something much different, requiring a belief of a higher-order power and source of it?

Sheen: Meaning or purpose as I see it, is the foundational motive or impetus of any and all human action, be it a petty desire for pleasure or a noble ambition to make the world a better place. I use the term meaning and purpose in roughly interchangeable ways because they both refer to the fundamental “teleology of action” – the reason(s) why an action of a free agent occurred in the first place. I personally see the meaning or purpose behind actions as the most important of all qualities or characteristics that make up our actions.

From a philosophical point of view we can see everything, including every relation in the world as largely belonging to one of three categories: logical, causal, or teleological. Logical entities are atemporal, as formal logic alone does not refer to temporality.
unlike causal entities. The equation 1 + 1 = 2 carries the same information regardless whether you read it from left to right or vice versa. Causal entities are always temporal, as the existence of particular contingent beings are necessarily preceded by something else that led to its existence. Causal relations reflect the temporal order in which one thing is followed by another. Teleology is unique in that it applies only to rational free agents such as human beings. Teleology is the meaning or purpose behind an action, it is the value that drives a free agent in pursuing a certain thing or result, and the greatest teleology or meaning, I believe, is Godly love.

Godly love, as the highest order teleological framework for the moral good, is necessitated as a prerequisite to all other forms of love, as love pertains to the good, and all subjective good must rely on the foundational concept or ideal of an objective good (otherwise we would have no idea what constitutes “goodness” at all). All other forms of meaning are hence partial representations of Godly love, not all of which are truly good. For example, an alcoholic’s love for beer is focused only on the pleasure of consumption, but looses sight of the perseverance for universal goodness, given that he is harming himself and those around him by constantly over-drinking. In this sense, the alcoholic’s “love” is a partial representation of the fullest extent of love that is Godly love. It is a poor imitation of Godly love, manifested within the worldly shallows of immediate pleasure.

I personally believe that it is imperative that a belief in a high-order (God as the ultimate teleological foundation of all meaning and purpose) is necessary for any and all forms of meaning or purpose to be valid, otherwise there would be no grounding as to why we should trust or cherish any of it. At the very bottom of the debate, the foundational disagreement between theism and atheism, as I see it, is the debate whether there is some sort of inherent meaning to life and existence, or if everything is merely an illusion of a perpetually unexplainable “accident” out of chance (which I term as the “accident of the gaps” argument, a satirical twist of the ubiquitous “god of the gaps” argument). I guess this quote by C.S Lewis might shed more light in this context:

“Supposing there was no intelligence behind the universe, no creative mind. In that case, nobody designed my brain for the purpose of thinking. It is merely that when the atoms inside my skull happen, for physical or chemical reasons, to arrange themselves in a certain way, this gives me, as a by-

product, the sensation I call thought. But, if so, how can I trust my own thinking to be true?”

As a further extension of this perplexing situation, if it were the case that there is no ultimate purpose or meaning as an overarching teleology of the entirety of existence, even the question “Is there some sort of ultimate meaning?” wouldn’t make sense, as the very blueprints of meaning that led to the arise of such curiosity would not exist, any and all fragments of meaning would then be lost within the void of logical certainty and causal determinism.

**Jacobsen: Do these descriptions of love and meaning relate to understanding and compassion?**

**Sheen:** I believe they do, as understanding seeks truth, so does Godly love. Love without understanding can be misguided, as despite good intentions, it is possible to provide the incorrect aid to another even in genuine love, and make things a lot worse in the long run. For example, giving money or continuing to supply a homeless alcoholic with beer might seem like a charity on the outside, but the continued indulgence in alcohol will only lead to death and destruction for both the homeless alcoholic and those around him. If one only supports the homeless alcoholic with money without knowing what he intends to use them for, one may in reality be leading him down the path of destruction, despite one’s good intentions. In this sense, love and understanding are closely related – one cannot practice love effectively without understanding. This is also the reason why the Bible stresses the importance of truth in love, as love without understanding of truth can easily be led astray.

**Jacobsen: What, in the end, is the meaning of it all – of life and existence?**

**Sheen:** That will really depend on who you ask. I do not proclaim to be able to find and identify the meaning for other’s lives, nor am I arrogant enough to define or regulate the purpose other people’s actions. I can only answer for myself, and my life’s meaning is to strive for love, justice and equality for all, and be able to best contribute to these purposes for our society with my greatest strengths and abilities. Love, altruistic justice, and compassion is what I seek as the highest meaning for my life, and at the centre of this triangle is God, realised through faith and a never ending pursuit of Godly love. To seek understanding, and bring forth realisation of the Grand Teleology of Design that is the realisation of the highest good in our universe, and be able to share this wisdom with others and actualise this divine image of the Kingdom of God, in spite of all the evils and imperfections of our world…perhaps at the heart
of my desires, this love and reverence for the ultimate moral goodness is what pushes me forward.

**Jacobsen:** Thank you for the opportunity and your time, Richard.

**Appendix I: Footnotes**


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.*
Conversation with Beatrice Rescazzi on Family, Genius, and Community: President, AtlantIQ (1)

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Abstract

Beatrice Rescazzi is the President of AtlantIQ. She discusses: the trend in the high-IQ societies; family history; some crucial or pivotal moments of upbringing; some of the gifts; the asynchronous development of the gifted and talented; the overexcitability of the gifted and talented; educational; professional; a high-IQ community; AtlantIQ; functional, active, and existent high-IQ societies; become involved with or members of AtlantIQ; Graham Powell; more important figures within the high-IQ community or communities; some of the greatest geniuses in history; few women geniuses in the history of world; few women who are in the high-IQ communities; a respectful and positive space for women; a similar set of issues for members of the LGBTI community; favourite hobbies; favourite colour; top 5 favourite books; the rankings or listings within the high-IQ societies; and importance of publications like those published by AtlantIQ, the Triple Nine Society, and others.

Keywords: AtlantIQ, Beatrice Rescazzi, community, family, genius.

Conversation with Beatrice Rescazzi on Family, Genius, and Community: President, AtlantIQ (1)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: I have been interviewing members of and working intensively with members of the high-IQ communities at a wide range of rarities for a number of years now in a number of different capacities. In an effort to compile and analyze every resource available now, so far, in the preliminary analysis, I have noticed the graveyard for most societies, or as AtlantIQ lists them as “dead” societies. Why is this the trend in the high-IQ societies?

Beatrice Rescazzi[1],[2]*: While the first high-IQ societies were physically existing, with real addresses and meeting places, over time new societies were born exclusively online. Since the resources required to run an online group are fewer, I think that even those founders who also had less time and passion to devote, have created new high IQ companies more easily, but they also closed just as easily. Either way, my societies graveyard is to be taken with some humor.

Jacobsen: Taking a step back, what is family history, e.g., geography, culture, language, and religion or lack thereof?

Rescazzi: First, I would love to be more interesting than that but, my family has been native to north-central Italy since time immemorial: the surnames in my family all show origins in the area between Florence and Venice, at least since 1300.

As for the culture, although I love my birthplace with all its wonderful art and tradition, and it seems that my ancestors were couch potatoes who never ventured into faraway places, I have always felt like a citizen of the world: I do not recognize the need for state borders; I believe that it is everyone’s duty to resolve the problems that afflict people even in the most distant geographical areas; and I believe in full

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international collaboration for the common good of the whole humanity.

As far as politics and religions are concerned, I know I’m unpopular when I say that I see both of them primarily as dangerous means of division, and act like filters that stand between the observer and the world. We know that the human brain – like other organs – has evolved to waste as few resources as possible: consequently it is more natural for us to jump to easy conclusions rather than “waste energy” and continue to ask ourselves questions, study and overcome the cognitive dissonances that keep us in the pleasant conviction of having the best ideology and the best possible cult. Whenever we label ourselves as followers of the political party “X” or religion “Y”, we are not only looking at the whole world through that filter, but we are creating a division from others. I study with pleasure the different ideas and thoughts of philosophers and prophets, but I take care not to embrace any ideologies, parties, religions and beliefs and to maintain a global and inclusive vision without any filter before my eyes.

As for languages, as you can see, unfortunately my English is a little ungrammatical. Yet, I guess it’s still good enough that I might be elected President of the United States. In a discontinuous way I study other languages that intrigue me such as Japanese and Esperanto, above all.

**Jacobsen:** What were some crucial or pivotal moments of upbringing?

**Rescazzi:** Since all the readers will be tired of reading my interview up to this point, I can tell you a secret, Scott: I hated school for many years. My problem was following a boring program instead of being able to get the answers to my many questions right away. Hence, many crucial moments in my upbringing were negative. I didn’t fit especially at Catholic private middle school, where bullying, hypocrisy and closed-mindedness were at home.

When I came home from school, on the other hand, I had huge libraries with many thematic encyclopedias, grammars, essays, novels … I also had my Commodore 64 with programs of astronomy, musical composition, creation of sprites, text speech. So, for many years, school for me was a place I couldn’t wait to leave to go home to finally read, study and code.

It was only when I started university that I was able to really manage my time and learning methods.

**Jacobsen:** When did you find out about some of the gifts for yourself?

**Rescazzi:** I have not known that I am gifted for many years. I’ve always felt like a fish out of water but if you ask around, many feel that way, and so in itself it doesn’t mean anything. I did not coincide with the stereotype of the bespectacled male child who does great at school. Furthermore, the type of intelligence where I shine the most is the spatial-visual type, which has little relevance at school, where abstract subjects are given more prominence.

When I was around sixteen, I bought a quiz book for fun. At the end of the book there were tables with a score each. I realized that my scores were sometimes reaching the extreme upper limit or even exceeding it. Because it appeared from the book that I was very good at math while I was not in school, I considered that book very unreliable, and I left and forgot it in my library.

Many years later, when the Internet became available, I learned about giftedness, psychometrics and more about other neurodiversities such as sensory synaesthesia, which is also one of my characteristics. I began to delve into these topics and discovered that the quiz book bought years ago, now yellowed by time, had been written by the famous psychologist Hans J. Eysenck.

So I began to consider the possibility that my different way of thinking could result from a different IQ than the norm. I took some tests online, to find that they confirmed my hypothesis. I discovered that logical-mathematical intelligence has nothing to do with grades in mathematics at school, even for those who are dyscalculic.

Some tests were considered valid for entering groups with gifted individuals. So, as a fish out of water, I finally found myself in good company becoming a member to many high IQ societies. Later I went to a psychologist to have a more precise profile of my potential. So, I was pretty slow to realize that I was gifted…

**Jacobsen:** What are some important things to keep in mind about the asynchronous development of the gifted and talented?

**Rescazzi:** In my opinion, the most important things to keep in mind about the asynchronous development of the gifted and talented, is that giving little importance or ignoring people’s feelings can lead to very serious consequences, both immediately and in subsequent years. Second, the talent of gifted children is in danger of being wasted. These children do not always have the strength to overcome the loneliness that comes from misunderstanding with their peers, teachers and sometimes families as well. Great importance must be given to the development
of a balanced emotional sphere, which will allow the child to manage their feelings and make right decisions in life. Unfortunately, we still tend to believe today that intelligence is sufficient to understand everything, while the emotional part is even an obstacle to reasoning. But this is an outdated concept, and it is dangerous to perpetuate it, especially when you see how many depressed people there are among the gifted, who then become unable to manage their own lives and be successful, even with the highest IQ.

Jacobsen: What are some important things to keep in mind about the overexcitability of the gifted and talented?

Rescazzi: With regard to overexcitability, in my opinion it is necessary that more information be disseminated on this and on all aspects of giftedness. In this way, people who are in contact with the talented child understand that having a high IQ is not just having bright ideas, but there are also other characteristics, which also manifest themselves in behavior and character. The greater the understanding of the strengths and limitations of talented children, the more it will be possible to support them in their educational path. Children who are 2E (twice exceptional) should especially be kept in mind.

Jacobsen: What did you pursue educationally in young adulthood and moving forward?

Rescazzi: At the University I mainly studied ophthalmology, optics, orthoptics, computer science. Subsequently I followed several university and non-university courses on every topic that ignites my curiosity. If I am not busy, I study many hours a day on my own, be it with a course or with manuals and books.

Jacobsen: What did you pursue professionally in young adulthood and moving forward?

Rescazzi: My working career includes optician, orthoptist, eye surgery assistant, and also computer science teacher in adult courses. Being fond of learning, I taught myself many things including electronics, robotics, and also, how to build 3D printers and 3D print, and this has become a more frequent activity of mine in recent years, since one of my projects is to make medical devices easily accessible to everyone. Some of my inventions and designs appear in the issues of Leonardo – the society magazine.

Jacobsen: Now, when did you find a high-IQ community?

Rescazzi: I found the first high-IQ community in 2009. It was the International High IQ Society.

Jacobsen: With AtlantIQ, why did you found a high-IQ community?

Rescazzi: It seemed to me that many high IQ societies didn’t give much prominence to the actual abilities of the gifted. It is true that the Intelligent Quotient is the expression of a potential, but I wanted to bring together the people who actually use that potential and express it in the most varied forms. The “low” cut-off required for admission to theAtlantIQ Society along with the submission of documentation proving special skills in the arts and sciences, on the one hand includes more talented people, on the other excludes those who only collect IQ tests without having anything intellectually interesting to offer.

Furthermore, it seems to me that knowledge is put aside a bit in many societies, while in my opinion, a thirsty mind requires numerous inputs and resources. So I also created a virtual library with over two thousand books, that is accessible to every member. I also decided that it was time to found a society with totally free admission, where even students, artists, unemployed – who cannot pay a fee plus the cost of the tests, which are required in many other societies – are welcome. High-IQ society doesn’t have to be a club, in my opinion.

Jacobsen: In some of my preliminary analysis or review, why is AtlantIQ one of the few functional, active, and existent high-IQ societies compared to a graveyard of others? Even of those who may be functional, there are a large number who are barely active or who may be paralytic – not so for the AtlantIQ community.

Rescazzi: I suppose that AtlantIQ reflects a bit my way of being, which is that of a very active person.

Jacobsen: How can people become involved with or members of AtlantIQ?

Rescazzi: I’m not a fan of social media, but as they are a popular medium to communicate and share, there is an AtlantIQ Facebook group for those interested in the AtlantIQ high IQ Society.

Instead, for those wishing to become a member, there is detailed information for submissions on the dedicated page of the website: www.atlantiqsociety.com

Jacobsen: How has Graham Powell been an important support for the AtlantIQ community and development of the society?

Rescazzi: Graham Powell holds the position of Vice President and as such presents our quarterly magazine with me. Thanks to his linguistic knowledge he can amend articles written by
contributors. In fact, once I complete the graphics, layout and content, Graham revises the text and sometimes contributes his poems himself. In the past he has participated in meetings abroad with representatives of other high IQ societies as an exponent of AtlantIQ. Depending on the society’s activities, he can also hold the position of judge or consultant.

**Jacobsen:** Who are some of the more important figures within the high-IQ community or communities inasmuch as it or they exist? Why them?

**Rescazzi:** There are two main types of members in the high IQ community: those who like to brag and draw attention, publish their test results, and pose as philosophers. And there are the modest people, who listen instead of talk, whose name is not so well known, who use their skills to solve problems, put into practice brilliant ideas, and study to improve themselves, without making a lot of noise.

My admiration goes to the latter.

**Jacobsen:** Who do you consider some of the greatest geniuses in history?

**Rescazzi:** It is no coincidence that I have dedicated the AtlantIQ Society to Leonardo da Vinci. I consider him an incomparable polyhedral genius.

We know of Archimedes his numerous brilliant inventions, and although many of his writings have been lost, there is still enough material to consider him a true genius.

I would also like to say Socrates, but since he left nothing in writing, there is even the remote possibility that Socrates never even existed and that his words are to be attributed to others.

There is a cultural bias in Western culture and schoolbooks that universal men like Shen Kuo and other brilliant characters from distant cultures aren’t even named. Similarly to Leonardo, he mastered a wide range of different subjects, but 400 years earlier.

Finally, a modern day genius that I admire is Elon Musk. He certainly doesn’t hold the patent record – like the incredible Shunpei Yamazaki – but Musk has the rare gift of shaping the future and thinking so outside the box that it arouses bewilderment to people who believed they knew what was possible and what was not.

**Jacobsen:** Why are there so few women geniuses in the history of world who have been permitted to flourish?

**Rescazzi:** The answer partially lies in your question: “… who have been permitted to flourish.” The smaller build of the female gender together with a less aggressive soul has led to suppose in many societies that women should be kept in a condition of subjection, where their rights are permits. This has done nothing but keep many human communities of the Earth in a condition of backwardness and low dignity. Because it’s the way people treat others that shows how much people are worth. The evolution towards a society free from sexual prejudices is still in progress, and has not yet begun in many parts of the world.

**Jacobsen:** Why are there so few women who are in the high-IQ communities?

**Rescazzi:** There are two main reasons for the low number of women joining high-IQ societies.

The first is cultural. Statistically, gifted girls are less recognized than boys. A character factor also intervenes: females tend to doubt their potential more, with a more widespread Impostor Syndrome, while males are generally more inclined to overestimate themselves and flaunt their skills. Furthermore, the traditional division of duties prevents women from having free time to devote to themselves, due to occupations at home: it is worrying to note that there are no adhesions by women from the more traditionalist countries at all.

The other reason is that there is indeed a difference in the brains of men and women: the distribution of IQ in the male and female populations is different, with a greater variation in the male than in the female with the latter more concentrated in the average values. It means that among males there are both more subnormal and gifted individuals, while in females both the subnormal and the gifted are rarer (some links grouped in this article: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Variability_hypothesis#Modern_studies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Variability_hypothesis#Modern_studies))

**Jacobsen:** What can be done to create a respectful and positive space for women in the high-IQ communities?

**Rescazzi:** I think it is important to start with general education to respect others at school and in families, avoiding stereotypes and differences in education from early childhood. As long as there are things like silly pink toys for girls and interesting blue toys for boys – as is still the case even in the most advanced societies – we will not be able to have people who are truly free to be as they are and able to follow their aspirations. You may know that women from Mensa and other high IQ societies have created a separate social media group that includes both women and
those who recognize themselves as such: it happened because the large male majority in other high IQ groups more often makes these places a source of quarrels based on competition and vanity, while there is a lack of sensitivity to address certain issues, such as homosexuality, mental illness or bullying.

Obviously, this is a generalization, and there are also many talented men with mature and respectful behavior, but we know that even a few individuals in a group are enough to create toxic dynamics and an inhospitable environment for a certain type of people.

**Jacobsen:** Is it a similar set of issues for members of the LGBTI community within the high-IQ communities (similar to women)?

**Rescazzi:** I know of homophobic individuals in high IQ societies, and I believe that this, together with other manifestations of intolerance towards diversity, discredits the very value of the much inflated IQ measurement, which evidently does not take into account deficiencies in judgment and sensitivity. Everyone is welcome in the AtlantIQ Society, if it needs to be said.

**Jacobsen:** What are favourite hobbies?

**Rescazzi:** Good for you that you have specified “favorites”, narrowing the field a bit, because I cultivate a lot of hobbies, and I don’t know how much space I am given here. Among my favorites are astronomy and space missions, which I follow with such great diligence that in the end I have also infected my husband with this interest. I love all new technologies and I love to experiment with the 3D printing by creating a bit of everything, from Martian habitats for competitions to optical instruments and useful objects for those who need them, such as the face shields that I 3D printed for the healthcare workers during the pandemic. I am interested in robotics, and lately, in the branch of soft robotics. The mascot that appears at the bottom of the list of members on the website of the AtlantIQ charity, is called Verbo and is one of my robots. I like nutrition, herbalism, food history and cooking by inventing healthy desserts. I like to draw (2D and 3D), and manage the company’s Leonardo magazine in the graphic field, in the publication, in the contents I write and receive from members. I love to learn, invent and build. I love computer science, programming languages, collecting and restoring retro computers… I stop here.

**Jacobsen:** What’s your favourite colour?

**Rescazzi:** Purple. Besides being a beautiful color, it’s interesting from a physics point of view as no single frequency of electromagnetic radiation can create purple: there is no such thing as a purple light in the electromagnetic spectrum (not to be confused with violet). The purple pigment was also very valuable and rare in nature and has a very interesting history.

**Jacobsen:** What are your top 5 favourite books?

**Rescazzi:** It’s a difficult question because I’m an avid reader, so I’ve tried to limit the number to ten, but not without doing wrong to other titles that I love equally.

*Freedom from the Known* by Jiddu Krishnamurti.

*Ulysses’ Lies. The Adventure of Logic from Parmenides to Amartya Sen* by Piergiorgio Odifreddi

*Reality Is Not What It Seems: The Journey to Quantum Gravity* by Carlo Rovelli

*The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* by Gustave Le Bon

*Journey to the Center of the Earth* by Jules Verne

*The Caves of Steel* by Isaac Asimov

*The Art of Loving* by Erich Fromm.

*Kinds of Minds: Towards an Understanding of Consciousness* by Daniel C. Dennett

*The Philosophy of Moral Development* by Lawrence Kohlberg

*Meeting with Japan* by Fosco Maraini

**Jacobsen:** What explains the rankings or listings within the high-IQ societies? Why is this an endeavour to list the highest of the highest in this niche community?

**Rescazzi:** I’m sorry to be brutally honest, but those lists are nothing more than an expression of vanity. Some members literally pay to appear in “genius lists”, and like to show this IQ number of theirs as it corresponds to the amount of what they are worth, which in my opinion is counterproductive to their own value and dignity as a person, now reduced to a mere number. Yet, this number seems enough to make them self-proclaim geniuses.

It should be remembered that the IQ shown in many lists and societies is often based on online tests that may not be very accurate, or have even already been compromised by the presence of answers on the internet. In the best case, it represents the measure of a potential, leaving out things like critical thinking, creativity, self-perception, maturity, sense of reality, emotional balance and many other skills that could divide a person who simply scores high on a test from a properly intelligent person.
On the same wave, we’ve also seen the creation of high-IQ societies that ridiculously restricted entry to anyone but the founder, or a few others, just to point out that an online test had given him an incredibly high score. Unfortunately these monstrous scores, which if confirmed would overshadow those of Leonardo da Vinci and Albert Einstein put together, do not show correspondence with any achievements of the same level in life. To me, it doesn’t look much different from those superficial busty women who are all about their physical appearance and whose giant breasts are fake. Here, I said it. Now, if I become the most hated member of the high IQ community, it’s your fault, Scott …

Jacobsen: What is the importance of publications like those published by AtlantIQ, the Triple Nine Society, and others?

Rescazzi: I can answer for the AtlantIQ Society only: Leonardo magazine is a means for all AtlantIQ members to express themselves, to inform others and get informed, to get to know the Society and its members, to learn new things and stay updated. It is a free magazine that also includes many guest authors and can be read and downloaded for free by anyone.

Many thanks to Scott Jacobsen for this interview, who like a gentleman didn’t ask my age not even in dog years.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] President, AtlantIQ.

Full Issue Publication Date: September 1, 2020: https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/.

*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen


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Abstract

Richard May (“May-Tzu”/”MayTzu”/”Mayzi”) is a Member of the Mega Society based on a qualifying score on the Mega Test (before 1995) prior to the compromise of the Mega Test and Co-Editor of Noesis: The Journal of the Mega Society. In self-description, May states: “Not even forgotten in the cosmic microwave background (CMB), I’m an Amish yuppie, born near the rarified regions of Laputa, then and often, above suburban Boston. I’ve done occasional consulting and frequent Sisyphean shlepping. Kafka and Munch have been my therapists and allies. Occasionally I’ve strived to descend from the mists to attain the mythic orientation known as having one’s feet upon the Earth. An ailurophile and a cerebrotonic ectomorph, I write for beings which do not, and never will, exist — writings for no one. I’ve been awarded an M.A. degree, mirabile dictu, in the humanities/philosophy, and U.S. patent for a board game of possible interest to extraterrestrials. I’m a member of the Mega Society, the Omega Society and formerly of Mensa. I’m the founder of the Exa Society, the transfinite Aleph-3 Society and of the renowned Laputans Manqué. I’m a biographee in Who’s Who in the Brane World. My interests include the realization of the idea of humans as incomplete beings with the capacity to complete their own evolution by effecting a change in their being and consciousness. In a moment of presence to myself in inner silence, when I see Richard May’s non-being, ‘I’ am. You can meet me if you go to an empty room.” Some other resources include Stains Upon the Silence:
**something for no one, McGinnis Genealogy of Crown Point, New York: Hiram Porter McGinnis, Swines List, Solipsist Soliloquies, Board Game, Lulu blog, Memoir of a Non-Irish Non-Jew, and May-Tzu’s posterous.** He discusses: “Stains Upon the Silence: something for no one” (2011); the intended meaning of the title; MayTzu or May-Tzu; the cover; a cross-section with “philosophy, cosmology, poetry and humor”; an atheist; Jorge Luis Borges in The Library of Babel; transontological studies; the conservation of information; “two fundamental theorems of quantum mechanics”; information; and information, knowledge, and wisdom.

**Keywords:** information, knowledge, IQ, Mega Society, Richard May, Stains Upon the Silence, wisdom.


*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Okay, now, we come to the fun bits. The greatest hits of May-Tzu in three thematic parts based on three books while bound to one singular interview and segmented into parts. Your first book for analysis is entitled “Stains Upon the Silence: something for no one” (2011). Why this title?

Richard May[1],[2]*: I think the expression that “each word is a stain upon the silence” originated with Samuel Beckett, who may have implied that his words were less true and beautiful than silence. The silence of pure consciousness in the moment is suggested to and by me, but not necessarily meant by Beckett, analogous to sunyata, the Buddhistic void.

“— Something for no one” anticipates that the book is unlikely to immediately be made into a hit TV series or become a popular film. Only the subset of the general population with both fairly high cognitive ability and a degree of “right-brainedness” and/or appreciation of artistic creativity are likely to value the work. These two factors probably have a correlation of about zero (0). So this is not a large potential audience.

Jacobsen: What is the intended meaning of the title?

May: What I’ve said above.

Jacobsen: Is it MayTzu or May-Tzu?

May: Google says it’s either. But May-Tzu is Wade-Giles. Today May-Tzu should apparently be written Mayzi, as Lao-Tzu is Laozi. The former is Wade-Giles, the latter pinyin.

Jacobsen: Who designed the cover?

May: The image was my idea. Someone who knew how to edit files, a digital artist of sorts, brought it into existence.

Jacobsen: Why make a cross-section with “philosophy, cosmology, poetry and humor” in it?

May: Why not? The universe is a Rorschach inkblot interpreted by human intelligence as a geometric theorem and also a geometric theorem interpreted by human intelligence as a Rorschach inkblot. “A complete and perfect philosophical work could be written consisting entirely of jokes” — Ludwig Wittgenstein

Jacobsen: Are you an atheist? Rather, how are you defining the “-theist” god so as to provide an “a-”?  

May: I find the existence of Zeus somewhat improbable. Was the Buddha an atheist? Was Patanjali an atheist? Is advaita Vedanta atheism? Is the philosophy perennis atheism? Atheists seemed to be mostly focused on the personality of the Adorable Yahweh, and on the exoteric level of the Abrahamic religions. As Gurdjieff, among others, recognized there are different levels of religions, e.g. exoteric and esoteric, and different levels of humans beings.

Remember May-Tzu’s wager: “It is extremely improbable that God exists. But it is certain that I don’t exist. Therefore, the existence of God is a much better bet.”

Jacobsen: You quote Jorge Luis Borges in The Library of Babel on page 3, which says, “I know of an uncouth region whose librarians repudiate the vain and superstitious custom of finding a meaning in books and equate it with that of finding a meaning in dreams or in the chaotic lines of one’s palm … . . . . the books signify nothing in themselves. This dictum, we shall see, is not entirely fallacious.” Why quote him in this book? Why do books “signify nothing” in and of themselves?

May: Borges’ mind resonates with me; Borges is hilarious. But he attributes the view to the librarians of an *uncouth* region. If life, itself, is “full of sound and fury, signifying nothing,” then what of the literature of those who live it?
Jacobsen: What would be “transontological studies”?  

May: Studies across different levels of Being, a bit beyond transgender. Maybe academic pretense also.

Jacobsen: If we take the musing in the “Preface” on the conservation of information, how might this effect considerations about human mentation and computational capacities of digital computers?  

May: Maybe everything and every thing is immortal as information. Then all sorts of Immortal Dreck would exist, floating throughout space-time everlasting as information, perhaps including human personalities.

I don’t understand how it would affect the computational capacities of digital computers. But the conservation of information may be beyond my pay grade or even the pay grade of Homo sapiens, as presently evolved.

Jacobsen: Do these “two fundamental theorems of quantum mechanics” imply a link to the ‘fundamentals’ or base of the dynamic construct called the universe and that which we – recently, mind us – deemed “information” for the proposed conservation of information if tying this knot to G.I. Gurdjieff who “maintained that all knowledge was material”?  

May: I don’t understand the question.

Jacobsen: Following from the previous question, you focused on the contextualizations of information with “knowledge” and “wisdom.” In this framework, we come to the idea of the triplet linkage between information, knowledge, and wisdom. Human operators make distinctions between these. Why would the universe make such a distinction? This seems like an jump-gap with hidden premises, potentially needing filling for more complete consideration.

May: I think, as Sir Fred Hoyle suggested, that our brains, and presumably brains in general, including exo-brains and AI, follow the logic of the universe, not vice versa. The distinctions between information, knowledge and wisdom may be natural language attempts to designate an information hierarchy of increasing levels of generality and utility, both objectively (isomorphic to ‘external’ reality and intersubjectively testable) and subjectively (isomorphic to ‘internal’ reality). — Sometimes questions have hidden premises too.

Jacobsen: Following from the previous question, we have the idea of the conservation of information and “memories,” human remembrances, as incorporative of information. Why would the universe constitutionally organize the information on the large scale akin to the manner of the human mind, so as to make the connection between human memories as a form of information? This seems similar to the dilemma with information, knowledge, and wisdom, stated in the context before.

May: I continue to think, as Sir Fred Hoyle suggested, that our brains, and presumably brains in general, including exo-brains and AI, follow the logic of the universe, not vice versa. The distinctions between information, knowledge and wisdom may be natural language attempts to designate an information hierarchy of increasing levels of generality and utility, both objectively (isomorphic to ‘external’ reality and intersubjectively testable) and subjectively (isomorphic to ‘internal’ reality).

Appendix I: Footnotes


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Abstract

Beatrice Rescazzi is the President of the AtlantIQ Society. She discusses: general internal dynamics of the AtlantIQ Society; the “most striking and distinctive thing about high IQ groups of women”; the listed tests; admission criteria; FAQs section; and membership.

Keywords: AtlantIQ, Beatrice Rescazzi, membership, qualifications, tests.

Conversation with Beatrice Rescazzi on Membership and Qualifications: President, AtlantIQ Society (2)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Let’s get into some of the general internal dynamics of AtlantIQ Society now, what is the current headcount of the membership? What are some general indications as to the demographics of the community in AtlantIQ Society? How does this current membership size and demographic compare to the beginnings, the early days, of AtlantIQ Society? What were some of the earliest productions of the community out of AtlantIQ?

Beatrice Rescazzi[1],[2]*: There are 210 members at the moment. I collected some stats in 2011 about their IQ and the language spoken by the members. The magazine was born a few months after the foundation of the society itself, which is now more than 10 years ago. Along with that, we created an affiliation with UNICEF on behalf of the entire society, and the members sent about 500 dollars to UNICEF for their humanitarian projects.
Jacobsen: What are some amusing facts women have in the high-IQ communities discuss amongst themselves about the general community, even about some of the controversies and personality feuds involving mostly the men?

Rescazzi: The most striking and distinctive thing about high IQ groups of women is that no one ever talks about their IQ, IQ tests, scores and comparisons with others. The main topic is of a political nature, followed by social issues, social justice, ethics, equality, books, art, space launches, artificial intelligence and more. I can’t think of any particular joke about the men in the group, but sometimes funny memes with male / female stereotypes are posted.

Jacobsen: You have a list of the admission criteria, as follows:

Accepted IQ tests:

- **EMC-30R** (raw score=10)
- **HART-26** (raw score=8)
- **MRI-30R** (raw score=14)
- **Tractatus Logicus 37** (raw score=10)
- **Logima Strictica 36** (raw score=8)
- **Esoterica** (raw score=6)
- **LSHR** (raw score=6)
- **LSHR Light** (raw score=12)
- **Inplex** (raw score=13)
- **Triplex** (raw score=6)
- **Verba 66** (raw score=22)
- **DIGIT** (raw score=18)
- **SLSE 48** (raw score=6)
- **TetraStIQ Light** (raw score=15)
- **Cooijmans intelligence Test** (raw score=23)

Other IQ tests can be considered and accepted, in any case, acceptance is always at the will of either the President and/or the Officers.

(AtlantIQ Society, 2019a)

Why these tests? With the listed tests by Alexi Edin (e.g., the 2016 Extreme Matrix Challenge – 30: Revised, the 2017 High Abstract Reasoning Trial – 26, the 2017 Matrix Reasoning Index – 30: Revised, and the 2017 Digits Investigate General Intelligence Trial), Christopher Collin (e.g., the 2008 Tractatus Logicus 37), Robert Lato (e.g., the 1999 Logima Strictica 36), Mislav Predavec (e.g., the 2007 Esoterica and the 2008 Verba 66), Ivan Ivec (e.g., the LSHR, the LSHR Light, Inplex, and Triplex), Jonathan Wai (e.g., the 2003 Strict Logic Spatial Examination 48), Gabriel Garofalo (e.g., the TetraStIQ Light), and Paul Cooijmans (e.g., the 2009 Cooijmans Intelligence Test – Form 3E), why these test authors? Following from the last question, what made these particular authors’ tests, or the tests listed of these test creators, appealing and worthy of admission criteria stature?

Rescazzi: AtlantIQ tests are selected based on reliability criteria, in comparison to average scores of other tests, based on the number of people who have taken the test, based on the norming phase and if the test has been compromized by online answers. In the Admission & Info page of the AtlantIQ website it is written that “Other IQ tests can be considered and accepted.” This includes a multitude of other tests, ranging from classic ones to newer ones that are considered when evaluating the submission, taking into consideration the other elements necessary for membership.

Some tests, which I call “slot-machine” type tests, are usually not accepted, because I consider them unethical: in fact they exploit people’s low self-esteem to push them to spend money and repeat the tests indefinitely until they reach the highest possible score. Moreover, these tests are automatically corrected by a program, and therefore have no reason to take a lot of money from the testee people with each new attempt.

I am embittered by the maniacal fixation for the IQ score in this environment: where are the innovative ideas, the depth of thoughts, the superior global vision that must also apply to the people themselves? Is there only IQ in people, or is it the yardstick that measures their whole value? No. And intelligence certainly cannot just be enclosed in a fallacious number eradicated from what should be a full assessment of the potential performed by a psychometrist psychologist. Of course, that score measures a potential, but we must not compare it to intelligence itself or anything more important than what it represents.

Jacobsen: Let’s say someone qualifies, what does membership confer upon, or get, the new member into AtlantIQ Society?

Rescazzi: When a person is accepted as a member of AtlantIQ, he/she becomes a life member and has access to a reserved area of the site where he/she has access to the private group, the library, can take part in challenges, and can take decisions on the society itself by means of questionnaires.

References


Appendix I: Footnotes


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Conversation with Benjamin Li on High-IQ, the Sciences, Vancouver, and The University of British Columbia: Member, International Society for Philosophical Enquiry (ISPE) (2)

Abstract

Benjamin Li is a student of Mathematics, Statistics, and Philosophy at the University of British Columbia. He discusses: The University of British Columbia; some of the benefits of the higher IQ in personal life; some of the benefits of the higher IQ in professional life; statistics and mathematics; the local Vancouver culture; the campus culture; the degree in mathematics and statistics; the family background in high-level academics; this career in the sciences; and research question.

Keywords: Benjamin Li, campus culture, high-IQ, IQ, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: So, you’re studying at The University of British Columbia. You’re scoring high on alternative tests. You’re new to the community. What are some of the insights garnered through some of the mathematics and statistics education at The University of British Columbia for you?

Benjamin Li: I learn most things on my own time, rather than relying on my education. Through my general education, I was quite pleased with my philosophy professor, and I even had a 3-hour conversation with him through office hours one time. He was knowledgeable on many subjects and had even let me borrow a few scholarly books and articles. I usually find it challenging to approach...
professors, which was the first time, but I found it quite a fantastic experience. I think some insights gained through my education thus far are how to encourage in-depth conversations about thought-provoking topics, listen carefully, consider other viewpoints, and learn voraciously. Even to hear all types of voices, such as those from peer-reviewed journal articles (holds most weight), professors, books, blogs, the internet, the general public, etc. Thanks to my current insights garnered, I think academia is a viable option for me to pursue in the future.

**Jacobsen: What do you feel has been some of the benefits of the higher IQ in personal life?**

**Li:** One benefit is self-confidence. It is important to feel satisfied in one’s ability to live with the mindset that one can continue to grow, despite any setback. Of course, one should not go around braging about one’s intelligence, as that will not yield any benefits socially. Even if you knew your I.Q. was much higher than someone else’s, it is not polite to show any signs of a superiority complex. Confidence and arrogance, while similar, are not the same. I think when being confident, you don’t view others as a threat, and instead, you can focus on using one’s higher I.Q. to try to benefit others. Arrogance points to low self-esteem because you feel threatened by other people and believe you must defend yourself. Confident people don’t have to repeatedly rub their achievements in people’s faces because they know their value. Knowing I have a high I.Q. made me recognize that I can probably succeed in a lot of things if the mindset and personality are at an appropriate level. Still, I should also be making positive contributions to other people’s lives at the same time.

**Jacobsen: What do you feel has been some of the benefits of the higher IQ in professional life?**

**Li:** Given that IQ tests, like standardized tests, measure fundamental life skills, there are many benefits. My intelligence has helped me out tremendously, despite figuring things out relatively late in my life. It has helped me thrive in a STEM field at a reasonably elite University (top 40) despite a very poor work ethic since high school. An exceptionally high IQ will likely help me comprehend difficult material, perform complex actions, or learn the intricate skills necessary for demanding tasks. Examples of cognitively demanding activities include STEM careers, mental sports (Chess, eSports, mental Olympians), music composition, and the like. The correlation between IQ and occupational success is lower in occupations that are less demanding and more repetitive. Sometimes, high IQ individuals will perform exceptionally poorly on tasks that correlate weakly with general intelligence.

**Jacobsen:** Why did you decide to pursue statistics and mathematics?

**Li:** Going into university, I wasn’t so sure what I’d like because I never took academics seriously and had some of the poorest work ethic imaginable. I still did well in mathematics-based courses because they seemed to come naturally, perhaps because my culture had also prepared me more in mathematics. I believe aptitudes, interests, culture, and career prospects played decisive roles. My mathematical skills are currently higher than my verbal skills, so a STEM field made sense. On standardized tests, I can solve math problems considerably faster than verbal problems. However, my verbal reasoning skills have risen exceptionally quickly since university had begun. Culture has played a profound role because, like most immigrant parents (Chinese and Indian I can speak about), it does not look terrific if one decides to study a field that doesn’t lead to a secure job. Most try to look down on the arts and humanities as entirely useless. If I wasn’t worried about money, I would probably just major in Philosophy or Psychology and pursue my passions. It’s a bit late for that now since I took too many courses related to mathematics and statistics and performed well, so it would be a waste to turn away from it. I decided that I should probably try to obtain a double major in Statistics or Mathematics alongside Philosophy. I decided this was perhaps the best way to have a balance. It is hard to be very proficient in both domains, but someone of my caliber of intelligence should tackle the challenge.

Parents and peers have influenced me. I was encouraged to major in Computer Science by parents and pursue either Law or Medicine by peers. I was stuck deciding what type of career to choose, but I decided on these three fields at the start of university because I wanted to do what my friends did. However, my inner urge was telling myself to pursue the most important questions of our time. I spent more time learning about Philosophy, Psychology, and various other fields than my education, which has negatively impacted my academic performance. I made virtually my whole life based on my deepest interests instead of focusing solely on my STEM education. I don’t regret anything since it was what my inner drives told me I ought to do, rather than what my parents or peers would expect me to do instead. I hope to graduate with reasonable skills in statistics and mathematics to gain a job in case I
These Li: mathematics Jacobsen: this. Regardless, whereas influences, I Asian’s, interna have been conducive to the flourishing of high-IQ types? Jacobsen: Do you find the local Vancouver culture Jacobsen: How is the campus culture at The Jacobsen: When you graduate with the degree in Jacobsen: If you pursue this career in the sciences, what sciences will most interest you? Why those?
brightest in the broad field of psychology, and many individuals come from a variety of areas aside from psychology. Many intelligence researchers are self-taught statisticians. It is also a secret, but many intelligence researchers were once members of the most elite IQ societies (above Mensa with strict requirements) such as the Triple Nine Society (TNS), International Society for Philosophical Enquiry (ISPE), and the Prometheus society.

Intelligence is a bit of a taboo subject, and the topic is not given the undivided attention in university as it deserves. Most of the general public is not well educated on this subject, so I believe I can help fill in those gaps in all those myths that pervade our culture. It also seems like I may be destined to be the one to do this. I have had amazing conversations with the general public who are entirely clueless, and many times people tell me how grateful they are for sharing. They find the things I have to say to be very interesting, but they may not have the same level of intellectual curiosity I do.

My philosophical interests are related to the philosophy of science, philosophy of biology, philosophy of race, philosophy of genius, epistemology, and rationality.

To briefly discuss genius once again, some philosophers touch on this subject. Genius is vital to me because I realized that there is a high probability that I could be a genius. I have always had trouble understanding myself, but somehow this one label related to me more than anything else. Giftedness and Prodigiousness also influenced me and are likely what I am interested in as well.

I have not found much interest in mathematics or statistics research, but the skills acquired from my education will be invaluable to a career in research.

**Jacobsen: What research question would most interest you?**

**Li:** The research question that has interested me ever since I graduated high school was the controversial subject about the causes of group differences in IQ test scores within and between nations.

I want to pursue something useful to society and is complicated enough to feel intellectually satisfied. I am not here to solve social problems, but the truth may likely assist that indirectly. Finding all the environmental causes of group differences is an abstract problem.

The race and IQ subject has been in my head for over a year now, and it is a fascinating debate, despite its turbulent history. Intelligence isn’t taught seriously in university because different ethnic groups score differently, on average, on IQ tests. Solving this problem entirely would likely put an end to the taboo.

There are many different perspectives on this taboo subject, but it is my best opinion that the totality of evidence points to a solely environmental cause for group differences.

It just seems like I should be the one to solve this problem since I have developed the skills to rationally and honestly solve this problem, without racism/prejudice or political/personal bias. James Flynn was one of my favorite academics, and he had unfortunately passed away recently. It seems like the individual most likely to succeed him may very possibly be me. I understand his views the most and have conversed with him as well. His interest in race and IQ was due to his political opinions (he has publicly stated). However, he has been sincere and respectable, in addition to having profoundly contributed to the subject of intelligence.

Many people who believe there may be some genetic basis for the gaps (yet they can’t provide a percentage), but who are also afraid of how the research will be used, will likely ask the questions “Give me one reason this research benefits the world” or “What’s the point?” Some will jump into flames and tell me whatever the answer may be; the consequences are too destructive. This implies that they believe in what they do not want. These people wish this subject to somehow be ignored for thousands of years. This is a fallacy. These individuals never provide any evidence for their assertions and always rely on fallacious arguments. The statement that IQ is mostly based on genetics is entirely worthless. Any reasonable person should not be afraid of tackling this problem honestly. These people cannot see that their opinions are not based on rational scientific reasoning. I see the differences as likely to be minor and of unknown direction.

I am not very political, but I have given enough thought to why solving this problem will benefit the world. Aside from ending the taboo on IQ, I have realized that there is no rational reason to delay the inevitable. The causes of group differences are of crucial scientific interest, and if done fairly and honestly, can benefit the world. Many people tell me that the differences cannot be entirely environmental and say that I should ignore this subject altogether. These individuals never provide any evidence for their assertions and, when confronted, merely say that genetics influence intelligence, and thus group average differences must have some genetic component. This statement is ignorant and irrelevant to the subject at hand. Even if this is true, it is better to find all the environmental factors that handicap
specific groups in society rather than ignore them. With that said, any argument that relies on trying to delay the inevitable can be very easily refuted. An appeal to consequences is just another fallacy I have no time for.

It is better for the answer to come out as soon as possible. I can not wait 500 years for this question to be settled because I will not be alive. Is it better for the truth to be known now, in 100 years, 500 years, or in 50,000 years? Any honest and reasonable person will immediately answer now. Anyone who says that we should never look for the truth exposes themselves as not believing that significant environmental factors influence these outcomes. If we never study the subject honestly, how can we find the environmental factors that can help certain groups advance in society? Also, note that no one will say any of these things in public, but only privately express their concerns. The wide range of viewpoints from the general public needs unpacking, and understanding the social experiences of different ethnic groups requires a candid examination. After this is settled, the IQ taboo should disappear. If we can not talk about this, then society has failed. No knowledge is dangerous by itself, only how we use it.

If we can give everyone a decent life, we wouldn’t need to worry about superficial things like race or IQ. At the moment, however, these things are not insignificant because they impact outcomes and overall life experience. If we ever reach that point for everyone in the world, where we wouldn’t need to care too much about IQ or race, life will be more pleasant for everyone worldwide. When I look at people, I try not to see color. I understand individuals for who they are. If everyone can live a satisfactory life, maybe if we glanced at one another, perhaps we would still detect color, but hopefully, we will notice something else standing behind it.

Appendix I: Footnotes


Conversation with Dr. Giuseppe Corrente on the Mafia and the Vatican: Computer Science Teacher, Torino University (8)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen
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Abstract

Dr. Giuseppe Corrente is a Computer Science teacher at Torino University. He earned a Ph.D. in Science and High Technology – Computer Science in 2013 at Torino University. He has contributed to the World Intelligence Network’s publication Phenomenon. He discusses: the Mafia and the Vatican; the origin of the mafia in Italy; mobbing-bossing; the Mafia offshoots; the great companies; the Mafia attractive to some Italians; the benefits of joining the Mafia; southern Italy; and conclusion.

Keywords: Giuseppe Corrente, Italy, Mafia, Vatican.

Conversation with Dr. Giuseppe Corrente on the Mafia and the Vatican: Computer Science Teacher, Torino University (8)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Sir, shall we finish? Italy is known for two big organizations: the Mafia and the Vatican. Although, the Vatican appears to have its own autonomous region as recognized by the United Nations with the Holy See. What is the origin of the Roman Catholic Church and the Vatican in Italy?

Dr. Giuseppe Corrente[1],[2]*: The Vatican is a state inside a state, a small state in Rome. The fact that is in Italy exercises enormous power in education, politics, government, moral in the course of past decades and in the present. The Roman Catholic Church history is fused with that of the whole Occident since the origin.

Jacobsen: What is the origin of the mafia in Italy?

Corrente: The origin of the mafia is determined by Sicilian way to dominate poor agricultural masses since 1800. Now it is diffused in all the world, but has its roots in southern Italy. It is also a way of thinking diffused in the population and not only a criminal organization.

Jacobsen: What in the heck is mobbing-bossing?

Corrente: If a hierarchical superior wants take over you, not only as an employee but in your whole life, this is bossing. It is also known as vertical mobbing.

Jacobsen: What are the Mafia offshoots in institutions?

Corrente: In many ways, but the one that mostly I have noticed is an indirect one: in the way of thinking, in the style of managing. The reflection of the Mafia in companies and institutions in this sense is above all the bossing as the main style of personnel management.

Jacobsen: What are the great companies in Italy?

Corrente: Multinationals, or their local branch, sited mainly in Northern Italy.

Jacobsen: What makes the Mafia attractive to some Italians?

Corrente: Unemployment. If Southern Italy is seen only as a way to take funding by companies and is
not seen or cured by the Institutions, then the Mafia is a consequence.

Jacobsen: What are some of the benefits of joining the Mafia? What are the obvious downsides of joining the Mafia?

Corrente: Mirage of many, many money. The risk of life and to become a Mafia slave.

Jacobsen: What makes southern Italy a huge for great companies?

Corrente: In the past for the possibility of funding and the lack of control of their use. I hope this is not true for the present, but I am not sure.

Jacobsen: Any final feelings or thoughts in conclusion based on the series of interviews?

Corrente: I am very grateful for the opportunity to tell some parts of my life and of my ideas.

Jacobsen: Thank you for the opportunity and your time, Giuseppe.

Appendix I: Footnotes


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Conversation with Dr. Heinrich Siemens on 195 IQ (S.D. 15), CIT5, Cooijmans, Conscientiousness, Mennonites, Plautdietsch, God, the Three Sonnets Test, and Tweeback Verlag: Linguist (2)

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Abstract

Heinrich Siemens was born as a member of a Low German community in Latvia, or the former Soviet Union. His family spoke Plautdietsch and read the Luther Bible in High German. He has performed very well on HRIQ tests of Ronald K. Hoeflin, Paul Cooijmans, Jonathan Wai, Theodosis Prousalis, and others. Some results have been above 5 sigma or 5 standard deviations. He developed the Three Sonnets Test (www.tweeback.com/hriq/Three-Sonnets.pdf). A lot of his life resolves around Plautdietsch language. He is the president of the international association of speakers of the language. He founded a publishing house devoted to this language: www.tweeback.com. Siemens enjoys the philosophy of Wittgenstein in particular and the philosophy of language in general. He has a film interest in directors including Bergman, Kubrick, Melville, Tarkovsky, Tarr, von Trier. If in Plautdietsch, he enjoys films by Alexandra Kulak & Ruslan Fedotov, Carlos Reygadas, Nora Fingscheidt, and others. He discusses: 195 S.D. 15 on the Cooijmans Intelligence Test 5 or the CIT5; the feeling when the score came back from Cooijmans; thoughts on the directories, rankings, and listings available; the length of time one should take on an alternative test; pre-Soviet and post-Soviet experience of the “Low German community”; life until age 11; life as an adolescent; knowing one’s “limits” a sign of both intelligence and conscientiousness; Mennonites baptize only adults; the main contribution to Germanic life and work via the Plautdietsch speaking people and the Mennonites; the Soviet Union: pacifism as crucial for the Mennonites; religion; individual autonomy in the selection of religion; being against baptism; belonging to the “cultural community of Mennonites, but not to a congregation”; life “without God”; the trajectory of the “careful consideration” about God; the ‘final nails’; the Bible “misused”; freedom of religion; the things lost in non-intergenerational homes; the reason for this becoming a hobby at age 45; the Three Sonnets test; the demographics of the test-takers; finding out about giftedness later in life in the international high-range community; the leap from the previous “highest score” on “the verbal section of the Marathon Test with IQ 180 S.D. 15” to the “195 S.D. 15 on the Cooijmans
Intelligence Test 5 or the CIT5”; marathon test-takers; individuals taking 5, 10, 20, 50, or more high-range tests; and Tweeback Verlag.

Keywords: 195, CIT5, Cooijmans, conscientiousness, God, Heinrich Siemens, Mennonites, Plautdietsch, Tweeback Verlag.

Conversation with Dr. Heinrich Siemens on 195 IQ (S.D. 15), CIT5, Cooijmans, Conscientiousness, Mennonites, Plautdietsch, God, the Three Sonsnet Test, and Tweeback Verlag: Linguist (2)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Some news since the previous coverage. As noted in the prior interview, on the legendary Titan Test, you scored 45/48. Furthermore, you have “performed very well on HRIQ tests of Ronald K. Hoeflin, Paul Cooijmans, Jonathan Wai, Theodosis Prousalis, and others” with “some results... above 5 sigma or 5 standard deviations.” With the recent news, as stated on the World Genius Directory [Ed. Ranking], you scored 195 S.D. 15 on the Cooijmans Intelligence Test 5 or the CIT5, which corresponds to a score of 28 out of 40. A cognitive rarity of 1 in 8,299,126,114 based on the preliminary (September 2020) norms statistics on the CIT5. Any early feelings on the achievement?

Dr. Heinrich Siemens[1],[2]*: It feels great. To be honest, I do not believe in statistics in these high ranges. What does it mean that I have outscored 8,299,126,113 of the adult population, when there are only 7,800,000,000 people living on earth, including many non-adults? The problem is not the lack of data, but the fact that a priori there is not enough data to make significant statements. But even if Paul should change the norm, the raw score of 28/40 on an extremely hard test and the membership in the Giga society will remain and I am proud of that.

Jacobsen: What was the feeling when the score came back from Cooijmans, the “psychometitor,” to you?

Siemens: It was just like when Ron Hoeflin told me that I was accepted into the Mega society. Sometimes, you have a wish and you do not really believe that it could come true. And then it does happen, and you are happy.

Jacobsen: Any thoughts on the directories, rankings, and listings available when they require some form of rigorosity in validation of the scores on good tests from reliable and trustworthy alternative test constructors? All “directories, rankings, and listings,” as a side note, in presentation and tacit intent appear far more as rankings and, thus, the titles of directory, listing, or ranking, should collapse into “ranking,” in personal opinion. Unless, some other explicit differentiation of intent tied to alternative presentation structure.

Siemens: Do we need such rankings? Why do we have world championships in chess or in sports? Why Olympic Games? It is in the nature of mankind to compete with others. But animals can also jump and run. If cognitive abilities are the outstanding feature of human beings, then this competition is much more important than it is in sports. But then it should also be fair. One of the biggest problems of the HRIQ community is that the norms of the tests are so different. Every test maker works with his own currency for the determination of the IQ value and in the end (in all of these rankings and listings) we behave as if 150 euros = 150 dollars = 150 rubles. There should be a procedure to determine the norms of tests in a uniform way. There are now huge amounts of data from Paul Cooijmans, Theodosis Prousalis, Jason Betts, Domagoj Kuttle, and, perhaps, a few others. One could compare all tests of different test makers with more than (let us say) 20 or 30 submissions. I am sure many test takers have taken tests by different test makers. Based on this, it should be possible to adjust the norms, so that in the end it is equally difficult or easy to get a certain IQ certified for each test. If someone creates a new test, a norm should only be published as soon as a minimum number of test takers, whose IQ is already confirmed by other tests, have submitted their answers. Then rankings and listings would be much more significant than they are at present.

Jacobsen: How long should one take on an alternative test to score as well as innate intelligence provides them rather than underestimating intelligence for them?

Siemens: I am sometimes asked how much time I needed for a specific test. This is a difficult question. I started dealing with CIT5 years ago when it was published. Then other things came up and I forgot about it. Now I have dusted off my old pages because I remembered that this year the contest ends. I changed some answers, added some others. I usually try to think of a difficult question in the evening before I go to sleep. Then I can use the night because the brain continues to think about it while I sleep.
Sometimes I wake up in the morning and see the solution light up like a revelation. Probably everyone has their own way of solving IQ tests, but if someone is still looking for a personal approach, you can try my method.

Jacobsen: What encapsulates this pre-Soviet and post-Soviet experience of the “Low German community” experience?

Siemens: In the Soviet Union, the Plautdietsch people lived in more or less isolated settlements, so that life in the family, but also on the street and sometimes even at work, largely took place in Plautdietsch. The Luther Bible was read in High German. Russian, the lingua franca of the Soviet Union, was spoken with other nationalities. In some republics, the national language was also spoken, in my case Latvian. People lived multilingually. Every language had its domain. We still have this situation in the isolated Latin American Plautdietsch settlements, where the number of speakers is increasing rapidly. But in Germany, where most of the Plautdietsch people emigrated after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the language is highly endangered, similar to Canada and the US after World War II.

Jacobsen: What was life like until age 11 as a child?

Siemens: We lived in a small town in Latvia, almost rural. (Of course, there was no free Latvia at that time, but my birthplace Sigulda is in Latvia nowadays). We had a big garden, chickens and every year a pig. As children we played outside a lot. We had books, but no mass media. We lived in a multigenerational household with my grandmothers. The grandfathers had starved to death in Stalin’s Gulag. My parents both grew up without a father.

Jacobsen: At and after age 11, what was life as an adolescent for you?

Siemens: I lived a rather lonely life. I never had close friends. I lived in a world of books and imagination. In Germany we have a special school system, which is not often found in the world. At the age of 10, the children are divided into different types of schools. The main problem is that this division depends much more on the social background of the parents than on the cognitive abilities of the child. For example, there is the so-called Gymnasium for the children of academics (the word has a completely different meaning in German than the word “gym” in English, and both no longer have anything to do with the original meaning in Greek because you don’t walk around naked in either one); at the other end of the spectrum, there is the so-called Hauptschule for the children of socially disadvantaged parents and children with a migration background. This is the official term in a country where there is officially no discrimination, but children born in Germany are not simply German if they have a grandmother born in Anatolia or Siberia. Well, in my case, it was even migration foreground; and so, I attended the Hauptschule. But fortunately, the system is not completely impermeable, so I went to the Gymnasium later. I then became a Diploma Mathematician (a degree which is no longer in use, comparable to a Master of Arts) and to complete the Septem Artes and complement the quadrivium in the trivial direction, I changed the faculty and wrote my Ph.D. thesis in linguistics.

Jacobsen: Is knowing one’s “limits” a sign of both intelligence and conscientiousness?

Siemens: The concept of limit involves the idea that there are two sides to it. An intelligent person is characterized by the fact that s/he finds the other side of the limits more interesting and challenging than her/his own side. Limits are there to be crossed. And consciousness is created by not only crossing borders, but by making this process itself the object of reflection. Noblesse oblige, especially cognitive noblesse. Therefore, intelligence is worthless if it is not accompanied by conscientiousness.

Jacobsen: Why do Mennonites baptize only adults – not to individuals considering from the outside, but the rationale from individual believers who practice & believe in a proper way? As the Dutch were German, and thus amount to a branch of more ancient German peoples, as a German ethnic group, where I live, Dutch Christian farmers came to Canada and settled the land there. I live in British Columbia, Canada. In addition, a large contingent of this “Bible Belt” of Canada or Langley consider themselves Mennonites, interesting coincidence for the conversation today, as they exist in every aspect of life for me. Through various town and Township of Langley positions, I remain in contact with the culture and the peoples, aware, as I harbour significant Dutch, Germanic in other words, heritage too.

Siemens: Yeah, that’s what can happen, you look for someone for an interview on the other side of the world and end up with a Mennonite just like at home in your local supermarket or pub. I consider it one of the greatest achievements of the Baptizers movement of the 16th century that it was left to each person to decide whether to participate in
a rite of initiation into a religion, so I reject the baptism (as well as circumcision, sorry to my Muslim and Jewish friends) of children. There is an age of consent in every country in the world. It should also protect the victims from religious attacks by adults. By the way, I also reject the term Anabaptist used in English. It was invented by the Catholic Church and was used as an excuse to burn or drown the Baptizers. They only baptize once, and that is when they are adults, so there is definitely no re-baptism or ana-baptism. Even with the Westphalian Peace, 120 years after the Baptizers movement, the principle of Cuius regio eius religio still applied. It was not until the Age of Enlightenment that the right to an individual confession of faith (or non-faith) was generally recognized. The Baptizers had already advocated for this principle centuries earlier.

Jacobsen: What seems like the main contribution to Germanic life and work via the Plautdietsch speaking people and the Mennonites too?

Siemens: The most important contributions of Mennonites to world cultural heritage are 1. the individual confession of faith in the 16th century, 2. the invention of the cable car by the Gdansk Mennonite Adam Wiebe in the 17th century, 3. the first civilian alternative service for conscientious objectors in 19th century Russia, and 4. the most famous Plautdietsch family was invented in the 20th century by the Mennonite Matt Groening: the Simpsons.

Jacobsen: How did the Soviet Union change the nature of the culture of the peoples for you?

Siemens: The early Christians lived in communist communities. Part of the Baptizers movement, the Hutterites, have lived in communist communities for 500 years. In the principle “Everybody gives what he can, everybody gets what he needs” and with a classless society in which Mammon does not rule, the ideal of the Soviet Union is in essence hardly different from Christian utopias. It is a pity that such ideas have been corrupted as a form of government for a long time by the Soviet rulers, especially by Stalin’s terror.

Jacobsen: What makes “pacifism... crucial for Mennonites” too?

Siemens: The early Baptizers and thus also the Mennonites saw the Sermon on the Mount, and pacifism as its central component, as the basic law of human coexistence. To uphold this principle, they emigrated again and again to new countries and continents, often to areas that had been considered uninhabitable until then, such as the Paraguayan Chaco.

Jacobsen: Also, theological-definitional question, what is religion? Then, what is religion, to you?

Siemens: Individual religion probably arose from the need to explain the cause of effects when no natural causes could be found and therefore supernatural ones were considered. Organized religion arose as some people claimed to have preferential access to the Deity. They demanded submission from the believers and in return offered answers to difficult questions and, above all, a meaning to life. I personally refuse submission to authority and to difficult questions I prefer to seek the answers myself. In most cases, the questions about the meaning of life are much more exciting than the proposed answers, and philosophical books can be much more helpful than religious dogmas. Since atheism is also a belief, I would probably consider myself an agnostic, but such a label is not important for me.

Jacobsen: Why is individual autonomy in the selection of religion important to you?

Siemens: When it comes to the most important questions in life, everyone should have the right to seek their own answers. That is my view of humanity.

Jacobsen: Why choose “against being baptized”?

Siemens: In the Soviet Union, the practice of religion was persecuted. If the Soviet Union still existed in its former form, and if I still lived there, I would probably have been baptized and, maybe, even become a Mennonite preacher, as my parents always wanted me to be and, perhaps, still do. Anything else would have been a sign of cowardice and betrayal. But I am glad that it has come to this. I am free to choose. By refusing baptism, I can show that I have become alienated from the faith in a supernatural being.

Jacobsen: Why “belong to the cultural community of Mennonites, but not to a congregation”?

Siemens: Many Mennonites have lost their faith, often out of disappointment with the way the congregation dealt with them when they were unwilling to submit to religious authorities with regard to life-style, sexuality, etc. They still think of themselves as Mennonites, even if some believers see it differently. In order to save them for the cultural community, we have founded an international association (Plautdietsch-Freunde e. V.), in which all who feel that they belong to the cultural community of Mennonites (defined by the common language) can meet. Perhaps half of our members are in Mennonite (or other) congregations, the other half are
not. But since we do not ask anybody about it, I do not know the exact percentage.

Jacobsen: Why live life “without God”? What defines God in this sense of “without” or “a-,” in reference to “–theism” as in “a-theism” for you – in a pragmatic sense of life without God rather than a formal implied ontological stance of the concept “God”?

Siemens: Some people need someone to take their hand and show them how to align their lives with respect to a higher being. I don’t.

Jacobsen: What constituted the trajectory of the “careful consideration”?

Siemens: When I still attended church, I often felt obliged to give witness to my faith, for example at school. However, I noticed more and more how insincere this was, when scientific explanations contradicted those of the believers. I believed one, gave witness to the other, and did not feel good about it. So, I stopped witnessing the other. Let us suppose that our universe, space and time, arose from an initial singularity. Did God exist before because he is eternal? The idea that anything, even God, existed before the origin of time seems contradictory to me. If God came into existence later, when the laws of nature already applied, he must have had a cause, as nothing comes from nothing (Parmenides). But this contradicts the concept of God as taught by Christianity. So, God himself must be the prima causa, an unmoved mover (Aristotle). Okay, if someone is happy with this, he should call the initial singularity God. But this is a wheel that does not move anything.

Jacobsen: What were the ‘final nails’ – proverbial, so-called – to this careful consideration? Why “maybe because of Ockham’s razor”? How big was the beard to begin with for you?

Siemens: The final nail was even literally a beard. The Baptizers have different ideas about what the lower half of a man’s face should look like. The Amish, for example, let the beard grow (because God lets it grow), but they shave the moustache. Well, actually God lets it grow too, but for some obscure reason that is something completely different. I grew up in a congregation where men had to shave. The theological argument was derived from the fact that it is written: “Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Little children do not wear beards, quod erat demonstrandum. When I stopped shaving, I got in big trouble with the church leadership. So, I grabbed Ockham’s Razor. However, instead of shaving my beard, I shaved my faith.

Jacobsen: How is the Bible “misused”?

Siemens: I just gave you an example.

Jacobsen: Why is freedom of religion important to you, as either a concept or as a human right?

Siemens: There were always times when religion gave important impulses for the coexistence of people, for example in the Sermon on the Mount. But for some centuries now, secular initiatives have taken this place. For us, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the standard that determines our actions. In comparison, many church’s standards seem outdated and contradict not only human rights, but often also constitutions, for example with regard to the role of women or sexual self-determination.

Jacobsen: What is lost in non-intergenerational homes – more than parent-child, e.g., grandparents or great grandparents?

Siemens: In situations of language transition, for example in connection with migration, the three-generation rule often applies. The elderly speak one language, their children are bilingual, and their grandchildren are monolingual again. This is how languages die. Multi-generational households help to prevent or at least delay this process. By talking to their grandparents, the grandchildren learn their language. This is how Plautdietsch was able to survive in the diaspora over the centuries.

Jacobsen: As identified in the first session, you have taken tests from some of the most respected alternative test constructors for the higher scores in the tests taken by you: “My most successful test results include the Titan test by Ronald K. Hoeflin (raw score 45/48), the Test of the Beheaded Man (33/40), the Marathon Test (108/111), both by Paul Cooijmans, many different tests and some won contests by Theodosios Prousalis, SLSE 48 (30/48) by Jonathan Wai, etc. Usually, the results were beyond 5 standard deviations.” Why did this take until 45 to become a hobby?

Siemens: I simply did not know these people or HRIQ tests before. It was a coincidence that I stumbled upon an interview with a member of the Giga society and so Paul came to my attention. With further research, I found Ron, Theodosius, and the others.

Jacobsen: As prospective test-takers look into tests to spend some time for themselves, what are some of the benefits of taking the Three Sonnets test? Why the title, “Three Sonnets”?


Siemens: The Shakespeare Sonnet has the ideal form to express a thought. One develops an idea from three perspectives and summarizes the result in a couplet. (The Russian poet Pushkin proved that you can write an entire novel in Shakespeare’s sonnets. You should read Eugene Onegin, if you haven’t done it yet). My test tries to be not just a sequence of questions, but a real composition, like a poem or a piece of music. It consists of three sonnets: an overture in which the central idea is developed and the later motives are already intoned, a numerical section and a verbal one. In each sonnet, the central idea is illuminated from three angles and summarized in the couplet, just like Shakespeare did. By the way, I would like to draw your attention to verses 29-32 of my test, which represent the quintessence of the test. When you have answered these questions, you have solved one of the central problems that literary studies have been arguing about for decades without being able to solve it. (And I am not referring to the question of who wrote Shakespeare’s works, for the answer is trivial: it was not Shakespeare himself, but a completely unknown author whose real name was Shakespeare.) Like any scientific thesis, my test ends with two footnotes.

Jacobsen: How many people have taken the Three Sonnets test? What are the demographics of the test-takers?

Siemens: Unfortunately, far too few have taken the test so far, so I cannot say anything about demographics or preliminary norms. But I would like to use my 15 minutes of fame to draw attention to this test once again. Perhaps the first step is the hardest. You have to discover the entry. Once you have crossed the threshold, it is no longer time-consuming. Do not let the first impression discourage you. I would be happy if as many of you as possible submit solutions. (The only hint: it was published on Towel Day.)

Jacobsen: Side note, how common is finding out about giftedness later in life in the international high-range community, as you found out at age 45? I like the alignment of the 45 on the legendary Titan Test with it.

Siemens: I have not even noticed this coincidence before. Maybe I should have waited another three years, then I would have had 48/48 correct answers. I do not have the slightest idea at what age other people start to deal with HIROQ tests. You should ask those who have been making many tests for years and therefore have a lot of data.

Jacobsen: What seems like the context in which to interpret the leap from the previous “highest score” on “the verbal section of the Marathon Test with IQ 180 S.D. 15” to the aforementioned “195 S.D. 15 on the Cooljmans Intelligence Test 5 or the CIT5”?

Siemens: The difference is exactly one standard deviation, such leaps are very rare because the intelligence of adults is assumed to be relatively constant, at least until it decreases with age. One explanation is probably that Paul usually publishes preliminary norms at a very early stage, which in my opinion is very problematic, especially in areas where one can hardly expect to get much empirical data. On the other hand, this is not Paul’s first test that I have taken, and from one test to the next, one increasingly understands the test maker’s way of thinking.

Jacobsen: When marathon test-takers of the high-range world exhibit ranges of 30 points (S.D. 15) – plus or minus a few – on the alternative tests, what seems like a reasonable manner in which to interpret the scores?

Siemens: As I already said, such leaps are very rare and could be an indication that something went wrong with the norming process.

Jacobsen: What seems to explain individuals taking 5, 10, 20, 50, or more high-range tests? It helps with the furtherance of the data collection efforts. All the power to them. It seems like a huge time sink, though, at the same time.

Siemens: Of course, every test maker is happy to receive as many submissions as possible, because they are the basis for a profound norming process. Everyone spends as much time with his hobby as he can spare. A hard test is often time consuming. But “time sink” sounds too derogatory. There are certainly worse things to spend time on than passing cognitive challenges.

Jacobsen: Have other publishers arisen alongside Tweeback Verlag working in this niche? If not, why not? If so, why so? What were the books needing publishing (plug, plug)?

Siemens: Most Mennonites still use a different written language and Plautdietsch is only spoken. Therefore, the market for Plautdietsch books is very small. I don’t know of any other publisher that specializes in this niche. Plautdietsch developed late as a literary language. The first major works were written about 100 years ago and the most important Plautdietsch author, Arnold Dyck, died exactly 50 years ago. That is why we are presenting an Arnold
Dyck Award for the first time this year to encourage more people to write in Plautdietsch.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Linguist; Founder, Tweeback Verlag; Member, Mega Society; Member, Giga Society.

Conversation with Glia Society Member #479: Member, Glia Society (1)

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Abstract
This is an interview with Glia Society Member 479. They discuss: growing up; an extended self; the family background; the experience with peers and schoolmates; the purpose of intelligence tests; high intelligence; the geniuses of the past; the greatest geniuses in history; a genius from a profoundly intelligent person; some work experiences; important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses; some social and political views; the God concept or gods idea; science; some of the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations); the range of the scores; and ethical philosophy.

Keywords: 479, Paul Coojmans, Glia Society, intelligence, IQ.

Conversation with Glia Society Member #479: Member, Glia Society (1)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: When you were growing up, what were some of the prominent family stories being told over time?

Glia Society Member #479[1],[2]*: Given the nature of the interview, I cannot say too much about that. I do recall some interesting episodes involving adultery or extrasensory perception.

Jacobsen: Have these stores helped provide a sense of an extended self or a sense of the family legacy?

#479: No, not really. I think of myself as an individual person and feel little need to submerge my identity into a kin-group.

Jacobsen: What was the family background, e.g., geography, culture, language, and religion or lack thereof?

#479: Middle-class WASP-y.

Jacobsen: How was the experience with peers and schoolmates as a child and an adolescent?

#479: My only response to this is that I never had a girlfriend in high school and I am still pissed off about that.

Jacobsen: What is the purpose of intelligence tests to you?

#479: If you’re referring specifically to my hobby taking high-range tests, then the purpose is that they’re fun to solve and give me insight into my own mental ability profile. More generally, intelligence tests can be useful clinical instruments for assessing one’s cognitive functioning, and provide insight into intelligence itself, which is the most important thing that can be studied. One might call it meta-science, for it is the brain research itself.

Also, high-range tests will be very useful for quantitative directional selection once I finally get around to starting that Pacific island eugenics program with a bunch of kidnapped National Merit Scholars.

Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?
#479: I hit most of my developmental milestones early, so I guess you could say that it was discovered in toddlerhood, if you define high intelligence by age-peer norms. I think that’s disingenuous, though, so I’d have to say when I qualified for Mensa, significantly surpassing the entry requirement on the supervised test battery that they gave me. I later gained deeper insight into my mental ability profile with high-range tests, particularly those of Paul Cooijmans.

**Jacobsen:** When you think of the ways in which the geniuses of the past have either been mocked, vilified, and condemned if not killed, or praised, flattered, platformed, and revered, what seems like the reason for the extreme reactions to and treatment of geniuses? Many alive today seem camera shy – many, not all.

#479: I don’t have a comprehensive answer to this question, but what I do know is that geniuses inherently tend to promulgate views which contradict some societal or institutional dogma, e.g., Galileo. That probably explains most of it.

Also, I can’t confidently confirm or deny your assertion that many geniuses alive today seem camera shy without knowing whom you consider geniuses. That is the sort of observation which I am unwilling to accept based entirely on a secondhand opinion. In any case, I think there are extremely few true geniuses alive today, possibly because the sciences, each straining in its own direction, have advanced so far that the barrier for a single person to make a revolutionary contribution is exceedingly high. Besides myself, of course, we probably only know the names of a few.

**Jacobsen:** Who seem like the greatest geniuses in history to you?

#479: I suspect that there have been people throughout history who would now be considered amongst the greatest geniuses in history, if only they had been recognized as brilliant or otherwise experienced different life circumstances. This would include myself, of course.

Restricting our universe of discourse to well-known geniuses, and ranking them by their intellectual productivity rather than hypothetical potential, Isaac Newton is almost certainly at the top. Second place would probably go to Albert Einstein, and then third to Carl Gauss. Other people near the top include Leonhard Euler, John von Neumann, Nikola Tesla, and Dmitri Mendeleev.

As for tremendous intellects who have received relatively little public notice, but whom I have been lucky enough to discover, I would like to draw attention to Paul Erdős (a borderline case in terms of fame), Stanislaw Lem (author of the most eloquent and profound fiction I have ever read), and Chris Langan (a disagreeable person, but a misunderstood intellectual).

**Jacobsen:** What differentiates a genius from a profoundly intelligent person?

#479: That’s nearly an apples-to-oranges comparison, and somewhat like asking what differentiates an extremely tall person from a top basketball player. To succeed in the NBA, one is practically required to be uncommonly tall, but beyond that, yet greater height brings diminishing returns, while other factors like work ethic, physical strength, and aiming ability become increasingly relevant.

I concur with Arthur Jensen and Paul Cooijmans that exceedingly intelligent people are actually less likely to become geniuses than are people of somewhat lower, but still very high, intelligence. I have observed that people whose intelligence I judge as extremely high, both inside and outside of the high-I.Q. world, tend to be almost depressingly normal, and therefore lack the mixture of non-cognitive personality traits required for genius. This is vaguely analogous to how the tallest people in the world, like well over 7 foot (2.13m) usually don’t excel in sports, since they suffer from chronic mobility problems. The tallest man alive, Sultan Kösen, relies on crutches to ambulate.

**Jacobsen:** What have been some work experiences and educational certifications for you?

#479: I am currently attending a well-regarded university, majoring in a STEM field. For reasons of privacy, I would rather not say more.

**Jacobsen:** What are some of the more important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses? Those myths that pervade the cultures of the world. What are those myths? What truths dispel them?

#479: I don’t have much to say about this that hasn’t already been said elsewhere, so I won’t. I refer the reader who is interested in these topics to the articles on Paul Cooijmans’ website.

What I would like to point out is that, for a highly intelligent person, perhaps the greatest thing about living in a society which emphasizes personal responsibility and economic independence is that they can make half of an effort and still succeed. If they actually apply themselves as much as regular
people, or more so, then life will certainly roll out the red carpet for them.

**Jacobsen: What are some social and political views for you? Why hold them?**

**#479:** My interest is almost totally detached from contemporary politics. Ephesians 6:12 somewhat applies here, although we fight against flesh and blood simultaneously with principalities and powers. Different political ideologies purport that they can solve our problems by organizing humans in certain ways, but the quality of a structure is bounded above by its constituent material. “Oh ye seekers of perpetual motion, how many chimeras have you pursued in vain? Go and take your place with the alchemists.” That line from Leonardo da Vinci would hold true after “perpetual motion” is replaced by something like “social justice” or “collective happiness.”

The only way to induce permanent, significant, positive change in society is by altering the invisible hand of psychology, which underpins human behavior. One might call it psychohistory or one might call it cladodynamics, but the point is the same: human societies are subject to long-term behavioral trends, which are opaque to everyone or almost everyone, and which may be impossible to observe at smaller scales. For instance, old people like to complain about how “kids these days have no work ethic,” which is a common source of intergenerational conflict (“ok boomer”), and they’re largely right. That’s mainly because relatively recent increases in labor productivity, made possible by modern technology, have made people’s lives easier. When you make it so that people are wealthier, can have more fun in their free time, and don’t need to input as many hours of labor to generate the same output, then don’t be surprised when they don’t want to work as much as people used to!

Some kind of genetic improvement of humanity is necessitated, to improve average intelligence and other traits. The details of how such an initiative is to be implemented are, unfortunately, left to the reader. But do consider how many people died under Communist regimes. If a bunch of dirty reds can shift the demographics so hugely, we can do it too! Also, better nutrition will improve intelligence in malnourished populations, with iodine supplementation probably being the best route for that. The egalitarian taboo of discussing group differences in intelligence has actually harmed those populations by making it politically incorrect to address the root cause of their problems, which is low I.Q. Yes, indeed, imagine how good UNICEF could do with just a few dropships full of iodized salt.

**Jacobsen: Any thoughts on the God concept or gods idea and philosophy, theology, and religion?**

**#479:** I am an avowed atheist, insofar as theism concerns belief in the deities supposed by popular contemporary religions. However, I do have idiosyncratic beliefs about what I associate with “God,” if only because my atheism leaves a void in my personal share of the collective unconscious where religion would normally go. I believe in absolute truth, the fundamental interconnected monism of all things physical and aphysical, and the potential for humanity to transcend itself through technological singularity. I presume that many people would associate each of these things with “God,” or at least ascribe quasi-divine attributes to them, but I reject that as mere poetic metaphor. Nonetheless, “God” is a convenient referent for them, and therefore what I shall adopt in the forthcoming summary of my metaphysical para-religion.

The below explanation is rather long and difficult, so here’s the **TL;DR version:** Math exists because it can’t not exist. Groups of mathematical truths, through some unknown mechanism, give rise to an objective reality. Groups of physical objects, through some unknown mechanism, give rise to consciousness.

Now, for the longer version:

**[begin dissertation]**

Everything, everything under everything and everything over everything, is an absolute monad, whose universe of discourse may for the purpose of explanation be separated into three teleologically disjoint essences. At the root of this structure is mathematics, the domain of propositions which are independently and indisputably true, and therefore monopolize the aseity required for an uncaused cause, serving as axioms for the cosmos and thereby sidestepping arguments from universal causation. Note that “mathematics,” as used in this context, refers to logical structures which occupy some imperceptible realm which I have termed “infospace,” and therefore does not necessarily describe a collection of structures which is bijective to those mathematical structures which are known to humans. We only know them, and perhaps can only know them, by abstract descriptions of their properties, not specific designations or descriptions of the structures within this complex. The collection of propositions which underlie the nomos, and thereby permit the instantiation of the cosmos and nous, may be finite, or it may be infinite; it may include mathematical structures with which we are familiar, or it may be not; it may be possible to
identify them as discrete propositions in order to study their emergent phenomena and determine what demarcates truths which exert influence from infospace from truths which exist only as symbolic constructs, or it may not.

Physics is the second level of the existential hierarchy, emanating from the propositions which reside in infospace. It provides a medium through which the atomic propositions can interact with each other and thereby coalesce into novel entities, like a primordial soup catalyzing the acquisition of form beyond what infospace can provide. As Wittgenstein said, the world is all that is case. Note that “physics,” in this context, is not equivalent to the usual understanding of physics in the scientific sense, nor is it necessarily limited to our perceptions of the physical universe. I use “physics” to denote any objective reality which possess properties beyond those of infospace but does not experience qualia.

Consciousness is the third level, and probably the highest. Like propositions somehow engender an objective external reality, physical objects can somehow combine to create qualia. We must accept this without asking how. Although we may eventually discover which collections of physical states give rise to conscious agents, I am nearly certain that the underlying mechanism cannot be empirically determined, even in principle. If it can be determined at all, then it will have to be done through analysis of the absolute truths in infospace themselves, wherein all the secrets of the universe reside. In a poetic sense, that is perhaps the fundamental teology of the pleroma: to create conscious minds capable of reasoning about metaphysics and thereby let itself be known.

If that hypothetical teology turns out to be more than a poetic metaphor, then perhaps it gives us hope for an afterlife, whereupon we shall be freed from the boundary layer imposed on us by the Demiurge of physics, and therewith sublime into infospace ourselves, entering into a Gnostic paradise of eternal life and unlimited knowledge. “O, let not the pains of death that come upon thee enter into my body. I am the god Tem, and I am in the foremost part of the sky, and the power which protecteth me is that which is with all the gods forever.” But I wouldn’t count on it.

A counterintuitive remark which I must make for the sake of logical completeness is that physics may not exist at all, in which case the three-layer hierarchy could be reduced to mind-body dualism, wherein mathematics give rise to qualia without an intermediary layer of objective reality. Descartes’ evil demon is applicable, in that case.

Attempting to map this belief structure onto contemporary theology, I see profound parallels with the Christian doctrine of Trinitarianism, which combines a monotheistic God with multiple consubstantial “persons,” namely the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. My own mathematical “God” likewise manifests in three superficially different hypostases which reduce to the same ultimate Ein Sof. However, because the three aspects of my God are apparently hierarchical and interdependent, perhaps it is my nearly isomorphic to heresies such as Modalistic Monarchanism, with the pure apeiron emanating first from the pleroma (mathematical), and from there to the Demiurge (physical), and finally to noesis (qualiac).

[end dissertation]

That may have been difficult to read, but it’s actually full of oversimplifications and imprecise language, which I hope to remedy in a future treatment of these subjects. I am not certain of it all yet myself, and my views have continuously morphed over the past few years, even though I was nearly certain of their correctness at every point in that process.

Jacobsen: How much does science play into the worldview for you?

#479: Science is fundamentally an epistemologically untenable construct, but once you ignore Descartes’ evil demon, it’s given us Internet pornography and electric scooters, so clearly it plays an important role in the lives of most specimens of Homo sapiens, despite the widespread failure of that species’ members to live up to their taxonomy.

Oh, yes, and you all should do yourselves and favor and read about the Technological Singularity and other transhumanist topics. Eliezer Yudkowsky is worth looking into, although I don’t agree with everything he says.

Jacobsen: What have been some of the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations) for you?

#479: My scores on good heterogeneous tests tend to cluster around I.Q. 150. I prefer not to specify further. One thing I will say, though, is that my results tend to cluster shockingly closely together, even on tests which seem to be of less than high quality. Whatever the tests are measuring, my portion of it seems to be nearly static and subject to objective analysis.

Jacobsen: What is the range of the scores for you? The scores earned on alternative intelligence tests tend to produce a wide smattering of data points rather than clusters, typically.
The full range is extremely wide, spanning from about 90 to 180. However, much like the bell curve itself, they are mainly clustered around the center, with a few outliers in either direction. Again, for reasons of privacy, I would rather not say too much.

Pertaining to this discussion, I would like to mention that a characteristic shortcoming observable in discussions in the high-I.Q. world is an apparently deficient number-sense with regards to score rarity. For example, suppose you take a high-range test and score the equivalent of I.Q. 160, with a standard deviation of 15, a standard error of 1 raw score point, and (your raw score – 2) and (your raw score + 2) normed at I.Q. 158 and 161 respectively. Then your 95% confidence interval, spanning plus or minus 2 standard errors from your actual score, ranges from a rarity of 1/18,120 to 1/41,916. Three I.Q. points have more than doubled your score’s rarity! Considering that most tests have far wider confidence intervals, and that norms are unreliable at such altitudes regardless of measurement error, we can conclude that pinpointing someone’s level in mental ability relative to the general population is infeasible. Even someone who conscientiously takes many tests in order to better estimate their I.Q. with assistance from the law of large numbers will still have their results tainted by the myriad other sources of systemic bias: less conscientious or fraudulent scores disrupting norms, norms based on self-selected candidates which may not be representative of the general population, bad problems, and more. Results from psychometric tests, especially but not exclusively high-range tests, are bound by inexactitude, and whoever propounds otherwise has lost their perspective amongst the orders of magnitude. Perhaps only in astrophysics would such an imprecise measurement otherwise be taken seriously.

Ultimately, I think that exact I.Q.’s from high-range tests are meaningless. High-range testing is, at best, sufficient to place you in a relative range of intelligence. Note the two words there: relative, meaning that your exact score is almost certainly inaccurate; and range, meaning that it’s almost certainly imprecise. For instance, if your average score over many high-quality heterogeneous tests is 170, and someone else’s average score is 150, then you’re probably the more intelligent of the two. That’s all that can meaningfully be said, other than that you’re both in the *hic sunt dracones* region of psychometrics.

**Jacobsen: What ethical philosophy makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?**

Utilitarianism, by virtue of harnessing the boreal truth of mathematics, is ultimately the only workable ethical philosophy. We must maximize the integral of total positive qualia, summed over all conscious agents in reality, from now as time goes to infinity. However, since we are limited by our agent-relative perceptions, we lack the omniscience required to apply utilitarianism. Therefore, I rather recommend a more intuitively applicable conception of ethics, combining deontology with morality and virtue ethics: Be wonderful to each other. If I have anything to say about it, which I probably don’t, that opus magnum may someday be realized.

**Appendix I: Footnotes**

[1] Co-Editor, “Phenomenon” (World Intelligence Network).


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.*
Conversation with Graham Powell on Issue X of “WIN ONE” with Gwyneth Wesley Rolph, Anna Konnikova, Thomas J. Hally, Claus Volko, Greg A. Grove, Therese Waneck, Beaux Clemmons, Manahel Thabet, Karyn Huntting Peters, Marco Ripà, and Alan Wing-Lun: Co-Editor, “Phenomenon” (9)

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Abstract

His Lordship of Roscelines, Graham Powell, earned the “best mark ever given for acting during his” B.A. (Hons.) degree in “Drama and Theatre Studies at Middlesex University in 1990” and the “Best Dissertation Prize” for an M.A. in Human Resource Management from the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England in 1994. Powell is anHonorary Member of STHIO Society, Former President of sPloS Society, Vice President of Atlantiq Society, and a member of British Mensa, IHIQS, Ingenium, Mysterium, High Potentials Society, Elateneos, Milenija, Logiq, and Epida. He is the Full-Time Co-Editor of WIN ONE (WIN-ON-line Edition) since 2010 or nearly a decade. He represents World Intelligence Network Italia. He is the Public Relations Co-Supervisor, Fellow of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, and a Member of the European Council for High Ability. He discusses: a different tone; “Biofeedback” by Gwyneth Wesley Rolph, and Mastermind: How to Think Like Sherlock Holmes by Anna Konnikova; “A Brief History of IQ Tests” by Thomas J. Hally; “Feedback on ‘Atheism’…” by Dr. Claus D. Volko; “The Lost Child” by Therese Waneck; “Another Friend Dies From AIDS” by Beaux Clemmons; “As I Recall” by Hally; “A festive poem” and “The Challenge”; “Gödel and the Limits of Computability” by Volko; “Epigraphs” and “The Editor’s Anagadoku”; “X-Test Solutions Finally Revealed!” by Marco Ripà; Alan Wing-Lun published “About ‘Codin’ Code Al Coda’”; “Theme from Love, Injury, Fear, Embarrassment.”

Keywords: giftedness, Graham Powell, United Arab Emirates, WIN ONE, World Intelligence Network.

Conversation with Graham Powell on Issue X of “WIN ONE” with Gwyneth Wesley Rolph, Anna Konnikova, Thomas J. Hally, Claus Volko, Greg A. Grove, Therese Waneck, Beaux Clemmons, Manahel Thabet, Karyn Huntting Peters, Marco Ripà, and Alan Wing-Lun: Co-Editor, “Phenomenon” (9)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Issue X set a different tone than the previous issue of WIN ONE. It opens with the quote, “To the tranquil mind, flowers are great friends, radiating beauty without recourse to words.” Why this quote or statement for this particular issue? Who owns the quote? You note the problems inherent in the issues of the early 21st century with some turbulent times while also acknowledging the benefits in the ease of travel for in-person discussions within members of the meta-society known as the World Intelligence Network. How important was the tenth issue to get right? Once more, you solo edited. What is the workload in terms of hours and level of effort per
issue, as the size and scale of the issue began to stabilize?

Graham Powell[1],[2]: Yes, Scott, this Edition took on a new ‘voice’, I think this a corollary of the meeting of minds at the 12th Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness, plus the fact that I was in Al Ain at the time, an Emirate that is part of the United Arab Emirates. In the heat of the desert, the mood was reflective. Usually I was walking to the Internet Cafe in temperatures above body temperature. I reflected on the beautiful flowers at my home in Sardinia – the quotation is my own. It was a struggle to get this edition finished, especially as many of the inclusions arrived late, so, yes, repeated treks to the internet cafe took some pluck as the hours ticked by and the deadline got closer and closer. There is a mood in this edition of discussion and, I think, a little remorse; there is poetry and an artistic intensity that is greater than in previous editions. I wanted everything to be right, yes, despite the challenges. The world was in the middle of an economic meltdown and the effects on people’s daily lives were coming through. There is always a kind of backwash to the wave of macroeconomic hardships, which is tough to bear. It strikes homesteads across the world and this was being reflected on people’s faces. I put in a great deal of effort for this edition too, having time to do that, but also because it was the beginning of an era whereby people had other things to concentrate on. Much of this edition came from friends, or via my own hand. I had just met Gwyneth Wesley Rolph (prior to going to the Emirates) and that was great. I am pleased that she has now realised her potential and is pursuing what, at that time, was a dream. Her research on intelligence and related neurophysiology reminds me of the work by Rex Jung, who I admire greatly.

Jacobsen: “Biofeedback” by Gwyneth Wesley Rolph covers the issue of biofeedback as a research topic. The article provides some grand claims about health benefits and the forms of equipment used for the biofeedback, e.g., EMG or electromyography, temperature or thermal feedback, galvanic skin response training, heart rate variability training, neurofeedback through the EEG or electroencephalogram, and others.[3] Does biofeedback still seem reasonable as a practice and valid as a tool for self-knowledge and awareness? You reviewed Mastermind: How to Think Like Sherlock Holmes by Anna Konnikova (Dr. Maria Konnikova) in “A book review.” She writes about the fictional personhood of Holmes. His personality, abilities, and how this ties to modern psychological research with some reference to the work of Professors Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald by you. The most important point, or takeaway for me, comes from the way in which Holmes focused on a goal to filter information, as a means to solve problems before him, as per “Peter Gollwitzer’s 5 Goal-orientated Behaviour traits.” Sections included mindfulness and motivation, interpretation of the world as the world, the DMM or default mode network, the importance of common sense found through deduction or, more properly, induction/abduction described as “systemised common sense,” and knowledge of self. You gave an enthusiastic review of Mastermind: How to Think Like Sherlock Holmes. What was some feedback on the text since the publication of the review? How has Dr. Konnikova’s career progressed?

Powell: Interesting that you ask about this, Scott, because I am involved in neurofeedback at the moment, a new adventure that has taken me back to Dubai. It is, indeed, just that: feedback. In my work, there’s low electrical input, mainly just sensors. People undergoing the feedback monitor their responses alongside the technician and they are ‘rewarded’ via a notification system. This reward system is decided upon via consultation. I have undergone some of the light and sound sessions and it is effective. I have found that my sleep patterns have returned to a healthy rhythm, with theta waves being emitted more than previously. As such, I think the three main goals espoused by Gwyneth are being met: I self-regulate, know more about how the brain is functioning, and I am taking the results into my everyday life. I have a hunch that the other forms of biofeedback can have similar effects, hence Gwyneth’s three, generic goals.

As for Maria Konnikova Hamilton (her full name), her writing career has progressed and she has produced several books of note, her latest book resulting in her becoming a gambler in casinos. She is about to move on from that, but, unfortunately, due to a certain amount of fame, she has distanced herself from me these days, so I don’t know in what direction she is about to go.

Jacobsen: “A Brief History of IQ Tests” by Thomas J. Hally discussed the history of low range and normal range testing, and high range testing, of general intelligence with a tip of the hat to Paul Cooijmans, Ron Hoeflin, Robert Lato, Laurent Dubois, Mislav Predavec, Jonathan Wai, Kenneth Ferrell, Jeff Leonard, Jason Betts, and Ivan Ivec. Of course, noting, the test scores do not define the person and the HRT test creators remained all men at the time. This may stay the
same into the present. However, as a caveat, as a singular trait pervading aspects of an individual’s life, access to joining societies, access to contribute to and write in journals, and the like, the test scores, at minimum, define part of the person, if defined in an extended sense of “person” as in an extended relational self. What are the issues of high range tests from the most serious to the trivial? What are the benefits of high range tests over low range and normal range tests? How do the politics and personalities of the HRT world impact the dynamics of the societies, the development of tests, and so on? If someone donates money to a high IQ society and to the career of an individual within the HRT world, and if one exists as a member of a society in which a test developer uses individuals for the purpose of increasing the relevant sample size of the tests in development, do these amount to financial conflicts of interest and other forms of conflict of interest? How do these considerations impact the legitimacy of the creation of some tests and some societies in the 3-sigma and higher world of the high IQ?

Powell: Okay, let us break this down, then push people in a direction to learn more. A fundamental issue is said to be the lack of people to provide data, though the current world population is 7.8 billion, which statistically indicates the possibility of at least one person having an IQ of 201, SD16. One in 7.2 billion reach that score. It also equates to one in nearly a million scoring 176 SD 16, (1:982,001), so a quantitative sample of at least 7,385 is possible. This poses the following problem: from where can we find these people? I think a more serious consideration is: how many of these people wish to participate collectively? Having spoken face to face with one such person, the related anecdotes don’t bode well for these people to interact. A further example is an article by Michael Ferguson, who calls them ‘The Inappropriately Excluded’. In a previous round, I cited Hollingworth’s research and the issues of the isolationism of a group which would now, utilizing Gaussian distribution IQ scores, be considered to have an IQ score of around IQ 159 SD 15, or above. Ferguson also refers to this. Generally, the HRTs may identify certain people, but my knowledge about the interactions which take place at the very high IQ level, does not make for pleasant reading. That’s the ‘trivial part’.

As for conflicts of interest, attempting to identify and further research and data collation is necessary. If there is a monetary gain in doing that, I provisionally say that it is fine. In the end, individuals have a choice about whether to participate, or not. At the IQ societal level, I don’t think the funding of individuals occurs very much, at least not due to particular membership of a society. Rather, members of the very exclusive societies can make themselves available for exceptional research and development work – if they so desire. It’s a vicious circle for them, really: the opportunities are there, if they want to run the gauntlet of what may seem banal. As stated before, in the end, many of the plethora of tests are not sufficiently tested to be both reliable and verifiable. In the end, I’m not sure how beneficial all this is to these people anyway. Other factors in life are more important than an IQ score.

Jacobsen: “Feedback on ‘Atheism’….“ by Dr. Claus D. Volko provided a short retort to the eighth issue article by Phil Elauria. His critique focusing on the non-need to move to multi-valued logic where classical binary logic suffices to resolve proposed problems in logic. Any thoughts on the retort by Dr. Volko? “The Writer’s Dilemma” by Thomas J. Hally provides an implicitly amusing frolic on the nature of writers, literacy, mathematicians, and other intellectual types. In “Juggler of Day,” a poem by Emily Dickinson, accompanied pictorially by Dr. Greg A. Grove, we discover a new fact: Dr. Grove’s synesthesia or cross-talk between senses. “Emily Dickinson Eats Out” by Dr. Grove was a charming little piece. You wrote “Meeting In-flight.” Where was this a trip towards at the time – other than someone’s lips? Or was this more of an imaginary production? “Not Quite Carbon Copies” by Hally is a delightful, and humorous, observation-bound poem on sex and gender dynamics in general. What made this poem stand out to you? “The Lost Child” by Therese Waneck put forth a one-word poem, in a way, which brought to mind, “Cooked.” What words and images come to mind for you, in this poem? “Dying Dawns” by Waneck brings the sorrow known to and expressed by many elderly friends to me, in intimate conversations. What does this poem evoke for you? “Renewal” by Hally brings forth a strangely depressing but hopeful tale of reflection on the generation and the hope for the metaphysical and spiritual – “transformation” – in spite of the flaws, failures, and follies of the generation. I am ambivalent on an emotional judgment of this piece. What do you think, feel?

Powell: I tried to encourage feedback on the pieces in the magazine, so Claus-Dieter’s was a welcome inclusion within this edition. I recognized the logical sequence that Claus-Dieter proposes, though I had to liaise with him on it at that point in time. It was a steep learning curve for me, so rewarding too. One of
the joys of editorship is learning along the way. A curious aftermath was the fact that Phil Elauria took a course in Computer Programming and it is at the core of his career path now, though I’ve no idea if this intervention by Claus-Dieter made Phil consider entering that job sector. All I do know is that Phil is proving successful in his new job.

As for Doctor Grove and his synaesthesia, I knew about it and indeed took part in an experiment involving art. Greg loves music by Scriabin, whose atonal scale was influenced by synaesthesia. Greg also loves the poetry of Emily Dickinson, hence the artwork. Greg would make a fascinating person to interview.

The Meeting In-flight poem is a modern version of Meeting at Night by Robert Browning, though I must confess that it is also based on a real-life experience in Izmir, Turkey. I think Tom Hally and I share a poetic interest in these facets to life, though I am perhaps more of a romantic. That comes out in Renewal, too. Tom is more sardonic in his outlook.

Therese Waneck’s poems always entreat me. Like Emily Dickinson’s, they are bijou expressions, yet pierce to the core. I love Therese’s work.

Jacobsen: “Another Friend Dies From AIDS” by Beaux Clemmons portrays a moving depiction of loss, of death and coping, and moving on, once the shock disappears. Clemmons, as a Christian, comes to confront an apparent injustice with anger at purported love for his Creator. Doubt, anger, and a generally pissed off demeanour seeps through portions of the text, understandably. In a seriocomic stance, Clemmons pretends God is imaginary, not present, and remains unconvinced of the view here in the thought experiment too, which belies a certain agnosticism, implicitly. Clemmons ends on a re-invigoration of strength by putting the feelings to text. What stood out about this piece to you?

Powell: Beau (his actual name) is a devout Christian who I’ve known and, indeed, assisted sometimes for a few years, now. This piece arrived as I was walking through around 45 degrees centigrade to publish the magazine from the internet café in Al Ain. It was a heartfelt piece, one which clearly made Beau question many aspects to life, his sexuality, his beliefs, the seemingly unfair judgement that is bestowed upon us at times. I had to go back through the scorching heat to add his article. Beau expressed that he had to let the emotions go and was keen that I help him by publishing the piece. I think it was a cathartic experience for him, which these occasions often require, whatever your belief.

Jacobsen: “As I Recall” by Hally opens with the psychological knowledge of the most prominent memories tending to be emotional ones. Although, Professor Elizabeth Loftus’s, from the University of California, Irvine, memory research may buffer direct statements about this, especially in regards to Rich False Memories, for example. Hally’s focus is “arousal” and “valence” and “mood” as integral to strong, detailed, and lasting memories. A wonderful, concise, and effective summary of memory research to this point, at an intermediate level. Does educational material, as opposed to that which requires some interpreting, become more easily accepted into the journal? You wrote “A festive poem” and “The Challenge,” which provided some mental food for thought. “WIN Meetings” provide some further context of the relationships between executive members of WIN with visits to Dubai in April and June of 2013 with pictures of Dr. Thabet, Dr. Katsioulis, and Dr. Karyn Huntingt Peters. How were the subsequent meetings in person with Drs. Thabet, Katsioulis, and Peters? What have been fruitful dialogues since that time?

Powell: I think people like to learn, yes. I also did a little research and high IQ people are not interested in doing puzzles within magazines. I didn’t realize that at the time, but it seems to be a prevailing viewpoint. On a different tack, I was pleased to make the interactions of WIN members evident visually, which had been done in an earlier WIN magazine, G2G Manifest. There was quite a lot of interaction while I was in the Middle East, so it was a great opportunity, in that respect. The three WIN members that you cite are at the epicentre of my high IQ experience, even to this day. We continue to change the world, I am sure, in a positive manner.

Jacobsen: Dr. Volko wrote “Gödel and the Limits of Computability.” In it, he describes the ways in which the two incompleteness theorems – 1) incomplete and consistent, or complete and inconsistent and 2) consistent systems cannot be proven consistent within their own formalities – describe the limits of computability. Any further thoughts on the incompleteness theorems for you? Any known additional theorems adjunct to these two theorems? What do these theorems appear to mean for computability and human computation? What stands out about Dr. Volko’s material over the years? “Epigraphams,” clever as well as entertaining as a word, connects to “The Editor’s Anagdoku.” What inspired the tying of these together? Also, what is the image behind the text, the background picture?
Powell: I think you would do best to ask Claus-Dieter about the theorems and the lasting nature of his work. The magazine is largely a snapshot of intellectual considerations at certain moments in time. As I said before, my real-life interactions with the people you mentioned previously are more significant to me now and take up a great deal of my time. The results of that will become clear, I am sure. Please watch the media.

Regarding the Epigraphs, I have kept a journal since April 1983. The Epigraphs were a collection of epigrams from those journals. As I hinted near the beginning of this interview, in the desert, reflections on matters often bring quite original thoughts, with neologisms, if you will. I like anagrams and I also enjoy writing the occasional Sudoku, so some of the anagrams and a Sudoku combined to produce the Anagdoku. The picture behind the text (the watermark) I don’t recall now, though I am sure it is an engraving which is redolent of the work of William Blake, so it is a hark back to the cover of Edition VI, which was very much styled on Blake’s Songs of Innocence.

Jacobsen: “X-Test Solutions Finally Revealed!” by Marco Ripà pulled a first with the exposing and exposition on the solutions to an IQ test developed by the test creator himself. Not too much commentary here in the question other than the unique laying out the solutions to problems on an IQ test, as if Penn & Teller. Any thoughts on the prospect of benefiting from the practice of HRT with provision of the solutions for an educational purpose? You did accept and publish the article after all. Then there were some individual images of famous mostly dead smart people for consideration as parts in a puzzle inside the issue as a whole. Alan Wing-Lun published “About ‘Codin’ Code Al Coda’” in response to the ‘composing’ (I was a bit loose in the language before, sorry, and so partially wrong, in a prior interview part) of the puzzle and the literal zero correct responses sent in about the puzzle, in spite of a competition placed for it. He ends, humorously, on a quote by Oscar Wilde stating, “I refuse to have a battle of wits with an unarmed man.” What comes to mind when a puzzle remains so difficult for the international high IQ community that no correct solutions come into the creator of the puzzle until after a competition and not during?

Powell: I remember that a couple of the items in Marco’s test had been compromised, by unscrupulous people either asking for the answers, or by giving the items as puzzles to solve, thereby gaining insight via other people offering solutions, or by actually giving the solutions. Marco was getting frustrated about this, as one can understand, and he decided that he would submit all the answers and put his X Test into IQ-testing history. We also moved on, with another type of test. It is computer generated and changes each time a person decides to take the test. It was a bold move by Marco and Gaetano Morelli, with a small contribution by me towards the end of the project – what was really a consideration of the best practical way to administer the test, though I did check the workings of it too.

Jacobsen: You composed “Music: ‘Theme from Love, Injury, Fear, Embarrassment’.” Then comes a rapid succession of solutions to puzzles throughout the issue. If you had to guess, how many readers look to the solutions before solving the puzzle? How many get them right on the easier puzzles and on the harder puzzles (excluding the one with zero solutions)?

Powell: As I mentioned before, generally, it seems that high IQ people are not interested in puzzle solving when reading online magazines. Occasionally, people compliment me on the ingenious nature of the puzzles, but I sense that less than 1% of readers do them. The lack of solutions submitted for Alan’s conundrum I feel validates my point. As a point of further interest, the music you cite was composed in 1988 for my play Love Injury Fear Embarrassment, which was performed at the Betchworth Festival, Surrey, England, that autumn.

Jacobsen: Thank you for the opportunity and your time, Graham.

Powell: It was a pleasure, Scott.

References
Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Co-Editor, “Phenomenon” (World Intelligence Network).


[3] “Feedback,” in full states:

Biofeedback can be used for a variety of purposes, including, but not limited to, the alleviation or reduction of anxiety and stress, muscle tension, high blood pressure, asthma and other breathing difficulties, irritable bowel syndrome and other disorders of the digestive system, temporomandibular joint disorder, back problems, chronic pain, headaches and migraine, insomnia, major depressive disorder, heart disease, diabetes, chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia.

It can be used by medical doctors, chiropractors, mental health practitioners, dentists and other healthcare providers in conjunction with existing standard health treatment plans, or by specialist biofeedback providers to assist clients with various conditions.


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Abstract

Richard May ("May-Tzu"/"MayTzu"/"Mayzi") is a Member of the Mega Society based on a qualifying score on the Mega Test (before 1995) prior to the compromise of the Mega Test and Co-Editor of Noesis: The Journal of the Mega Society. In self-description, May states: “Not even forgotten in the cosmic microwave background (CMB), I’m an Amish yuppie, born near the rarified regions of Laputa, then and often, above suburban Boston. I’ve done occasional consulting and frequent Sisyphean shlepping. Kafka and Munch have been my therapists and allies. Occasionally I’ve strived to descend from the mists to attain the mythic orientation known as having one’s feet upon the Earth. An ailurophile and a cerebrotonic ectomorph, I write for beings which do not, and never will, exist — writings for no one. I’ve been awarded an M.A. degree, mirabile dictu, in the humanities/philosophy, and U.S. patent for a board game of possible interest to extraterrestrials. I’m a member of the Mega Society, the Omega Society and formerly of Mensa. I’m the founder of the Exa Society, the transfinite Aleph-3 Society and of the renowned Laputans Manqué. I’m a biographee in Who’s Who in the Brane World. My interests include the realization of the idea of humans as incomplete beings with the capacity to complete their own evolution by effecting a change in their being and consciousness. In a moment of presence to myself in inner silence, when I see Richard May’s non-being, ‘I’ am. You can meet me if you go to an empty room.” Some other resources include Stains Upon the Silence: something for no one, McGinnis Genealogy of Crown Point, New York: Hiram Porter McGinnis, Swines

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List, Solipsist Soliloquies, Board Game, Lulu blog, Memoir of a Non-Irish Non-Jew, and May-Tzu’s posterous. He discusses: a favourite Zen koan; other ethical system formulations; different formulations of the Golden Rule; the ‘religion’ of the Dalai Lama; crossing the other side of the river in Buddhism; “Thought without measurement”; “In Praise of Stupidity”: wisdom and compassion; preventing intelligence levels reaching averages too high; “Know Thy -?“; “Ideologies”; “ideologies” in general labelled “a secular theology of lies”; “Real plolitik among the Laputan Taoists”; “Utopia”; “Understanding”: men don’t understand their wives; “Prolegomena To Any Future Obfuscation”; the “reality of existence and the existence of reality” have no “single relationship”; reality and polyamory; metaphysicians; and stage magicians.

Keywords: G.I. Gurdjieff, IQ, koan, Marxism, May’s Razor, Mega Society, obfuscation, prolegomena, Richard May, Stains Upon the Silence, Zen.


*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Side question before starting today, what is a favourite Zen koan for you, or two?

Richard May[1],[2]*: My favorite Zen koan is: “What is a favourite Zen koan for you, or two?” Another favorite Zen koan of mine is: “Why is reality so ahead of its time in its polyamorousness?” — In general I think one koan is as good, i. e., ‘useful’, as another. I don’t think I have favorites.

“What is the taste of Braille shadows?” is a koan of my own invention.

Jacobsen: We talked a bit about ethical systems in the second session. What other ethical system formulations make sense to you?

May: The negative formulation of the “golden rule.”

Jacobsen: There are different formulations of the Golden Rule. There can be trotting out of the Golden Rule as if only a Western concept, or only a Christian idea or Jesus Christ’s idea. These are Western and Christian conceits inasmuch as we know and can comment on them within the backyard with the noisy, barking dog of the world. The Golden Rule has been stated as positive, as negative, as neutral. What other formulations, specifically, of the Golden Rule make sense to you?

May: The negative formulation of the golden rule, which is the same in Judaism (attributed to Hillel the Elder) and Confucianism. (The positive formulation which is close, but not as logically excellent, is attributed to Jesus. “Do unto others … ”)

I.e., “Do *not* do to others what you would not want them to do to you.”

This is what Hillel supposedly said to a gentile in the ancient world when asked to explain Judaism to him while standing on one leg!

From Wikipedia:

He is popularly known as the author of two sayings: (1) “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And being for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?”[4] and (2) the expression of the ethic of reciprocity, or “Golden Rule”: “That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow. That is the whole Torah; the rest is the explanation; go and learn.”

Jacobsen: What is the ‘religion’ of the Dalai Lama regarding ethics, and science for that matter?

May: The Dalai Lama says that his religion is *kindness*, i.e., compassion for all sentient beings. He also said that if any tenet of Buddhism is inconsistent with modern science, then Buddhism must change. Once when asked at a lecture what happens to our consciousness after death the Dalai Lama stood in silence for three or four minutes.

Jacobsen: What is crossing the other side of the river in Buddhism, and then discarding the proverbial raft?

May: After you cross to the other side of the river, i.e., attain enlightenment or liberation from the illusion of personal identity, you should discard the raft, i.e., Buddhism. Atheist and neuroscientist Sam Harris seems to have an understanding of Buddhism and the human situation. Buddhism also maintains that everything is transient and, hence, one day there will be no Buddhism.

Jacobsen: In “Thought without measurement,” you echo Wittgenstein about the relation of comedy and great philosophical works. Why?

May: No, I have not echoed Wittgenstein but reversed him!
Wittgenstein wrote: “A serious and good philosophical work could be written consisting entirely of jokes.”

Whereas I wrote:

*Thought without measurement

*A hilarious comedy could be written consisting entirely of serious and good philosophical works.*

Here I meant that philosophy ends where measurement begins. The domain of philosophy is diminishing historically as scientific knowledges increases

Jacobsen: “In Praise of Stupidity” speaks to the “primitive species” *homo sapiens*. The species that works in the destruction of one another in tribal warfare and of the environment sustaining its livelihood, not too bright in other words. You speak to the possible evolutionary function of relative stupidity. In that, a highly intelligent species, relative to the present, would probably self-annihilate, where lower mean intelligence of the species leads to a higher probability of surviving in the Darwinian world of nature. You point to an evolution of human intelligence beyond human compassion and wisdom. What seem like the drivers for an increase in intelligence beyond human compassion and wisdom?

May: Natural selection during inter-species competition found little utility in what we call, “compassion and wisdom.” A predator should not feel compassion towards his prey. But the development of weapons of mass destruction by any species on any planet, e.g., Homo sapiens on Earth, would be a game changer. Planets are bio-cultural Petrie dishes in the universe. To get from a Type-0 civilization to a Type-1 civilization or beyond will require much less intra-species self-cannibalism. Only some unknown percentage of “advanced” civilizations would graduate from a Type-0 civilization to a Type-1 civilization. Some don’t make it out of their Petrie dishes.

Jacobsen: How are you defining wisdom and compassion here, as counter-forces to raw intelligence?

May: I’m not sure how to define “wisdom.” Apparently wisdom is traditionally identified by a consensus of individuals who are not considered wise by themselves or others.

Jacobsen: What is preventing intelligence levels reaching averages too high and leading to a greater potential to use the proportionate lack of wisdom and void of compassion to destroy the species, as we head into a self-scorched Earth scenario?

May: Social services and medicine in the modern Western world have produced a dysgenic breeding pattern. I do not imply that I think we ought to abandon social services and modern medicine. But only that social engineering and medicine can and often do have unintended consequences. The ‘absolute IQ’ is probably lower today than it was in ancient Greece, for example. Aldous Huxley mentions that in *Brave New World Revisited*.

But what is the purpose of intelligence and human intelligence in particular? Just to enable the organism to survive, eat, live long enough to produce offspring, who survive, eat, live long enough to have offspring, who survive, eat, live long enough to have offspring, who — — . After reproduction and some nurturance of one’s offspring, just drop dead. This is Nature’s program for us.

The purpose of human intelligence is not to develop a unified field theory, a Theory of Everything or cosmological theories. Such theories are not necessary for “survive-eat-reproduce-die DNA-replication machines” developed by natural selection.

Cosmology may be beyond the pay grade of Homo sapiens as presently evolved. Just as various threshold levels of IQ, i.e., an approximate range of scores, are associated with different human occupations and professions and every known species has obvious limits of cognitive ability, why would Homo sapiens as presently evolved be an exception to this? Pure anthropocentrism — man is considered by himself to be the center of the universe and the crest jewel of the cosmos, and without inherent cognitive limits as a species.

Many individuals with high IQs today apparently believe that they can do cosmology and theoretical physics without any graduate degrees in physics, as Newton and others did hundreds of years ago; maybe, but maybe not. In my view even credentialed cosmologists and theoretical physicists may not really be doing cosmology today. E.g., String theory, M-theory and Hugh Everett’s Many Worlds hypothesis may only be beautiful mathematical-metaphysics, if none are experimentally disconfirmable. If a theory cannot be disconfirmed experimentally, how can it be considered physical science?

Why do very high levels of theoretical intelligence even exist? Why has this level of intelligence evolved? Albert Einstein didn’t have more progeny than Genghis Khan or Attila-the-Hun. He was vastly
less ‘successful’ from an biological evolutionary perspective.

Unless you think we are “images of (some sort of) ‘God’,” images of something at a higher level, maybe holographic images of the cosmos or that the Hermetic principal “As above, so below” applies somehow in ‘our’ universe, then why is there intelligence beyond the eat-replicate-die level?

Until or unless Homo sapiens takes control of its own evolution at a biological-level and an AI-level, by gene-editing/genetic engineering and brain implants a la Yuval Noah Harari, we are basically Chimps with WMDs; we are Koko the gorilla at the Princeton Institute for Advanced Studies.

Jacobsen: In “Know Thy -,” you state, “I don’t know anything until I see myself announcing it on television.” How long have you been playing the part of Socrates?

May: You apparently assume that Socrates was not playing the part of May-Tzu by reverse causality from his future event-horizon, a la M.I.T.’s Seth Lloyd.

Actually “Know thy -” was intended as humor. It was inspired by a certain well-known political leader who, when asked when he had learned of this or that event, claimed that he only learned of it by watching television. So I took it a bit further by writing that “I don’t know anything until I see myself announcing it on television.”

Jacobsen: “Ideologies” speaks to a few points. One on preferable values compared to those that aren’t. What makes “freedom, peace and prosperity” preferable to “their absence or negation”?

May: Our paleo-mammalian brain and cerebral cortex seem to have innate preferences. Other species of animals also appear to seek ‘prosperity’ and freedom as innate positive reinforcers as well.

Jacobsen: Why are “ideologies” in general labelled “a secular theology of lies”? What would make an ideology not a “convenient lie” and more truth than merely “a bit of truth”?

May: Ideologies are secular in that they are not usually theocentric or claimed to be direct revelations from the God of the Bible — quite. Ideologies have in common with theologies that they are not empirically based. You can postdictively interpret history through an ideological lens but you cannot do controlled experiments to test and potentially falsify ideologically-based predictions.

“What would make an ideology not a “convenient lie” and more truth than merely “a bit of truth”?”

If an ideology were philosophy or science, rather than an tendentious admixture of disinformation and truth, a reality-map intended to influence or control our behavior, then it would be more objective and useful to its adherents.

Jacobsen: “Real poltitik [sic] among the Laputan Taoists,” you exhibit the Taoist philosophy, and the paradoxical way of thinking about the different parts of the world, almost like an inverted thinking into redundancy to make a not-so-obvious point seem obvious, as a form of education. What is Taoist reasoning or logic, inasmuch as it exists (or not)? What is, perhaps, a better title for it?

May: The following principles and theorems taken from https://phiyakushi.wordpress.com/2012/03/09/seven-principles-of-the-order-of-the-universe-and-twelve-theorems-of-the-unifying-principle/ summarize Taoist principles:

SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF THE ORDER OF THE UNIVERSE

1. All things are differentiations of One Infinity
2. Everything Changes; nothing is stationary
3. All antagonisms are complementary
4. All phenomena are unique; there is nothing identical
5. All phenomena have a front and back
6. The greater the front, the greater the back
7. All phenomena have a beginning and an end

TWELVE THEOREMS OF THE UNIFYING PRINCIPLE

1. One infinity manifests itself into the two universal tendencies of Yin and Yang; complementary and antagonistic poles of endless change.
2. Yin and Yang are arising continuously out of the ceaseless eternal movement of One Infinite Universe.
3. Yin appears as centrifugality, Yang appears as centripetality. The activities of Yin and Yang together create energy and all phenomena.
6. Yin and Yang combine in an infinite variety of proportion, creating an infinite variety of
phenomena. The strength of attraction or repulsion always represents the degree of difference or similarity.

7. All phenomena are relative and ephemeral, constantly changing their direction towards more Yin or more Yang.

8. Nothing is solely Yin or absolutely Yang. Everything is created by both tendencies together.

9. There is no neutrality; either Yin or Yang is always dominating.


11. Yin, at the extreme point, changes into Yang. Yang, at the extreme point, changes into Yin.

12. Yang always focuses towards the center. Yin always diffuses toward the periphery.

“Realpolitik Among the Laputan Taoists,” is a better tittle for it. The irony between the meaning of realpolitik and the description of the Laputa Taoists ought to be clear.

Jacobsen: For “Utopia,” is this a recipe for the ‘leadership’ of the current administration of the United States with a particular disability of ill-calibrated ego and grand greed?

May: No, it is a play on the Marxist dictum: “From each according to his ability, to each according to his need.” —> From each according to his disability, to each according to his greed. — Think Venezuela!

Jacobsen: “Understanding” perfectly exemplifies a big issue of the major religions of the world. Any further ‘issues’?

May: “Understanding” applies to the revealed Abrahamic religions, each of which claims to have the final, complete and perfectly understood ‘revelation’ of the One-and-Only-One True God. The only exception to this is the Bahá’í religion, in which revelation is considered to be an ongoing process.

Jacobson: Also, why don’t men understand their wives so much, even not at all?

May: I think a person cannot understand another person beyond his own level of self-understanding. G.I. Gurdjieff wrote that understanding was the arithmetic mean of knowledge and being. Being was defined as the average level of attention of the individual, not his level of attention at any given moment, and his genetic hardwiring.

Jacobsen: “Prolegomena To Any Future Obfuscation” poses this question to no one, “What is the relationship between the reality of existence and the existence of reality? Your answer: Plural, “…in N-valued logic there may be gradations or degrees of existence and/or non-existence, a quantized set of values approaching a continuum as its limit. Ideally in this case the continuum mapped upon various topological structures in N-dimensional hyperspace, in order to maximize the degree of lucidity of the obfuscation.” This then leads to a statement on parsimony or (William of) Ockham’s Razor: “…entities should not be multiplied unnecessarily.” You posit “May’s Razor,” or, “Words should not be simplified unnecessarily.” How does May’s Razor apply, in particular, to metaphysics?

May: This writing was satire, inspired by the incomprehensibly obscure writings of an individual on one of the high-IQ lists. “Words should not be simplified unnecessarily,” because someone may grasp what you are talking about and be able to refute it.

Jacobsen: Why is reality simply a ‘plural relationship,’ or where the “reality of existence and the existence of reality” have no “single relationship” and, in fact, have “multiple relationships”?

May: This was all meant as satirical humor.

Jacobsen: Why is reality so ahead of its time in its polyamorousness? [Ed. Play on the phrase “multiple relationships” regarding the “reality of existence and the existence of reality.”]

May: Is this a koan?

I don’t quite understand how “reality could be … ahead of it’s time,” even a smidgen, let alone “so ahead.” What this could possibly have to do with amorousness, poly- or otherwise, must be one of the deep mysteries.

Jacobsen: Why are metaphysicians prone to super-overcomplicated-complexifications of ideational-concepts about extra-meta-super-reality?

May: “Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language.” — Ludwig Wittgenstein

Jacobsen: Are stage magicians like Penn & Teller, and James Randi, better than metaphysicians because they explain the trick and in straightforward terms (with an entertaining presentation)?

May: “better”? — “because”? — “entertaining”?
A magician could make this question disappear, but would the essence of the question still remain?

Appendix I: Footnotes


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Conversation with Anas El Husseini on Private Forums, Email Newsletters, Journals, Common Elements, Apps, Megalomaniacs, Thoth, and Balanced Intelligence: Member, Glia Society (3)

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Abstract
Anas El-Husseini is a Member of the Glia Society. He discusses: private forums; the email newsletters; the journals for the high-IQ societies; some common elements; private forums, email newsletters, and journals; apps for communication; long-term online platforms; “Die silently”; some intents of society founders and administrators; a reasonable and coherent society; the alternative tests; historical cases of high-IQ societies becoming particularly acrimonious and destructive; the Glia society; the reason for taking the test in the first place; some first impressions of the tests; the general impression of the content of Thoth; the general contents and reasons for submitting to Thoth; some of the sources of humour found in megalomaniacs; the source of the emotional, verbal, and logical deficits in megalomaniacs; the loss of interest in I.Q. tests; balanced intelligence; and efforts to bring everything under the same roof.

Keywords: Anas El Husseini, Glia Society, IQ, megalomaniacs, Paul Cooijmans, Thoth.

Conversation with Anas El Husseini on Private Forums, Email Newsletters, Journals, Common Elements, Apps, Megalomaniacs, Thoth, and Balanced Intelligence: Member, Glia Society (3)
*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: How do the private forums work in the high-IQ communities?
Anas El Husseini[1],[2]*: They are more or less like public forums, but with different types of topics sometimes, and with less traffic (due to the usually low membership). The communications there are rather high in quality, not only in the content’s side, but also in the presentation and the verbal ability.

Jacobsen: What tends to be the content of the email newsletters?
El Husseini: They vary from I.Q.-related tests/conests/articles to more common topics like personal choices of music. They contain sometimes articles or stories written by society members and published in I.Q. journals or elsewhere. Philosophical discussions occasionally take place there. They are also generally open to all kinds of intellectual communications, whether trivial or major.

Jacobsen: How common are the journals for the high-IQ societies?
El Husseini: They seem like a tradition for high I.Q. societies. If you find such a society without a dedicated journal, or with a journal that does not publish new issues any more, you will be right to assume that that society has become defunct.

Jacobsen: What tend to be some common elements of them?
El Husseini: Basically, there are articles authored by society members looking for a place that allows them to be published verbatim. However, some journals like Thoth accept copy from non-members too, so you get to see some bizarre content (since I.Q.
societies tend to attract megalomaniacs and other types of people). Other people like to write about their personal achievements, memories and life experiences and publish it there.

Jacobsen: What could make the private forums, email newsletters, and journals more engaging?

El Husseini: Modernization and rules. First, people have been preferring live chat and social apps over email lately, since the latter usually requires more formality in communications. Second, it is my opinion that the stricter the rules of the forum, the less people become inclined to participate. However, rules are very essential in such forums, since they are there to regulate and not to restrict freedoms. One should set a balance between forum rules and the allowed behavior in order to avoid compromising the principles of the society and the freedom of its members.

Jacobsen: Could the creation of apps for communication bridge the generations of individual members who exist within the high-IQ societies?

El Husseini: I think so, as I explained in an earlier answer.

Jacobsen: Not only member cognitive rarity cutoff for entry, there seems to be the facet of longevity and a long-term growth trajectory of a society for communication. Mensa International started a long time ago and continue to grow past 130,000+ members. It’s a feat. In fact, with online availability and access, could long-term online platforms provide a basis for sufficient membership, trust, and will to move into “physical events” and “meetings”?

El Husseini: No doubt that online presence has increased the outreach of high I.Q. societies, but those seem to have reach their limits in terms of increasing members nowadays. Talking about the higher range of I.Q. societies, they tend to either decrease in new membership because they became dormant, or they increase at an almost fixed rate every year for the last decade.

Jacobsen: I like the phrase, “Die silently.” It seems true. Based on some preliminary analyses of the landscape of the high-IQ, we can note the trend there. Many listings of societies lead to dead links, i.e., likely defunct societies. Any suggestions to memberships on prodding the administrators to maintain focus and energy on the society, so as not to “die silently”?  

El Husseini: In brief, the administrator must be fully involved, dedicate a good amount of his own time for this role, and manages to keep the other members engaged and interested in activities and discussions.

Jacobsen: What are some intents of society founders and administrators that can lead them inevitably into oblivion without a change of course?

El Husseini: I do not think there are any intents within society admins that lead to that result. It is usually inaction and passiveness that are the main culprits.

Jacobsen: What cutoff seems most conducive to a reasonable and coherent society without restricting the growth and access of the society?

El Husseini: A good compromise between freedom and regulations seems like a good basic conduct, although not trivial to achieve.

Jacobsen: Why do so many societies focus on the aspects of the alternative tests as opposed to mainstream intelligence tests?

El Husseini: Mainstream intelligence tests have their weak points. They are so common that their patterns are found in almost every online I.Q. test, so people can learn or get trained to memorize those patterns and achieve an I.Q. score higher than their real I.Q. Furthermore, many of those tests have a low cut-offs, i.e. they cannot measure I.Q. higher than 140 or 150 on a standard deviation of 15.

Jacobsen: Any historical cases of high-IQ societies becoming particularly acrimonious and destructive based on personality conflicts?

El Husseini: None that I know of.

Jacobsen: Why decide to join the Glia society in December of 2012?

El Husseini: I was looking into joining Mensa first, but it had no branches in my country and it required supervised I.Q. tests. I found the alternative in online I.Q. societies, many of which admit members based on the scores of recognized unsupervised I.Q. tests.

Jacobsen: With “an I.Q. score of 149 (S.D. 15) on the ‘Psychometrically Activated Grids Acerbate Neuroticism’ test,” what was the reason for taking the test in the first place?

El Husseini: Part of the reason was to solve the extraordinary puzzles in there. The other part was to get admitted to Glia Society.

Jacobsen: What were some first impressions of the tests?

El Husseini: I have tried some of Paul Cooijmans tests before. My opinion is that they were always top-
quality. Their questions are unique, very challenging, and give a great satisfaction when one manages to solve them.

Jacobsen: What is the general impression of the content of Thoth to you?

El Husseini: I almost always find something of interest in Thoth, sometimes even an image or just a line. Although, most members seldom send content to be published there nowadays, there are other members who still keep at publishing steadily.

Jacobsen: What were the general contents and reasons for submitting to Thoth several years ago twice?

El Husseini: I had joined the society recently then, so I wanted to see the impact of my writings in the journal. One of the contents I published was a call for engaging society members in some group action. It didn’t get any response or feedback, so I let it go.

Jacobsen: What are some of the sources of humour found in megalomania?

El Husseini: They threaten you sometimes with things they obviously cannot do, or things they can do but it will only hurt them back. They tend to be illogical and contradictory too. They cannot think that they can be wrong in any way. All of that make them say things or in act in ways that render them as objects of humor to me.

Jacobsen: What seems like the source of the emotional, verbal, and logical deficits in megalomania?

El Husseini: It is mainly their failure at assessing their own abilities, and overestimating them, that make them think that they are perfect at their current level and that they don’t need to learn more nor to add any more skills to their arsenal.

Jacobsen: You stated, “I was also fond *at the time* of I.Q. tests, and high I.Q. communities were a source of tests and puzzles of a rare and high quality.” [Emphasis added.] Why the loss of interest in I.Q. tests?

El Husseini: Excellent I.Q. tests are rare. There exist few that show up now and then, which I usually participate in. Otherwise, I try to find interesting and new challenges elsewhere.

Jacobsen: Balanced intelligence seems probably most important for a satisfying life of the highly intelligent person. Community or a social circle is one facet of balance. How do you get the sense of balance out of the Glia Society? Does this seem similar for most others in the communities inasmuch as these exist?

El Husseini: A balance exists between opposites. Highly intelligent people are not necessarily antisocial, but many of them may not find a lot of people that they can befriend. I.Q. societies exist to bring such people closer to each other. The funny thing is that in such societies, there exists a diversity in philosophies and views which may oppose each other, requiring therefore a new kind of balance between them.

Jacobsen: Some efforts exist to bring everything under the same roof, as networked or associative efforts to unify the entire front of the high-I.Q. In some ways, this makes sense. In another sense, a diverse ecosystem of independently evolving communities can make a more interesting and variegated tapestry of the highly intelligent. In fact, this may make more sense, as these individuals seem more prone to independence of thought and small collectives may be the trade-off between individualism implied by independence of thought, in general, and collectivistic impulses with an instinct to socialize. What do you think about these efforts?

El Husseini: I have seen a couple of those attempts, none of which seems to achieve its goal, most likely due to the owner(s) of such groups or the participating societies. I personally think that intelligent people who just want to socialize do not need a private group to do so. One may find a good companion or partner with people who have very different levels of intelligence. Some other people get attracted to their opposites. For those reasons, I do not see that collective communities were a success.

Appendix I: Footnotes


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Conversation with Justin Duplantis on Giftedness, Deviancy, “Vidya,” and the National Association for Gifted Children: Member, Triple Nine Society (5)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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Abstract
Justin Duplantis is a Member of the Triple Nine Society and the former Editor of its journal entitled Vidya. He discusses: nuanced facets of giftedness; some ways individuals who are gifted can be derailed in childhood development; the higher risk factors for gifted youth becoming deviant; learning styles; the capacity to make better decisions; internal policies for helping new members who may be younger and having issues; an issue of Vidya to this particular issue; the National Association for Gifted Children; the doctoral research; and the Zone of Proximal Development.

Keywords: giftedness, IQ, Justin Duplantis, National Association for Gifted Children.

Conversation with Justin Duplantis on Giftedness, Deviancy, “Vidya,” and the National Association for Gifted Children: Member, Triple Nine Society (5)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: What are some of the nuanced facets of giftedness important for understanding nature of the gifts?

Justin Duplantis: Traditional schooling is tailored to those of average intelligence. The general population requires information to be conveyed numerous times, prior to its retention. Gifted youth do not require such repetition, so once the concepts are understood, the child becomes bored and restless. This, inevitably, results in the child attempting to locate something in which to entertain themselves. This is generally something that directly contradicts the classroom rules, resulting in a reprimand, as opposed to a redirect. These gifted youth are subsequently labelled deviant, as opposed to an exploration into their behaviour, which would have resulted in the proper labelling of the child as gifted.
Jacobsen: What are some ways individuals who are gifted can be derailed in childhood development?

Duplantis: As stated above, if the child is labelled deviant, as opposed to gifted, this could lead that child down a path that would inhibit growth and disable them from fulfilling their potential.

Jacobsen: In adolescence, what would be some of the higher risk factors for gifted youth becoming deviant? Is there an innate aspect to this running off the rails? We have cases of Suffah Yusof becoming, later, a prostitute. We have the case of Keith Raniere ruining several people’s lives and facing significant time in jail, potentially for life, as a cult leader. Bobby Fischer derailed into exile and anti-Semitism. J. Robert Oppenheimer tried to kill his tutor. Lots of stories like this abound.

Duplantis: I believe this is a two-part response that goes with nature versus nurture theory. Although there are exceptions to every rule, gifted individuals tend to fall into one of two extreme categories. There are those that have the need to try everything once and those that are uninterested in taking risks at all. The higher the standard deviation, the more likely that individual is to fall into one of these two categories. Due to this, there is a high propensity for nefarious behaviour by those who fall into the “try everything once” category. This is fueled by the need for the next thrill. I am unable to relate, as I fall into the opposite category, having never smoked, done any recreational drug, or even tasted alcohol. On the other side of the coin, nurture is certainly a factor and I strongly believe, as referenced above, that the identification of giftedness at an early age is vital. My five year old’s preliminary IQ test was done at three and he ceilinged out the test at 150 IQ, so we are unsure where he actually lies. He started Kindergarten this week and has exhibited behavioural issues already, due to his boredom. If, as parents, we were unaware of his potential there is a probability that this unbecoming behaviour could result in future issues. Instead, his teacher is aware of his giftedness and is exploring creative ways to keep him engaged.

Jacobsen: When you speak of learning styles, what is the theoretical and empirical foundation for this view?

Duplantis: Different learning styles are common among all demographics in society, so this phenomenon is not limited to the gifted population.

Jacobsen: Young adults, ideally, have more fully-developed and integrated brains for the capacity to make better decisions. Yet, still, their minds can go into deviancy, even mental illness. What are some of the ways in which this can be induced externally if not by internal factors? (Obviously, we’re talking ratios here.)

Duplantis: I strongly believe this starts in childhood and adolescence. It is vital that the mental stimulation and hunger for knowledge that gifted youth possess be channelled in the proper direction. Without this, the deviant road is the most convenient, for its excitement.

Jacobsen: For Vidy, have there been any previous issues of the journal dealing with this particular problem? Have there been internal policies for helping new members who may be younger and having issues, i.e., providing community, giving encouragement, supporting them socially and intellectually, etc.?

Duplantis: I am unaware if there have been any past articles that are specifically geared towards this. With that said, at the annual gathering each year there is generally someone that speaks on giftedness and provides advice and resources.

Jacobsen: If this hasn’t been done, would you consider devoting an issue of Vidy to this particular issue?

Duplantis: This has absolutely been on my mind, as well as conducting a presentation at a future annual gathering. With that said, I want to ensure that the primary information that is provided is factual, as opposed to opinionated; therefore, I am going to wait and do so until after ascertaining my PhD.

Jacobsen: With organizations like the National Association for Gifted Children, they provide supports for the gifted. It is an acknowledgement of the differential in performance in different areas for the youth. In What is Giftedness?, they state:

Students with gifts and talents perform—or have the capability to perform—at higher levels compared to others of the same age, experience, and environment in one or more domains. They require modification(s) to their educational experience(s) to learn and realize their potential. Student with gifts and talents:

- Come from all racial, ethnic, and cultural populations, as well as all economic strata.
- Require sufficient access to appropriate learning opportunities to realize their potential.
- Can have learning and processing disorders that require specialized intervention and accommodation.
Need support and guidance to develop socially and emotionally as well as in their areas of talent.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of this definition?

Duplantis: This is an all-encompassing definition. Just as the term Autism is used to describe individuals with developmental delays in one or more areas. There are many subcategories that are yet to be defined that fall within these larger categories. In some school districts, for instance, they have gifted theatre classes. The students must go through a rigorous testing process to be deemed gifted in theatre. This is completely separate from academic giftedness.

Jacobsen: Is this close to the definition used in the doctoral research for you?

Duplantis: My research is not generically focused, as this definition suggests. I am solely focused upon overall intellectual giftedness, as defined by IQ.

Jacobsen: Something featuring prominently as the theoretical construct for the NAGC is the Zone of Proximal Development. Who invented this terminology and theory? What is it? How is this important for parents of gifted children?

Duplantis: Lev Vygotsky developed this in the early 20th century. It essentially indicates that there are items in which an individual is capable of learning on their own, other items that need assistance from another individual to learn, and those items in which the individual is simply incapable of learning. The toughest sector for the gifted community is the sector of items that simply are unable to be learned. This is a much smaller quantity, as compared to the general population. Due to this, the gifted individual and their circle of influence (ie family, friends, educators, etc) find it inconceivable that a gifted person would be unable to learn a certain subject. This created frustration and often times feelings of worthlessness. Although there are many distinct differences between the average individual and the gifted, at the end of the day we are all human and face similar struggles. Human first. Gifted second.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Justin Duplantis is a Member of the Triple Nine Society and the former Editor of its journal entitled Vidya.


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Conversation with Heather Dugan on Relationships, Life, and Ruth Bader Ginsburg: Author

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Abstract

Heather Dugan is an author, advice columnist, and feature writer. She was a finalist in the USA Book Awards and the Indie Next Generation Book Awards. She recently published Date Like a Grownup. She discusses: dating like a grown up; look to someone as a potential partner or someone as a summer fling; change and growth; lifestyle and potential preconditions; the narrative inside of the woman’s mind; young woman vet ‘sharks’ or inauthentic men; the challenge for Millennial women looking for relationships; factors are the most important to make a relationship last; the loss of the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg; persistence; women to see themselves as making independent choices in more connection with their real selves in their lives; and challenges rather than primarily as tragedies.

Keywords: Heather Dugan, life, love, relationships, Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Conversation with Heather Dugan on Relationships, Life, and Ruth Bader Ginsburg: Author

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: When you’re considering dating, and dating like a grown up, what are some lessons you’ve learned in reflection?

Heather Dugan[1],[2]: One of the things that got me started on writing that book. If you had a difficult situation, a lot of friends would like to bail you out, “You can pretend you have an emergency.” I wanted to do it differently. You feel a lot more empowered and happy with your choices if you can face people directly. I started this for Date Like a Grownup: Anecdotes, Admissions of Guilt & Advice Between Friends[3] The big scenes I come back to are understanding who you are. A lot of the time, people begin dating the second time around thinking that they’re the same person as the first time around. They don’t realize, maybe, that they’ll be looking for different qualities.

Have yourself in a position where you have a life bigger than dating, it means that you need good, strong friend relationships. [Laughing] Otherwise, it is like trying to find dinner in a convenience store when starving or hungry.

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Dugan: Then you tend to grab the least-worst option or the last text message. If you’re solid in your self-understanding, then you can wait for the best fit for you. It fits into some other things like filtering out people who may be nice, but do not fit. It is a self-assessment – being honest with who you are. We have such need for a relationship. Where they will cloak a candidate with all of their hopes and dreams, they want to see this person s the person that they want. Something that resembles a dream. Then the person [Laughing] does a bad little strip tease and reveals who they are. You just weren’t will to see that.

Jacobsen: This is good information. Also, the framework for coming to vet a potential candidate – let’s call them – for a relationship, this will differ for each individual, but there are trends in terms of what people want where they are in life. For someone of a younger cohort, how do they, typically, if they are a young woman, look to someone as a potential partner or someone as a summer fling – so to speak?

Dugan: My book is really geared more towards for people looking for the long-term relationship. I don’t think that you need to filter. If that is your intention, short fling, there are some things. It is where your attraction is; that is what that boils down to. You may want some shared activities. If you want some legs on it, you have to look deeper than that. Because you can find chemistry in shared activities a lot of different places. If you want it to last longer than a summer, you have to find some other commonalities. One of the big things that will make the difference is static versus a dynamic partner.

It can cause a lot of friction. One wants to stay the same. They aren’t curious. There is nothing wrong with that. But that kind of person is not going to be comfortable in being with someone who wants to learn and grow. Even two people who want to grow, they may not even have the exact same interests. I think it is important to have the same mindset of the curiosity. Because you will always have things to share. Actually, it is better if you don’t share your whole lives together. Otherwise, you suck the oxygen out of the relationship.

Jacobsen: When we talk about change and growth, change is more neutral and can go in any number of directions, including dissolution. Growth has more positive connotations. It has this sense of adding things to the unit, to the couple, rather than detracting from it. What are the positive things, concrete manifestations, of growth here?

Dugan: A lot of times, this last book I wrote about the transitions of people individually, but the effects on couples as well. These are life changing events.
When a couple weathers things together, they find strength and learn to appreciate and rely on each other in new ways. Other times, the deficits become clear. If a couple is to grow, then I think it is a matter of each of them being able to use the strengths of them. It takes knowing the strengths of the other person and the strength of oneself. Growing, it is creativity in there too. If we are growing, we are trying new things. One of my lessons to my youngest, “You saw the mistakes of your sister. You saw the mistakes of your brother. Make your own mistakes.”

Obviously, with a couple, in the context of a romantic relationship, you want to be growing, learning. A manifestation – to be more specific – is growing together and finding new things to talk about, new activities to share together, probably meeting new people to talk with. A lot of it is fresh water flowing into the relationship. It guarantees that you’re going to have new information, new opportunities. It is what tends to drive the growth. It is integrating what you’re learning into your life.

Jacobsen: For young women, younger people in general, they, typically, do not have to worry about a lot of health issues. As they get older, the probability of them having any variety of health issues from the very severe to the minor rise. Different health issues arise as well. When people are looking for the long-term partner when they are younger, how should they factor into account lifestyle and potential preconditions an individual might have who they might be looking to have legal and economic ties to – for a lifetime, potentially?

Dugan: In the beginning, if you are young and starting out, philosophy will be important. You mention later having some evidence of those ideas. Are you financially frugal? Do you enjoy spending lavishly? You want to be compatible on that. Part of that is going to be a shared activity thing. Is this somebody who likes to go running or going out, or staying in watching Netflix? Hopefully, your diets are compatible. In terms of health, it is all a roll of the die on it. If you are healthy, hopefully, you will be attracted to someone compatible that way. In the years that transpire, there are other things that grow beyond the initial physical attraction and other things. So, you’re able to weather things like a health issue.

Because, big and small, they do happen. People do bump into things. You do get stronger. I’ve had ankle surgery. I am still hiking in Colorado. You learn to push through. If you are in a couple, it becomes part of your story. Anytime you can make something part of the story. It is good.

Jacobsen: When a relationship is going well for an older person, what is the narrative inside of the woman’s mind? If a younger woman, what is the narrative there as well? Are there differences, in other words?

Dugan: I will have to think about the younger side of it. Because people share things, you don’t know the whole internal narrative. You always begin relationships with a lot of hope and with a lot of history. Older people have more history. A lot of times, I think that can put a ballast on it. But it doesn’t make it go away. People react in different ways. It depends on how mentally healthy they are. Some people, unfortunately, have a difficult time without drama. I do a lot of speaking on relationships in general. It is so important to catch. People do these patterns based on past experiences, which end up sabotaging relationships, sometimes.

If things are going well, and if the person is emotionally healthy, then the excitement comes from enjoying life together rather than creating drama. There is some peace in that. But you are planning for a future they share. Again, for the younger, there is not the history there. But everyone brings some history. In the beginning, you are dating the possibility of a person, almost. As we go along through life, we get chiselled. It is almost like a sculpting process. I see that happening. You reveal more and more of yourself as you grow into yourself.

Jacobsen: How can a young woman vet ‘sharks’ or inauthentic men who can make wild promises but have no intention of fulfilling them? Or are simply not competent in life, in life tasks and goals, to fulfill some of the promises that they make, even with good intent?

Dugan: It is important to give people time to show who they are. It is difficult to know, immediately. You may have clicks on things that look like a relationship will go a while. But you have to have some glitches along the way. You have to deal with a malfunctioning toilet or delaying travel plans. Travelling together is a great way to see how flexible people are; somebody might make promises. You look for how they treat you. Words are one thing. What do they do? I often tell people in terms of evaluating the quality of the relationship.

A lot of people, they are weighing it, “Is it valuable to say or should I move on?” Is it diminishing you? Are you able to be your best self? If anybody is having to diminish who they are in order to keep the relationship afloat, it is not going to work in the long-term. That’s a time to have, at least, a discussion together to see if it is something that can be
understood and rectified. But that situation, if somebody is squashing somebody else’s capacity to grow or is trying to keep them within a certain framework, then you’re likely to get to get a defensive response. It is better to live alone than to not live authentically as yourself.

Jacobsen: What do you see as the challenge for Millennial women looking for relationships, family, if they are heterosexual, a husband and family? As Pew Research finds, most young men and women do want marriage and family in the United States.

Dugan: I’ve encouraged my children. I’ve told them, “Don’t get married until you’re at least 30.” It is great if you can find someone who you click with and can do things together. There is no rush. You need to be stable in who you are before having children. It launches you into another orbit. I’ll be honest. It is not like you become a parent and suddenly have everything figured out. It is one of the first things I had my kids understood when they were older. “You’ve got it from here.” We don’t have to start a family immediately. I can understand when some people are tentative to move in that direction. I hear what you’re saying, ultimately. It is important to make sure it is a solid relationship. There are a lot of wobbly things in the world right now.

Hopefully, a relationship when you’re younger makes things in the world a little more stable, at least in your vicinity. Is it easy to relax with them? I remember back in relationships. Here is one party that is happy, which has nothing to do with me, it is something carried with them. People show you their best self. That is what we do. Over time, more and more, we reveal parts of ourselves that we are unsure of being worthy for other people to see.

Jacobsen: What factors are the most important to make a relationship last? Based on the research and the advice in the column, what strategies should people keep in mind?

Dugan: I think flexibility is huge. Rigidity has killed more things. It is difficult when people decide there is one way of living, one way of doing things. It is important to embrace things that come your way, to incorporate that into what you’re already building. Kindness, you have to be able, even in the midst of difficult times when there is a crisis or someone is not feeling well/afraid, to know the line and not to vent on your partner. To be kind, it is final. That’s what keeps things afloat, I think. Showing respect, you will not agree on everything. Respecting their choices and letting them have them, that shows love to the highest.

Unfortunately, it is hard to dial it down to a couple. But flexibility, kindness, respect, and a sense of commitment to something bigger than yourself, the promoting of each other in terms of appreciating their ability to be their unique self, not wishing for some other self – letting them be their self on their time. So, you can have the safe, calm space or a haven from the world.

Jacobsen: Unfortunately, there was the loss of the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg late last month. She has been a pillar for a lot of women’s rights progress, nationally, in the United States, whether in Supreme Court decisions or in commentary. So, as a mother, how can you approach speaking about the legacy of former Justice Ginsburg in regards to the work that she has done, and the strength of women and the importance of gender equality in the United States?

Dugan: I like to use those conversations as a way of empowering my kids and to help them tap into their own possibilities. On the topic of legacy, I would begin talking about how these develop over time. She didn’t become a circuit judge until 60. There’s a lot of work there. A lot of constancy, integrity, to get to the position, to be the same in all situations. The reliability of the decision-making there for her. It is helping your daughter understand who RBG is to so many people and thinking, maybe, the things she would hope people know about herself. Now, and what kinds of things would she like to build towards for her own legacy, another thing, too, the consistency thing; the constancy of being the same person in all situations. It is important to talk about integrity and to be the same in all situations.

It can be difficult for young women and for young men for that matter. Can you be the same person with your friends group? It is understandable that, maybe, you speak differently with adults than with kids. Are you able to be the same person with adults and with kids? If you are a person of respectful of other people’s ideas, are you different with one friend group than with another?

Jacobsen: You had a note about persistence as well. What is the example of persistence in Ginsburg’s life?

Dugan: The whole going first thing, my kids have heard a lot, “If not you, then who?” The idea that somebody has to take the first step for things to change. It wasn’t one step. As we said, her legacy, she went at this creatively. She was striving for equality through the use of the law, but she came at it through different viewpoints. As part of her push for women’s rights, she argued widowers should receive
death benefits. It was creative to find that and make that as part of the puzzle. I would go on to the value of creative problem solving, where there are different approaches for the same situation to move yourself forward. Talking about what it means to be a pioneer, that “no” is always part of the process. You are going to hear, “No.” Women need to understand it. Because they are going to hear it. When I was younger, “No,” would stop me in my tracks, now, it is more information.

**Jacobsen:** [Laughing].

**Dugan:** It is not judgment on a person. When they are more aware, then they can blow through them easier and then make their next attempts, I would ask about times when she heard, “No,” when she thought that she should have heard, “Yes,” when she thought that she was capable. Arming our kids with those first words, so they have that launching pad, the moment when you are first feeling the stress of the situation. It can be hard to find the words. It can give them the confidence to push past and find the dialogue rather than giving up. RBG, her life is such a rich history and example. There are a lot of different answers to learn on how she progressed through her journey.

**Jacobsen:** How can one allow women to see themselves as making independent choices in more connection with their real selves in their lives?

Dugan: I think you have to build that confidence in self. A lot of people spend their 30s, 40s, and 50s repairing a confidence damaged in childhood, unfortunately. Talking with your daughter that she will make decisions totally different from you, it’s totally fine. RBG pursued a different path than her mom. She couldn’t attend college. But her mother was her fan. Talk about the ways the two of you are similar and different, it allows her to be different within the family. The fact that she can change her mind. That’s part of gaining information. It does mean that you do change your mind. RBG exhibited an open-mindedness, even as she held onto core values. She socialized quite a lot with Scalia. There are a lot of great anecdotes out of that. Her challenges made her stronger, because of him. If you integrate the good parts into your own, and crystallize what you really good think, it is a good thing. We need discuss active listening and discussing vs. arguing, being able to take in the information the other person is preparing rather than preparing the rebuttal [Laughing].

**Jacobsen:** [Laughing].

**Dugan:** It is affirming that that is a sign of strength. That apologizing is a sign of strength. She apologized for comments about Donald Trump and Colin Kaepernick. She said things that she thought later weren’t the best and was strong enough later to say that. Saying, “Sorry,” doesn’t make you a weaker person, it makes people respect you more if you own up to it. Was there a time when people apologized to you, and then you liked them better because you felt they were more real with you? Maybe, you ask about times that she’s gotten information and changed her own mind. It will help her be more open to that kind of thing.

**Jacobsen:** As a wrap-up question for the session today, I want to ask about some of your difficulties in your life that you have experienced and taken those on board as challenges rather than primarily as tragedies, so as to become stronger.

**Dugan:** It has been a journey [Laughing]. Now and then, people will say, “You’ve had such a charmed life.” I just want to laugh [Laughing]. I had a call today, I mentioned. There was a time in life when I lost three close family members, had a major surgery, was going through divorce proceedings, was trying to raise kids as a single mother, and my mother required care. I got very disconnected from the whole world. It was a very difficult, dark time. I didn’t know that I could create anything better out of my life. I think my children were part of it, certainly, of moving forward. It was a greater responsibility for everybody. If you have something bigger than yourself, then that always helps. I have always been one of those people who has been curious. There is always an expectation. I want to see what it is [Laughing].

I’ve mentioned the previous ankle surgery. I find workarounds. Most of the time, when something is blocked, I have begun to find ways around them and see them as detours. Plan B is almost always better than Plan A because it includes possibilities and spontaneity, which didn’t enter my brain. I didn’t have the idea. [Laughing] I think having this sense of purpose and looking for workarounds in Plan B. It makes all the difference. The purpose part, for me, is helping other people maximize their life experience. It is such a big and important purpose. I don’t think I could stop.

**Jacobsen:** Heather, it’s been a delight. Thank you so much for your time today.

**Dugan:** Well, thank you, I appreciate chatting. If I can ever help you with anything, just give me a call.

**Appendix I: Footnotes**

[1] Author; Columnist.

[3] Blurb from Amazon (Hyperlinked in the main text): “Date Like a Grownup examines the impact of loneliness and social obsolescence on men and women in their second single lives and provides punctuating proof that looking for love from a place of isolation is as unwise as grocery shopping on an empty stomach. A USA Book Awards and Next Generation Book Awards finalist, Date Like a Grownup is “a witty and insightful look at dating the second time around, “a refreshing peek into the challenges of building midlife relationships” and “a toolkit for moving past the loneliness toward a relationship built for the future.” Unlike most relationship manuals, this book does NOT guide the reader through game-playing and winning temporary partners. Instead, Ms. Dugan presents a personalized strategy for building a life foundation that facilitates finding and growing a “right fit” relationship. Topics include: effective filtering, social media and online dating, how to avoid isolation and “space-filler” choices and how to strategically begin building a larger social network. Engaging narratives such as “The Percocet Proposal” and “Need Meets Greed” underline specific dating principles outlined in the book and affirm that none of us are immune to bad choices. These real-life outtakes from interviewed men and women are often funny and always insightful. Heather Dugan is a speaker, discussion facilitator and connection coach, a writer/advice columnist and frequent media expert on topics related to relationships, dating, connection, combatting isolation and work/family issues. Founder of Cabernet Coaches, a social connection group that encourages and enables women to build bigger relational foundations, Heather is dedicated to high impact, face-to-face friendship as a means of change. Her videos, articles and books promote active enablement, meaningful connection and proactive decision-making with a twist of humor and the affirming good nature of a friend who has traveled the same road. With at least half of adult population attempting a Do-Over on their most committed relationship—and many getting it wrong yet a second time—Date Like a Grownup provides time-saving truths for the millions of men and women navigating midlife dating.”
Conversation with Mhedi Banafshei on Egalitarianism, Convergent Intellectual Interests, Trust, Confidence and Humility, and “Broadening of Horizons”: Member, World Genius Directory (3)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen


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Abstract

Mhedi Banafshei is a Member of the World Genius Directory. He discusses: high-IQ communities defined within the parameters; egalitarianism; common things; certain intellectual interests’ the high-IQ societies; the issues around the legitimacy of high-IQ societies; the issues around the “existence of differences of intelligence altogether”; some of the reasons of others for joining the high-IQ societies; examples of individuals who could only be identified as geniuses; inappropriate ways of putting forth one’s ideas; the important lesson on resilience in the midst of reality; a gifted person learn to trust, drop their guard, and trust their natural inclinations of interests to guide them in life; “answers that are weighted differently rather than just considered as either correct or incorrect”; the injustices of the past; high-IQ societies matching “most things in life”; the precarious balance between humility and confidence; some programs available for the “broadening of horizons” of the gifted and the talented; and speculation as to the reasons for “those with IQs above 150 or so… less likely to have careers of prestigious positions.”

Keywords: confidence, egalitarianism, high-IQ societies, geniuses, humility, injustices, interests, Mhedi Banafshei, World Genius Directory.

Conversation with Mhedi Banafshei on Egalitarianism, Convergent Intellectual Interests, Trust, Confidence and Humility, and “Broadening of Horizons”: Member, World Genius Directory (3)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: What makes high-IQ communities defined within the parameters of any “social factor which indicates something about human values or something meaningful in terms of experiences of life is a foundation of community”?

Mhedi Banafshei[1],[2]*: Naturally, many members of high IQ societies are quite adept at being critical thinkers. Those who aren’t inclined to superficially analyze things are likely to find friends among themselves, in the same way that those who’re simply led by popular opinion and the media attract each other. The theory that one can only meaningfully communicate with those within two standard deviations of one’s own IQ score does have some truth to it, even if it doesn’t explain everything.

Jacobsen: Why is egalitarianism a common trait within the high-IQ societies?

Banafshei: I suppose many of us are smart enough to know that the value of something achieved is not determined by the superficial characteristics of the achiever.

Jacobsen: What are some of the common things to help “identify people with whom they have more than one thing in common”? 
Banafshei: I think it helps to try to listen better than you talk. People will reveal things well enough, and soon enough, when you do that.

Jacobsen: You stated, “Given that having a high IQ does generally relate to a somewhat higher likelihood of forming certain intellectual interests, such societies are giving many opportunities not only find those with similar interests but also those who happen to be equally cognitively equipped in relation to exploration of the subjects of mutual investment.” I ask: What seem like such “certain intellectual interests” in which “societies are giving many opportunities”?

Banaafshei: It hasn’t been difficult for me to find knowledgeable people within IQ societies to converse with about the subjects I’m interested in, which relate to some of the abstract topics of philosophy, mathematics and psychology. Many of us find IQ societies to be very handy in terms of just learning about almost any subject for purposes of curiosity and intellectual development even, without there necessarily being any desire of academic ambition. And for this reason, IQ societies can have an educational value for the intelligent that can’t be simply replaced by formal education. In terms of the aforementioned, I’ve found the IQ societies founded by Iakovos Koukas to be very good and believe they’ll pave the way of the high, and especially ultra-high, IQ sphere.

Jacobsen: Do the high-IQ societies seem more important to a country culture or less important in general now?

Banaafshei: IQ societies are of limited relevance in most countries because options are very limited in terms of the existence of nationally based IQ societies. Currently, many countries only have Mensa chapters and little else of serious development. While higher IQs are not very common, enough people exist with IQs at or above the third standard deviation to make the creation of national societies of such viable. With the realization of this, importance would manifest.

Jacobsen: What seem like the issues around the legitimacy of high-IQ societies?

Banaafshei: The main ones are the questions of intelligence itself. Since a considerable number of questions still surround intelligence, many who happen not to have any confirmation of possessing high intelligence are more comfortable assuming the concept of intelligence is merely an abstract philosophical one of little real-life consequence or that the point of diminishing returns is much lower than what is likely to be the case.

Jacobsen: What seem like the issues around the “existence of differences of intelligence altogether”?

Banaafshei: For reasons of political correctness, the education systems of many countries avoid assessing the intelligence levels of children and young pupils unless there is very obviously a need for it in terms of special needs, or teachers subjectively make formal judgments of such. The result of this is that many schools do a very poor job at identifying high, and sometimes even very low, intelligence. As well as the more important educational consequences this can have for many people, this reinforces social denial of the realities of intelligence related to the dunning kruger effect. Inevitably, intelligent people are undermined.

Jacobsen: What were some of the reasons of others for joining the high-IQ societies known to you?

Banaafshei: I know some who’ve joined with the hope they could find an appropriate partner, some who’ve wanted to learn from others, some who’ve wanted to find high IQ friends and even some who’ve simply been in the business of collecting as many certificates as possible.

Jacobsen: Any examples of individuals who could only be identified as geniuses, as such, after the fact?

Banaafshei: Individual examples are not as important as the general principle that contributions often need expansion of context to be properly understood.

Jacobsen: What are inappropriate ways of putting forth one’s ideas? What are more appropriate manners in which to put someone’s ideas forward to others?

Banaafshei: The universally inappropriate way would be to present ideas dishonestly. What’s appropriate depends on the idea itself and the range of people it can appeal to.

Jacobsen: If “failure is a part of life no matter what your IQ is,” what is the important lesson on resilience in the midst of this reality? What are some other similar realities for the gifted and talented to ingest as if the proverbial bitter pill?

Banaafshei: That while high intelligence is a good asset, it’s rarely sufficient on it’s own. It should be understood that even those who’re regarded as highly intelligent, or even geniuses, are not perfectly intelligent. Intelligence is relative, and the smartest are not as far ahead as some suppose. It’s only logical that some highly intelligent people become
complacent in life due to being able to sometimes get by more easily. But that is an often disastrous mistake. In the long run, the winners are always those who are well-rounded participants who possess many positive attributes of human success. The proverbial pill is that intelligent people would often find themselves much more easily overtaken by people of seemingly much lower cognitive ability than they may guess if they are led to believe intelligence is any guarantee of anything. It may seem like an obvious idea, but given the fact that the correlation between intelligence and success isn’t much higher, the need of it’s expression seems apparent.

**Jacobsen:** How can a gifted person learn to trust, drop their guard, and trust their natural inclinations of interests to guide them in life?

**Banafshei:** It’s important that they know themselves. Many of the ideas and expectations of prevailing cultures are not very accommodating of the essence of individuals who are statistical minorities of cognitive ability and/or personality. Life isn’t predicated on a monolithic one-size-fits-all philosophical framework of meaning. Those who’ll often find themselves at odds with the world, due to giftedness or anything else, would generally be better off if they try to forge their own senses of meaning and direction rather than continue to try to meet the, sometimes antithetical, standards of normalcy.

**Jacobsen:** Can you expand on the idea of “answers that are weighted differently rather than just considered as either correct or incorrect,” please?

**Banafshei:** While the abilities of cognitive tasks correlate with each other, there is still variation in terms of the subtest profiles of supervised IQ tests, and it’s also been found in relation to high range testing that some people of contextually moderate ability sometimes solve some of the hardest items, the hardest items which are also solved by many of the most intelligent test-takers. In relation to this, it’s clear that often there are a range of test answers which could be regarded as more or less statistically correct rather than categorically either. The application of this could lead to more precise estimations.

**Jacobsen:** What is done to ‘curb’ the injustices of the past? What is done to curb the curbing, so as to re-create the injustices of the past?

**Banafshei:** The range of both is too vast to be properly specified without writing a book, which I probably wouldn’t be qualified to write. An interesting context of this question is the circumstances in the US in terms of the current issues being dealt with relating to American minorities, and particularly African Americans, as the United States has been a focal point of matters of justice for a considerable period of time. Currently, it seems that radical opposing forces of politics are becoming more prominent there, and this may be in part because of the pervasiveness of the questionable modern notion that the things which are most representative of justice also happen to be the least offensive overall and the most easily presentable to society in association with causing minimal tension, this may have inhibited healthy debates in connection with growing problems and concerns of various kinds. Those who are seemingly the least biased in terms of radicalism will be crucial to the formation of things.

**Jacobsen:** You note most things in life, a lot, in relation to high-IQ societies. Does the consideration of high-IQ societies matching “most things in life” speak a lot about the nature of high-IQ and its associated societies built around attainers of said status?

**Banafshei:** Obviously, high IQ societies exist within contexts of general ones and like most, if not all, elements of subculture, they are highly influenced by the cultures of their surroundings. The dilemma of social groups which develop to function for niche purposes is that while they need to form norms of their own, they are nonetheless bound by the prominent cultural realities of their societal foundation. It’s difficult to say to what extent IQ societies tend to be structurally reflective of dominant systems, but participants thereof should certainly consider themselves relatively competent potential explorers of this matter.

**Jacobsen:** What is the precarious balance between humility and confidence?

**Banafshei:** A sense of responsibility is important. When one appreciates the importance of their actions in relation to others as well as themselves, it’s often easier to maintain balance of mindset.

**Jacobsen:** What are some programs available for the “broadening of horizons” of the gifted and the talented?

**Banafshei:** When in school, it’s important that the educational needs of gifted children are accommodated by the implementation of personalized pathways of learning. The simple fact is, good nurture of the most able children is of incalculable importance to the societal productivity of the future. If the question is thought of generally in relation to all of such people, then I’d say gifted/talented people should be focused on finding
the right way of doing things for themselves rather than simply following the example of others of a similar kind.

Jacobsen: Any speculation as to the reasons for “those with IQs above 150 or so… less likely to have careers of prestigious positions”?

Banafshei: Firstly, it should be clear to us all that difficulties of this kind don’t apply to everyone with IQs above this level. Given that one’s general intelligence doesn’t function independently of other human factors, whether or not problems of this kind will exist for a high IQ individual, and what the mechanisms of their existence/non-existence would be, depends on a host of personal, cultural, socioeconomic, and circumstantial factors, of course. In my own case, while I’m not sure such a notion applies in relation to my non-participation in the elite professions, I can say that some of the difficulties I’ve had in my formative years have related to my perceptions of interpreting things differently and apparently being more naturally evaluative/critical of the social activities, ideologies and fact related claims of the social systems of my engagement.

Appendix I: Footnotes


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Conversation with Bob Williams on Background, Genius, Theories of Intelligence, Psychometrics, and Worldview-Encompassing Philosophical System: Retired Nuclear Physicist (1)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen


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Abstract

Bob Williams is a Member of the Triple Nine Society, Mensa International, and the International Society for Philosophical Enquiry. He discusses: growing up; a sense of an extended self; the family background; the experience with peers and schoolmates; some professional certifications; the purpose of intelligence tests; high intelligence; the geniuses of the past; the greatest geniuses in history; a genius from a profoundly intelligent person; profound intelligence necessary for genius; job path; the more important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses; thoughts on the God concept or gods idea; science; some of the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations); the range of the scores; worldview-encompassing philosophical system; meaning in life; intelligence in the abstract; and the mainstream and fringe theories of human intelligence on offer over time.

Keywords: Bob Williams, intelligence, International Society for Philosophical Enquiry, IQ, Triple Nine Society.

Conversation with Bob Williams on Background, Genius, Theories of Intelligence, Psychometrics, and Worldview-Encompassing Philosophical System: Retired Nuclear Physicist (1)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: When you were growing up, what were some of the prominent family stories being told over time?

Bob Williams: Family stories were about what my grandparents and parents experienced before I was born. I recall thinking that I would not see advances as dramatic as those experienced by my grandparents. They were born before electrification and before flight, yet lived to see the first humans land on the moon. It is difficult to compare my life to theirs, but I think there have been at least as many big changes as they experienced.

Jacobsen: Have these stories helped provide a sense of an extended self or a sense of the family legacy?

Williams: Stories of past lives and experiences help to put my life in perspective. There has been an enormous change in the standard of living that my family has experienced as a result of increasing amounts of education and the technology that has increased exponentially in the last two centuries.

Jacobsen: What was the family background, e.g., geography, culture, language, and religion or lack thereof?

Williams: I was born during WW2 and grew up in Virginia in the suburbs of a city that was third largest (back then) in our state. We had two groups: whites and blacks. (Today this seems strange. As a student I only met one child who was Jewish and that was in primary school. We had one Catholic church, but I only knew of one student in my school who was Catholic. There were no Hispanics, Arabs, Russians,
or any of the ethnic groups that we only knew about from movies. Everyone claimed to be Christian; that meant Protestant as Catholics were presumed to mostly live elsewhere. Crime rates were low and violent crimes almost nonexistent. There was a very strong hatred of the North that was residue from the war. My great-great-grandfathers fought for the South, as did the families of those I knew. Today, that feeling has vanished. Technology and multiple generations caused many changes, even in local demographics.

**Jacobsen: How was the experience with peers and schoolmates as a child and an adolescent?**

**Williams:** I began first grade when I was 5 (6 was the usual). I had to go to a private school for one year, then transfer to the public schools. Through every grade, I was the youngest and, fortunately, one of the tallest in every class. One curiosity I have is about what was known about me by the schools and teachers. I don’t recall what if any standardized tests were given back then. I was apparently tested by a psychologist before being allowed to start school at age 5.

**Jacobsen: What have been some professional certifications, qualifications, and trainings earned by you?**

**Williams:** I have two degrees in physics and one in business administration. I went into the nuclear reactor business and worked (core design, modeling, analysis, instrumentation, etc.) in the private sector, then in the nuclear weapons business (we were intending to build a tritium producing reactor, before the SALT treaty made it unnecessary). In that particular market, everything is either proprietary (private sector) or classified (weapons program). As a result, despite constant writing, nothing was seen “outside.” We had only advancement as a reward. I joined my private sector company as an associate physicist, but the company decided to make everyone an engineer, so my job titles went that way, from engineer, to senior engineer, to principal engineer, and to fellow engineer. During that time I also held a range of management titles. I also became the company representative (we had research labs and production plants scattered over the eastern part of the US) for joint research projects, which led me to a very enjoyable stint of high level meetings with people in the US, over much of Europe, and the Middle East.

**Jacobsen: What is the purpose of intelligence tests to you?**

**Williams:** Today we can measure intelligence reliably and with good predictive validity. The only purpose of these tests is to predict important life outcomes. If the tests don’t do that, they are worthless… but they do it quite well. More intelligence means that there is a higher probability that a desirable outcomes will happen and undesirable ones will not. More intelligent people are more likely to experience: higher income, increased longevity, greater general health, more life satisfaction, higher degree of body symmetry, higher educational achievement (grades, years completed, difficulty of major), higher SES (a product of intelligence, not a cause of it), faster speed of mental functions, better memory, faster learning rate, greater number of interests (held with competence), higher job performance, higher brain efficiency (relative to glucose uptake rate and speed of mental operations). And … they are less likely to be impacted by smoking, HIV infection, crime, incarceration, school dropout, teen pregnancy, illegitimate births, and unemployment.

At the national level, mean national IQ correlates positively with per capita GDP, economic growth, economic freedom, rule of law, democratization, adult literacy, savings, national test scores on science and math, enrollment in higher education, life expectancy, and negatively with HIV infection, employment, violent crime, poverty, % agricultural economy, corruption, fertility rate, polygyny, and religiosity.

This effect does not have a known known. The Study of Mathematically Precocious Youth is a longitudinal study started by Julian Stanley and maintained today by Camilla Benbow and David Lubinski. Part of the study evaluated cohorts in the top 1% of intelligence. It showed that there are large differences between those in the bottom quarter of this range and those in the top quarter of the top 1%. These differences, favoring the more intelligent top quarter have been found in number of doctorates, number of STEM publications, number of patents awarded, income and literary publications.

**Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?**

**Williams:** Apparently it was well before I was aware of it. Even in primary school, I was selected for special treatment (a summer camp), a place on the varsity high school debate team when most participants were 4 years older, etc. By age 15, I began to win awards in science fairs that led to half a dozen trips to various parts of the nation; two trips to the International Science and Engineering Fair (one was part of the World’s Fair in Seattle); lots of prizes, a summer job, and ultimately
scholarships that paid for much of my college education. Upon entering my university I was given a chemistry test, which let to my being put in an advanced chemistry class that destroyed 2/3 of the students who were placed in it (I was up to it). Then there was a surprise trip by the Air Force (I was at Virginia Tech, which was compulsory military for two years, but I stayed in the Corps of Cadets for all four.) to send me to visit an airbase. It was years later that they told me I had made the second highest score on the Air Force Officer’s Qualification Test. The only thing I knew was that I did well on tests; it took years for me to connect various events to testing.

**Jacobsen:** When you think of the ways in which the geniuses of the past have either been mocked, vilified, and condemned if not killed, or praised, flattered, platformed, and revered, what seems like the reason for the extreme reactions to and treatment of geniuses? Many alive today seem camera shy – many, not all.

**Williams:** It is amusing to see how interested people are in genius (the real thing, not simply high IQ), yet bright people who are successful seem to be frequently looked down on. Genius is such a complex thing that it is extraordinarily rare. It happens when a constellation of necessary, but not sufficient traits exist at maximum expression. Hans Eysenck believed that both traits Neurosis and Psychoticism had to be elevated in true genius. Obviously if either trait is overly expressed, the individual would be hobbled and not achieve enormous feats of creative genius. When N and P are somewhat elevated they positively impact success, while likely creating an unpleasant personality. For example, P may cause a person to be seen as aggressive, cold, egocentric, impersonal, impulsive, antisocial, unempathic, tough-minded, and creative. Arthur Jensen believed that genius is the product of high ability x high productivity x high creativity.

ability = g = efficiency of information processing
productivity = endogenous cortical stimulation
creativity = trait psychoticism

The result of genius traits is not pretty, nor is it consistent in how it is displayed in geniuses. We have all read about the lives of various composers, artists, and scientists who were sufficiently “unusual” as to be unable to fit into normal life patterns. I think the common reactions that you mention are not restricted to genius. We see other people rejected when they have personality, or even physical, differences.

Curiously, I see this same rejection and bullying among the Canada geese that live in my yard. Lame geese and even normal geese without a group are rejected and sometimes attacked.

**Jacobsen:** Who seem like the greatest geniuses in history to you?

**Williams:** As a scientist, I am going to surprise you. It is the great artists, because they give us things that only they can produce. The major scientific discoveries would all be made, even if the people who discovered them had not existed. Of the greats, I think Beethoven is the most important person in all of history. His work was so profound, moving, and complex that nothing compares. Of course, the other composers (Bach, Mozart and many others) have made contributions that are treasures. In the arts, Michelangelo and Picasso lead the list of greats.

I have never seen a credible list of the IQs of any real geniuses. My guess is that those in the arts may be reasonably bright, but that it is their creativity and skill that sets them apart. In science, things are different. The scientists are brighter and higher on traits Agreeableness and Consciousness.

**Jacobsen:** What differentiates a genius from a profoundly intelligent person?

**Williams:** Personality and creativity. I have already discussed how personality can make a genius seem unlikable and unreachable. The thing that I find to be interesting is that the biological factors that are associated with bright brains are sometimes opposite from those associated with creative brains. We know from prodigy studies that prodigies have IQs that range from 100 to about 147 (those actually studied). Prodigies are found in rule based disciplines: chess, art, music, and mathematics. The highest IQs are those of the math prodigies.

One of the significant factors in the creative brain is an inhibitory function that is weak. This condition lowers the filtering system that rejects stimuli that are not needed for the task at hand. We experience this selective attention when we are in a noisy environment. Our brains usually tune out the noise, for example people talking in a social gathering, and focus on the sensory input that is needed (understanding the person we are talking to). When this selective attention is low, the person may find unrelated stimuli arriving in his brain simultaneously. This promotes new combinations of ideas that would normally be prevented by the inhibitory function. But this is exactly opposite of what we need for intelligence. A mathematician, scientist, or engineer must stay on task, not be distracted, and remain focused. An example of lowered inhibition is seen with alcohol and other drugs. Imagine trying to take a calculus test while you are inebriated!
There is a similar consideration in brain networks. The brain with poor connectivity (long mean path lengths and fewer connections to hubs) causes a single thought process to follow an inefficient path around the brain before it reaches its intended destination. During this long route, it can access information that leads to creative combinations of previously unrelated ideas. Again, this is opposite of what one needs for complex problem solving. There are other examples, but the point here is that creativity taps a set of brain conditions that are often opposite of those that are required for deep scientific reasoning.

Jacobsen: Is profound intelligence necessary for genius?

Williams: “Yes,” for STEM fields, “no” for the arts. This is not to say that artistic geniuses are not bright, but rather that they do not require “profound intelligence” of the sort we see in great scientists.

Jacobsen: What have been some work experiences and jobs held by you?

Williams: I spent a long time in the commercial nuclear reactor world. I began in reactor core physics, where I did modeling, burnup analysis, isotopic balances, and calculated a variety of physics parameters that are used by other physicists/engineers. A good part of that time involved work on fast breeder reactors, which was enjoyable because I could design and analyze multiple configurations so that the best one could be identified. It turned out to be a flat cylinder that got the name “pancake.” That design worked well because it allowed a lot of axial neutron leakage which fed the breeding of U-235 to Pu-239. Then I spent years doing transient analysis. This meant calculating the outcome of accidents, such as an ejected control rod, or a broken pipe. I recall doing the loss of feedwater accident for Three Mile Island-II. That was the accident initiated a sequence of events that destroyed the plant, but it was not because of a miscalculation, it was because we didn’t consider that an operator would turn off the emergency core cooling system! I ultimately became the only person who really understood the Reactor Protection System (RPS). It was satisfying to be the resident expert, but it made it difficult for me to move to something I wanted to do in a different division. I developed the methods for determining RPS setpoints and personally determined these for every large power reactor we built. I also did the work that resulted in the licensing of the first digital RPS approved by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

After training several people to do my job, I managed to move to the Contract Research Division, which was the most memorable and enjoyable part of my career. I mentioned some of that in an earlier question. All in all, I had great experiences doing things that most people could not even know about. My last 6 years (before retirement) were spent in the nuclear weapons program. I ended up working in Washington, DC for most of that time, as a Senior Technical Advisor to the Department of Energy. On one trip, I went to Mound, Ohio. The old part of this site was built very deep underground and designed to withstand a direct nuclear blast. It was amazing to see that something like that even existed. I was with a small group and we went on to Fernald. During the trip, someone wanted to visit a vault where weapons grade materials were kept. We went through 3 or 4 checkpoints where we had to go though various presentations of security clearances, etc. and then ended up in a round concrete room. The walls were decorated with machine gun ports and the guys behind them were actually holding the machine guns. I understood the old quip about “shooting fish in a barrel,” from the perspective of the fish. After they finally let us out of what amounted to a cage, we saw the vault, which was a major letdown, then we had to repeat each step in reverse. This sort of thing does not appeal to me at all. I was never happy working with security that involved man traps, armed guards, magnetometers, sniffers, x-ray, and endless security checks.

One thing that I enjoyed was teaching/lecturing. For whatever reason, I became the go to person for delivering lectures to our reactor customers, federal regulatory agencies (including one from Italy), and prospective customers. My lectures were always well received, but we were getting feedback that our Loss of Coolant lectures were not well received. This is an area that is focused on heat transfer and hydraulics. I had not worked in the area, but agreed to take over the lectures, if the engineers there would give me some time, explaining their modeling. I figured it out, designed, and delivered lectures that generated accolades from our customers.

Jacobsen: Why pursue this particular job path?

Williams: From childhood, I knew I wanted to go into science, but had no specific area of interest. By high school, I was more focused on chemistry and won awards on the studies I did with fuel cells that I designed and built, then with my studies of gas chromatography, using a system that I designed, built, then altered into various configurations. These led to multiple awards, up to and including a first and second at the International Science and Engineering
Fairs.] When I had to pick a major, I only considered the math load. I selected physics because I figured it was more math heavy than anything else. I was right at the academic level, but by the time I entered the nuclear business, we had mainframe computers and did most of our work using numerical methods (beating the answers out, by iteration). At that time reactors were the big deal for electric utilities and they paid off big for those who bought them. Ultimately, interveners found a way to stop the industry by endless (pointless) law suits that had no merit, but they delayed construction. At that time we were in the highest inflation period of modern times, so the utilities simply couldn’t pay the cost of their loans. It was a case of the interveners losing every battle, but winning the war.

Jacobsen: What are some of the more important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses? Those myths that pervade the cultures of the world. What are those myths? What truths dispel them?

Williams: Very bright people have the ability to understand and deal with multiple complex disciplines and to solve problems that are beyond even bright people. The spectrum of intelligence is defined by the structures and properties of the brain and can only be degraded by environmental encounters. That means we have not found a way to increase intelligence. The brain is built from our genetic instructions and is intelligent to the extent that its components are efficient and suffer few flaws. For example, we know that tissue integrity in both gray and white matter influences intelligence, as do the multiple factors that relate to mental speed (white matter tracts, hub connections, myelination, nerve conduction velocity, etc.). Ultimately, any brain feature that has a range of efficiency between individuals is going to favor the more efficient brain.

Studies of large populations and high end intelligence have shown that extreme intelligence is not associated with one or a few genes. It is simply part of the normal distribution of the huge number of factors that each contribute to phenotypic intelligence. We are at one of the big new directions of discovery in cognitive science: genetics. Within the past few years Genome Wide Association Studies (GWAS) have been done with large sample sizes. With over 1.2 million people represented, researchers have found more than 1,200 single nucleotide polymorphisms that are associated with intelligence. Despite this number, the effect size is only around 10%. Despite the small effect size, polygenic scores (PGS) have been derived from the GWAS and used to predict intelligence, even in embryos. These PGS have produced almost perfect (greater than correlations of 0.90) predictions of mean intelligence differences between breeding groups.

As the brain matures, the heritability of g (the sine qua non of intelligence) increases from around 40% in early childhood to about 85% in adults. This increase in the genotype is found in other traits as well. Despite the lower heritability found in young children, measurements done for ages 6 to 12 months are predictive of adult IQ and educational achievements. [Adult IQ, r = 0.59; Adult academic achievement, r = 0.53 (both corrected for unreliability)]

In the case of genius, as I previously noted, intelligence, creativity, and personality all have to be at optimum levels. This is an extremely rare event. Geniuses are typically born to families that have not shown outstanding performance in academics, invention, creativity, etc. Relatively few geniuses have children and many do not marry. Those who do have children rarely produce another genius (there are a few possible exceptions that we might find over the past several centuries).

Neither the general public nor those who teach at any level have even a modest understanding of intelligence. Russell Warne has been uncovering the details of just how little people understand. This year he did a survey of teachers asking them to rate a number of statements about intelligence on a Likert scale. Sadly, the results were not surprising. In recent years, he has surveyed US universities and found that most didn’t offer courses on intelligence and the psychology courses they taught used textbooks that primarily discussed discredited models (Gardner’s multiple intelligences) and often did not even mention g. He has written a book on the subject of myths about intelligence: In the Know: 35 Myths About Human Intelligence.

Myths

I will offer a few comments on just 3 of the many myths that are commonly accepted as facts.

Group differences

The single most damaging failure to understand is that there are large intelligence differences between breeding groups. These are differences in g and these are overwhelmingly genetic. The differences explain many of the conflicts we see between nations, within national groups, and between individuals. They explain differences in academic achievement, in job performance, in crime rates, wealth, income, health, and longevity. These differences have been known for 150 years and are forcefully denied by the
proponents of political correctness. Sex differences also cause some people to get upset and deny the differences. The reality is that, around age 16 males show a higher mean intelligence and a higher variability. These combine to cause a rapidly increasing male to female ratio in the right tail. There is controversy over the difference at the mean, but my conclusion is that it has turned up in a large number of independent studies and seems to be real. The difference we see most often is around 4 points, but a few studies have shown up to 6 points.

Heritability

Those who want to argue that all humans are born with identical abilities deny the very high heritability of $g$. We can and have measured this heritability using diverse methods that show essentially the same result. Those methods are as follows:

The correlation between MZA twins—This correlation is used directly—not squared.

Falconer’s Formula—This method was developed by Falconer and MacKay. It computed heritability by doubling the difference between the correlations of same-sex MZT and DZT twins. Numbers are typically $r = 0.88$ and $0.51$ respectively. After correction for reliability the numbers become $.98$ and $.56$, respectively. The difference is $0.42$, so the computed heritability is $0.84$.

Richard Lynn also reported two studies of heritability in India, both using Falconer’s Formula. One study yielded heritability of $0.81$ and the other $0.90$. After correction for reliability, these become $0.90$ and $1.00$, respectively.

1.0 Minus the Environmental Component—Adoption studies (and others) have shown that the environmental component is about $15\%$ in adults (see papers by Posthuma, Haier, Lynn, and various others). This method produces the typically cited level of heritability in adults of $85\%$.

Path Analysis—This technique was invented in the 1920s by Sewall Wright. The method incorporates multiple linear regression to apportion the contributions of each of the multiple causal variables to the variance in the single outcome. The assumed links between the causal variables can be tested and rejected if they do not fit the assumed causation. This is not a test of causation, but provides a means of determining magnitude and of establishing the existence or nonexistence of the assumed causality link. The method is general and has been used to study diseases, occupations, etc. One study that used this method was based on the Texas Adoption Project (300 adoptees). The analysis used the IQs of mother, father, their natural children, and their adopted children (after about 17 years of adoption). The heritability derived from this study was $0.78$ before correction for reliability. With correction it is about $0.86$.

Brain Imaging—Within the past decade papers have appeared with heritability estimates based on brain imaging of MZT and DZT twins. Imaging by Paul Thompson showed that the brain structure was heritable at the level predicted by other methods (listed above). PGS (previously mentioned) predict between group differences with strong correlation coefficients, as already discussed.

Environmental factors—People want to believe that intelligence is molded by parental interactions, socioeconomic status, school quality, etc. No, it’s genes. Stephen Pinker wrote a whole book on this topic (The Blank Slate).

Multiple intelligences—Howard Gardner invented a model that has strong appeal to the public, but which is not supported by data and does not withstand scrutiny. He showed that it is profitable to tell people what they want to hear, even if it is incorrect.

Flynn Effect and $g$

Another case of people wanting to accept pop-science explanations, without understanding the details. In this case, the public believes that intelligence is increasing and some believe that it is increasing in a way that will eliminate between group differences. IQ scores have been unstable for a long time and have mostly increased. The effect is different in different nations and is different as a function of time in most nations. We now have a reversal in a good many European nations. The problem is that these score changes have been shown to be artifacts and are not due to changes in $g$. For example, some of the instability is due to increased guessing (the Brand Effect) and some are due to the method of scoring the test, which has nothing to do with intelligence. Meanwhile there is considerable evidence that $g$ is declining, at least in Western nations and China.

Jacobsen: Any thoughts on the God concept or gods idea and philosophy, theology, and religion?

Williams: Over 20 years ago, I attended a presentation by Jay Glass, author of The Animal Within Us. He described exactly what I had concluded several years earlier, based on the same source material (the study of chimps). He concluded that humans are significantly like our nearest relatives in that we are genetically predisposed to organize in a dynamic hierarchical structure. Chimps
and humans have this social structure (other animals as well). I think we are so drawn to this need to have a hierarchy that we don’t stop with the chief, king, or satrap, but go on to spontaneously invent gods with magical powers and elaborate stories of their adventures, including the creation of the universe and man.

In cognitive science, religion has been studied extensively. In every case (national and individual studies) the finding has been a negative correlation between measures of religiosity and intelligence. Some researchers have approached the topic by studying the degree of dogmatism in individual religious beliefs. The more dogmatic (fundamentalist) the beliefs, the lower the IQ. I can recall that, as a child, I noticed that the religious denominations in my immediate surroundings were clearly stratified by SES. I didn’t know why at that time, but today it is obviously a case of grouping by wealth and education, both of which are products of intelligence. Scientists typically show low percentages who hold religious beliefs.

**Jacobsen: How much does science play into the worldview for you?**

**Williams:** It plays to my interest. There are things that are difficult or impossible to understand from a purely scientific perspective. Ethics is one example. Yet most of the things we see are subject to scientific study and understanding. This applies even to relatively ethereal things, such as emotions.

**Jacobsen: What have been some of the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations) for you?**

**Williams:** Virtually all of the tests I have taken were quite a long time ago, before I had an interest in cognition. I previously mentioned two tests I took in college. I think there were various others during high school. About 30 years ago, I took two tests administered by Mensa. I have no idea what they were and what the scores were, but I used them to join Mensa, the International Society for Philosophical Enquiry, and the Triple Nine Society. The latter two admit at the 99.9th percentile. I have not had any interest in hobby tests and have written about my concerns for their validity on numerous occasions. My last effort will presumably appear in the journal Noesis (Mega Society – not a member) in February.

**Jacobsen: What is the range of the scores for you? The scores earned on alternative intelligence tests tend to produce a wide smattering of data points rather than clusters, typically.**

**Williams:** I have no idea. When I have taken tests that had consequences, I managed to do well enough. I have not engaged in the “test taking as entertainment” practice.

**Jacobsen: What ethical philosophy makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you? What social philosophy makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you? What economic philosophy makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you? What political philosophy makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you? What worldview-encompassing philosophical system makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?**

**Williams:** I will combine the philosophy questions into one reply. Let me start with an observation by geneticist Robert Plomin. He was being honored with the Distinguished Career Interview at an ISIR (International Society for Intelligence Research) conference. As he discussed his career path, he mentioned that he began his university studies in philosophy. At some point, he realized that things that can be measured are not part of philosophy and changed majors. This reflects my view of philosophy. My interests lie in science, so that is what I read. My formal education did not include any courses on philosophy, so I don’t think in terms of Kant or Nietzsche. The one philosopher who has attracted my interest is Bertrand Russell; I found his essays about religion interesting. My belief about ethics is that, as usual with this sort of topic, there are different perspectives that can be argued endlessly. The thing I am most bothered by is another party attempting to impose an ethical standard on me. We see a lot of this as ethics is blended with politics and I believe it has become a social cancer. This relates to my previous comments about how the huge between group gaps in intelligence have serious consequences.

My view of economics is that of von Mises and Friedman. I think we have valid predictive models of economic behaviors and that we should follow those in government and fiscal policies. I consider myself to be a libertarian at heart. Unfortunately, I don’t see a path from the present political divide in the US towards a more harmonious and prosperous society. We have reached the point mentioned by Alexander Fraser Tytler at which people will vote benefits for themselves from the treasury at the expense of destroying the economic stability of the nation. This is an outcome that returns to the intelligence issue and, in particular, the decline in intellectual capital due to the negative correlation between intelligence and fertility rate.
As a matter of understanding why I see so many things as ultimately being matters relating to cognitive abilities, I think Douglas Detterman explained the gravity of it well: “From very early, I was convinced that intelligence was the most important thing of all to understand, more important than the origin of the universe, more important than climate change, more important than curing cancer, more important than anything else. That is because human intelligence is our major adaptive function and only by optimizing it will we be able to save ourselves and other living things from ultimate destruction. It is as simple as that.” [Detterman is the founder of ISIR and of its journal, Intelligence.]

While I am being pessimistic, I will share my conclusion about group conflicts. Despite all of the idealistic things that some people believe and others would like to believe, world history should have taught us all that humans are truly aggressive and will repeatedly commit atrocities and engage in wars. I see no end to it and think it is a part of our species behavior. In my lifetime we have had a world war, countless smaller wars, multiple instances of genocide, and see that these are not restricted to small, backward nations, but are done on a grand scale by the same nations that have given us artistic beauty and scientific understanding.

Jacobsen: What provides meaning in life for you?

Williams: The things that are meaningful to me are those that many people hold dear: family, liberty, and nature. I have had the opportunity to live comfortably and to enjoy a great deal of autonomy. I have surrounded myself with a zoo-like population of animals, forest, and a beautiful place to enjoy nature. I have gotten to know my Canada geese as individuals and spent hours watching the other creatures that live here with me.

Jacobsen: To set the stage for the further conversation, what comprises intelligence in the abstract?

Williams: I think g is the best match to “abstract.” It is a latent trait, so it can only be known by statistical manipulation of measurements. We have Arthur Jensen to thank for convincing skeptical researchers that the essence of intelligence is this single factor that Charles Spearman discovered in 1904. Jensen had the persistence to meet every argument with data and analysis. Today intelligence research is g research.

Jacobsen: What are the mainstream and fringe theories of human intelligence on offer over time?

Williams: Today g theory is accepted as the best representation of intelligence, defining its structure via factor analysis and linking the biology of intelligence to the outward measurements that relate to it. As I have already noted Gardner’s model is very popular among laymen. It is the sort of thing that drives researchers crazy. Gardner did not derive his model from data, did not use an inductive process to construct it, and has been unable to show that it can be demonstrated as correct from real world measurements. The thing multiple intelligences implies is that if someone has a low academic ability, they have something else to make up for it in a zero sum sense. It sounds nice, but it is nonsense. The real world is not so fair. What we have is the positive manifold, which is the way Spearman described his discovery that people who test at a given level on one category of cognitive tasks will test at a similar level on virtually all cognitive tasks. Of course it’s unfair… it means that bright people are likely to excel at almost every kind of task, while dull people will find most such tasks difficult or impossible. It is from the positive manifold that Spearman was able to reveal the general factor g (Spearman’s g) using factor analysis, which he invented.

Robert Sternberg also invented a model that he calls Triarchic theory. It consists of dividing intelligence into practical, creative, and analytical. As is the case with multiple intelligence, it sounds good to people who want to believe that g is not the answer. Some years ago, Linda Gottfredson did a detailed dissection (published in Intelligence) of his “theory,” showing that it does not withstand scrutiny.

Aside from the models presented by Gardner and Sternberg, there have been various other proposed models that have been abandoned. For example, Joy Paul Gilford offered a “structure of intellect” model. This complex model was designed with 150 cells, each of which represented an ability (Gardner magnified). There are a variety of other models that have been assembled, but the only one that is significant is Cattell’s model which was basically an argument against g. Instead of one top factor, he used two: fluid intelligence and crystallized intelligence. We still use these as stratum II factors, but they are grouped with other broad abilities. The structural model that won out was the Cattell-Horn-Carroll model that serves as the basis for both the Wechsler tests and the Woodcock-Johnson. Carroll tweaked the model that Cattell and Horn were using, so that g was extracted as the single stratum III factor. This model is g theory in practice. [Despite its popularity and usefulness, the CHC model is somewhat arbitrary and is not the true structure of intelligence. That honor goes to the VPR model (verbal, perceptual, and
rotational) developed by Wendy Johnson and Thomas Bouchard.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Retired Nuclear Physicist; Member, Triple Nine Society; Member, Mensa International; Member, International Society for Philosophical Enquiry.


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*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Conversation with Hakan E. Kayioglu on Family, Background, Philosophy, Genius, and Ethics: Member, Glia Society (1)

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Abstract

Hakan E. Kayioglu is a Member of the Glia Society. He discusses: growing up; stories helped provide a sense of an extended self; the family background; the experience with peers and schoolmates; the purpose of intelligence tests; high intelligence; geniuses; the greatest geniuses in history; a genius from a profoundly intelligent person; some work experiences and educational certifications; some of the more important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses; some social and political views; the God concept or gods idea; science; me of the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations); the range of the scores; and ethical philosophy.

Keywords: genius, Hakan E. Kayioglu, intelligence, IQ, Istanbul, Turkey.

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: When you were growing up, what were some of the prominent family stories being told over time?

Hakan E. Kayioglu: No prominent family stories were told except that my paternal grandfather was a very intelligent and learned man who had been amongst the best 3 students in the university he attended in Istanbul early 20th century. I learned that my father also was the first ranking student in his local high school graduating with a record level cumulative GPA. He said he had graduated as the fourth best student at the university.

Jacobsen: Have these stories helped provide a sense of an extended self or a sense of the family legacy?

Kayioglu: Probably yes in youth but not much in my later years in adulthood. I think family stories might have put some burden, a certain sense of obligation on my subconscious to be successful and achieve better than most at least in school.

Jacobsen: What was the family background, e.g., geography, culture, language, and religion or lack thereof?

Kayioglu: My parents were born in a village close to a historical town, Söğüt, of Bilecik province in Turkey. I learned from my father that our paternal ancestors, at least seven generations back before my father, were all born and grown in the same village as well as my mother’s paternal ancestors. Söğüt is one of the first towns where the Ottomans started to evolve in the 13th century. It is about 300 km south east of Istanbul. I was born in 1964 in a city in the northern part of Turkey but most of my childhood, but most of my childhood, teenage and university years were spent in Ankara, the capital city of Turkey. We also had been to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus for a couple of years during my high school education. My native language is Turkish.
Jacobsen: How was the experience with peers and schoolmates as a child and an adolescent?

Kayioglu: Quite well. I had no problems interacting with my peers and schoolmates throughout my education and in social life. I was probably a bit selective of close friends based on common interests, mutual understanding and accord. For intellectual pursuits I was mostly alone and on my own, doing my reading in diverse fields, constantly acquiring encyclopedic knowledge. So, I had to confine myself to sharing and enjoying with my friends only social life normally as a 14 year old boy couldn’t find ways to discuss higher level topics for lack of intellectual peers. I usually had to satisfy that need by discussing with older people in school, in the circle of acquaintances of my family and sometimes with teachers.

Jacobsen: What is the purpose of intelligence tests to you?

Kayioglu: Intelligence tests give a reasonably accurate measure of one’s intellectual capacity in a comparative scale. To me, it is also a dopamine shower and a sort of ecstasy when I solve a difficult problem; a short term nervous breakdown when I fail to find the solution. The most attractive feature and benefit of especially a good high-range intelligence test is that it teaches one to think on one’s own thinking, and I believe it improves the “quality of thinking” by raising one’s awareness on one’s own logical fallacies, forcing to use one’s mind in extreme diligence, precision, to check every divergent possibility available to his mind. In the end, one either finds the solution or not, but the very process of deep, layered and detailed thinking is itself rewarding on its own even in case of failure simply because it then teaches at least how not to think.

Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?

Kayioglu: I was formally tested when I started elementary school a couple of months before age seven. In Turkey, especially in those years I.Q. testing was not popular. It is known but not popular even now. But, years later I learned that somehow the educational management system had started a pilot study to identify intellectually gifted children in the area I lived in (Ankara), and upon my teacher’s noticing some intellectual brilliance about me and contacting the local authority I had the chance to be tested by a professional psychologist. I remember being tested by an old lady, asking me questions and recording my answers, sometimes also tape-recording my voice. I don’t know which test it was but my father told the true story to me years later on an occasion of discussing intelligence at home when I was 16 years old. He said: “Son, they told me you were found to be intellectually as capable as a 12-year-old. They recommended you be skipped at least one grade in elementary school but I didn’t accept that for fear of bullying and developmental issues that may arise.”

My parents also told me that I showed some signs of superior intelligence very early as I was able to speak in full sentences when I just turned my first year. I also invented some novel words at age 2 for objects whose names I didn’t know but needed to refer to. Those words were obtained in accordance with the derivation rules of Turkish but were not in colloquial use. I still remember two of them: tutanak (door handle) derived from “tut”, meaning “to hold” in Turkish, and “bağlac” (belt) from “bağa” meaning “to fasten”.

I learned the alphabet at 4 and could read and write the names of family members. This happened soon after I was exposed to toys consisting of the letters of the alphabet. I remember a dialogue between my parents, wherein my father expressed his fear that I seemed to learn how to read and write soon if he didn’t hide the letters and thus he wouldn’t want to let me be able to read before the normal school age for fear of problems with my peers.

As a peculiarity and maybe a sign of cognitive precocity, I also have vivid early memories before age 2 dating back to when I was 16 months old although mainstream psychology does not credit.

Jacobsen: When you think of the ways in which the geniuses of the past have either been mocked, vilified, and condemned if not killed, or praised, flattered, platformed, and revered, what seems like the reason for the extreme reactions to and treatment of geniuses? Many alive today seem camera shy – many, not all.

Kayioglu: Well, I think extreme reactions to geniuses may stem partly, or in combination, from socio-cultural conditioning, jealousy, ignorance, misinterpretation, a need for psychological compensation for one’s low self esteem.

Jacobsen: Who seems like the greatest geniuses in history to you?

Kayioglu: The guy who invented the wheel, Euclid, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Newton, Euler, Gödel, Albert Einstein, and Ramanujan.

Jacobsen: What differentiates a genius from a profoundly intelligent person?
Kayioglu: A profoundly intelligent person, if not already a genius, is no more than being profoundly intelligent. Genius, to me and most others, requires the presence and manifestation of extraordinary level of inventiveness and/or creativity in any field that involves it. Some typical personality traits are also said to co-exist with genius, but maybe the most common trait is conscientiousness. So, genius can be said to be a unique and optimal combination of high enough intelligence (not necessarily profoundly), conscientiousness and creativity. On the ground, it seems to me, lies ample curiosity and a very strong need to understand as a driving force.

Jacobsen: What have been some work experiences and educational certifications for you?

Kayioglu: I graduated from Middle East Technical University’s Chemical Engineering Department with a B.Sc. degree.

Soon after graduation I enrolled in the graduate school for a M.Sc. with an intention to obtain a PhD afterwards and pursue an academic life. But I decided to drop out before completing the first semester simply because I felt offended and discouraged when I was told during the interview by the department head that I would not be employed as a research assistant although I had the highest score at the exam. Reasons put forward were not related to my ability or academic standing but to my prospective attitude. The department head, based on her past observations about me, was just not sure enough if I would remain stable and consistently motivated in a long-term and demanding academic job.

As I had never thought of myself as someone to work in a factory environment throughout my education I didn’t want to hunt for an engineering job in a factory because I felt as a research oriented type of fellow. I didn’t want to go to other universities around for a similar position and degree either. So, I remained idle and unemployed for a couple of months. Then I applied for a vacant position as a translator in a government office. After the assessment formalities I was employed as an official translator. Though successful and happy with my job and work environment, it was a radically different career path which I soon discovered would probably not continue for long.

In the meanwhile I was informed by a friend that some government agencies and companies were granting scholarship to eligible candidates in many fields for higher education abroad – mostly in Europe, the United States of America and Canada – to be employed in various positions, including research engineering, upon return to Turkey after earning M.Sc and/or Ph.D. That was it! I was interested in and applied for a research engineering position offered to chemical engineering graduates who were to obtain a M.Sc. degree in petroleum engineering in the U.S.A. First I had to pass a hard exam held once a year nationwide to be an eligible candidate. I took the exam and got the highest score among some 250 applicants that year.

I was accepted by several universities after meeting requirements for the GRE and TOEFL during my stay with a host family in California in 1988, and I chose the University of Tulsa in Oklahoma. I spent one year by taking both undergraduate and graduate courses in petroleum engineering at Tulsa. Next year I decided to change my school and enrolled in Colorado School of Mines. I moved to Golden, Colorado. But, towards the end of my first semester there, it was too disappointing to have realized, just by chance from reading an announcement on the board, that I would not be able to complete my M.Sc. on the subject I was asked to study by the company, because that subject was only possible to study within the scope of a postdoctoral fellowship offered by another university! Surprised and upset, I discussed the situation with the authorities in the sponsoring company to resolve the issue proposing them also some practical alternatives like changing the subject of thesis or going for a professional engineering degree instead of a M.Sc., but they didn’t accept and could not propose a reasonable solution to satisfy both parties.

Truly frustrated and discouraged, the only way out from the deadlock, it seemed to me then, was to leave everything behind and return to my country to start a new life. For I felt I lost my stamina and was cross with my luck. So I dropped the graduate school, returned home and did nothing for a year until I felt good enough and recovered from depression.

Having completed the mandatory military service, I found a job to work as a chemical engineer in the research department of a factory producing refractory bricks and mortars. Later, I also specialised in quality control and management systems and ensured the entire factory implemented the QM systems and got certified in accordance with international standards. I also became one of the IRCA (International Register of Certified Auditors) certified provisional auditors for quality systems. Aside from managing the quality system in the factory, I also established a small laboratory for on-site internal calibration of measuring devices in use in the factory; giving personally, or arranging necessary training required to all employees from top management to workers.
Later I was also involved as a manager in the installation and development of a new production unit in the factory to manufacture sliding-gate refractory plates that are sold and used in the iron and steel industry. I worked in the refractory company for 7 years.

In November 1998 I moved to Eskisehir, the city I have been living since then, in order to run my own business by starting up a small company to provide calibration and quality systems consulting services with a partner. Because of some financial adversities unfortunately we had to close the company in 2000.

Between March 2000 and January 2020 I worked in a glass tableware production factory that belongs to a large corporation in the glassware industry in the position of Quality Control Chief until 2014, and Quality Manager in 2014 – 2020. Over the years I specialised in quality control and management systems based on international standards such as quality management (ISO 9001), environmental management (ISO 14001), food safety (ISO 22000), information security management (ISO 27001), social compliance management systems (e.g. BSCI), and also became partly involved in energy management (ISO 50001) and occupational health and safety management (ISO 45001). Apart from managerial tasks I was involved in, I also contributed to various technical works and researches on product design and development, test development and improvement, quality improvement, organizational development, digital transformation projects, development of automated systems for visual quality, 6 sigma projects etc.

I hold a couple dozen certificates in topics of quality management systems, auditing/assessing, quality improvement techniques as well as managerial skills.

As of January 2020, having fulfilled official requirements, I asked for my resignation and I am now a retired person with some free time and for the first time in 30 years, but only to turn my two decade hobby into a small business: teaching and working as a practicing astrologer on birth time rectification.

Currently I am enjoying free time while at the same time writing a book on the subject and doing some preparations for a different business life.

Jacobsen: What are some of the more important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses? Those myths that pervade the cultures of the world. What are those myths? What truths dispel them?

Kayioglu: I have been into books and articles on intelligence, creativity and genius since my teenage years as a topic of interest. I was keenly interested in the topic especially in my young age that I even had chosen to write on the topic of identification and education of the gifted and submitted a term paper of some 50 pages when I took the expository writing course in English in my freshman year at the university. It was only in order to call attention to the subject. Because I was aware by that time that many, if not most, of the intellectually gifted children and young people were lost and wasted due to many different reasons.

That being said, I believe this is the biggest waste among all sorts of wastes. Imagine for a moment that just because we wasted for this or that reason all geniuses such that humanity didn’t ever have Euclid, Archimedes, Al Khwarazmi, Avicenna, Galileo, Gauss, Euler, Newton, Einstein, Madam Curie, Schrödinger, Tesla, Shakespeare, Mozart, Bach, Da Vinci, Goethe and all other geniuses not mentioned herein; what could be our civilization like? We owe most of our civilization today and in the past to gifted and creative people, the big share always going to geniuses. Period.

The myths surrounding the geniuses usually stem from hearsay, movies, media which often emphasize and portray their eccentricity and savant-like peculiarities presented sometimes in an exaggerated way, so that most of the more important personality traits such as insatiable curiosity, truth seeking, dedication to work, diligence, perfectionism, very high and sustained concentration, determination, obsessiveness etc. are not given due consideration thus leading to a distorted view about genius. A good percentage of ordinary people think that genius comes hand in hand with madness. It is true some of them were also mad but most were certainly less than that. They were actually mad only about their work.

Another false idea, if not a myth, is to assume a genius is always a profoundly intelligent person. This is hardly true. A person having extreme intelligence but lacking genius traits like high level of creativity, diligence, persistence or conscientiousness is not supposed to create products at genius level. For instance, we have many such extremely intelligent individuals in today’s super high I.Q. societies who do not come up with compatibly creative output. There are examples from history also. John Von Neumann for instance had extreme cognitive power that was said by his contemporaries to be unmatched, yet he was not equally creative. By all intellectual standards, it appears, he was sure a genius as far as raw intelligence and cognitive ability is concerned, but not a true genius in terms of the real meaning of the term.
Therefore, it seems, one must have the optimal combination and amount of the required traits to be a genius. If the personality traits are accompanied by an extreme intelligence, that person may even be a candidate for a universal genius like some of the polymathic universal geniuses in history. But, I am of the opinion that in our time it is highly unlikely for the world to see a universal genius simply because too many fields of specialization, all having its diversity and depth and some being interrelated, are beyond any mortal’s capacity to encompass and absorb.

**Jacobsen: What are some social and political views for you? Why hold them?**

**Kayioglu:** I have been living in a culture where people usually care for the poor, the old and the underprivileged in general. Compassion and charity are kept in high regard. As someone who was raised in such a culture, this puts me closer to political systems that value social welfare and humanitarian ideals.

**Jacobsen: Any thoughts on the God concept or gods idea and philosophy, theology, and religion?**

**Kayioglu:** I believe that everything exists in God’s imagination only. By everything I literally mean everything, the universe we live in and also all other possible universes that we may not be aware of. God, in my understanding and belief system, refers to an undivided endlessness, wholeness and oneness beyond or apart from which nothing can exist on its own. In other words, the only ultimately aware Being who is the source of all other beings. Separateness and otherness is illusory. Each and every being is one of His infinite ways of manifestations as a kind of self projection, projection of a bundle of His names (divine qualities) out of infinitely many. In a sense, we are living in a matrix created in God’s imagination.

I came close to such an understanding in my high school years by reasoning and contemplation. Later, studying Islamic Sufism shaped my understanding of religion over the years since then. I was really impressed by and owe gratitude to especially two thinkers in this regard among many: Mohiuddin Ibn Arabi, a 13th century Sufi mystic, philosopher, poet and scholar; and more recently Ahmed Hulusi, a contemporary Sufi thinker.

**Jacobsen: How much does science play into the worldview for you?**

**Kayioglu:** In my mature years now, I see that I have always been fascinated by the “scientific thinking” itself rather more than the particular topics of interest in sciences, be it hard sciences or soft sciences. Conceptualization, hypothesis formation, experimentation, testing the hypothesis against facts and findings, drawing conclusions, then a critique. It must be a beautiful adventure. While I was being educated as an engineer, one of the things that I found most interesting and instructive was to discover the importance of underlying assumptions one often needed to make in order to simplify and be able to solve a real engineering problem. This taught me how things differ and a theory turns out to be when real life problems are faced.

I understand that science and engineering, to varying degrees, seem to be an oversimplified model of the reality that we are exposed to. No less, but also no more. In the search for understanding the workings of the universe science absolutely is a strong and indispensable tool, but I doubt that it is the strongest tool when it comes to search for the ultimate truth, especially when we consider the metaphysical implications of the logical limit imposed by the Incompleteness Theorem that Kurt Gödel had introduced and proved.

I suspect that science will ever reach a level where human intellect will no longer need philosophy, metaphysics and religion unless of course some day humanity totally becomes devoid of soul and discards the need to search for meaning (maybe there is no!).

**Jacobsen: What have been some of the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations) for you?**

**Kayioglu:** I was not informed of a score for the test I took when I started elementary school. I was only informed to be 5 years ahead of my peers. But a quick calculation would place my childhood ratio I.Q in a range of 165 – 175.

In the last year of junior high school I took a nationwide exam open only to eligible students satisfying grade requirements (about 15 percent of the student population). First phase of the exam was an intellectual aptitude test resembling an I.Q test. I obtained the highest 34th score among some 17000 mates. This roughly corresponds to a rarity score of 1 in 3000 – 4000. Assuming normal distribution, this would have corresponded to an I.Q. above 150 sd15 if it were normed by rarity.

I also took two self administered timed I.Q. tests at 16 which were said to be normed to ceilings of 145 sd 15 and 200 sd16. On the former I hit the ceiling, and on the latter 169. I don’t remember the name of the first test, but the latter was, if I don’t misremember, a Turkish version of the CMMT.
In 2004 I took the Mensa’s entrance test RAPM, but because as a policy Mensa did not give a score, I received a formal letter reporting only that I was eligible to enter Mensa. In 2005 I took Cooijmans Intelligence Test – Form 2E with a score of 156 I.Q. sd15 based on the preliminary norming, and was admitted to the Glia Society based on a 149 I.Q. after the norming in December 2005. Later in 2006 I took Paul Cooijmans’ QMC#4 test with a score of 143 I.Q. sd15.

In both tests I feel I did not do my best because I didn’t put the maximum effort needed for such tests. Years passed without attempting a new test due to lack of time and energy. I have recently completed in my free time after retirement another test authored by Paul Cooijmans, but not sent it yet for scoring; currently reviewing my solutions to make sure I have done my best this time. Last three tests mentioned above are all untimed and unsupervised high-range I.Q. tests authored by Paul Cooijmans.

Jacobsen: What is the range of the scores for you? The scores earned on alternative intelligence tests tend to produce a wide smattering of data points rather than clusters, typically.

Kayioglu: My scores on adult scale have varied between 143 to 149 which seem to be pretty consistent. I think the scores do not scatter much if one invests enough time and effort, does all the tests at adult age, the tests contain mixed item types covering a wider range of abilities rather than focusing on a single type ability such as consisting of verbal-only, or spatial-only; the tests have high enough ceiling, and of course if the test quality is high, that is, the tests are all psychometrically good.

That last condition may not be present in some tests. Most of the supervised tests do not have high enough ceilings for the exceptionally gifted. If a test has a ceiling of 130, another one 145, all Giga Society members with I.Q.’s of 190+ taking all three tests would have a score variation from 130 to 190! So, even if those three different tests are psychometrically perfect, and other conditions above met, one would still observe 60 I.Q. points a difference – apparently a very large discrepancy – between the lowest and the highest scores they obtained.

Obviously, if one or more of the conditions above are not met, then it is likely to get a wide scattering of scores differing at times 2 or more standard deviations for the same person. In my case for example, the condition of “investing enough time and effort” above was not fully met. If, for instance, I get a score well above this on the latest test I did, then it becomes quite clear that the spread is my fault, not the tests’. In the example above for the hypothetical Giga persons, it’s the ceiling that is guilty, not the testees.

Jacobsen: What ethical philosophy makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?

Kayioglu: No particular philosophy as a whole, without implying myself not favoring moral principles. I only want to point out the highly subjective and complex nature of ethics. Given the observation that human beings, societies and life arising out of interactions between them are too complex and dynamic, it is overwhelmingly difficult to offer a universal philosophy in the first place. I find it superfluous to elaborate more on this as it must be obvious when one especially considers the immense complexity of nonlinear systems and myriad of factors related to culture, genetics, belief systems, religion, education, upbringing, ration, intelligence, geography, technology, individual differences, biases etc. to name a few.

I am not as erudite as to claim that I studied all major schools of ethical philosophies to offer a perspective, but simply because of the complex nature of the matter, I don’t think any particular ethical philosophy can address all or even most of all problems effectively. So, to me, the nature and depth of the problem defies human intellect at its core. Consequently, this requires taking into account non-rational and even irrational elements of human beings if one has to deal with ethics.

Therefore, on an individual level anyone (here “anyone” also includes the most advanced AI to imagine) is doomed to choose one’s way under uncertainty based on such factors said above.

On a personal level, I have moral and ethical principles that I have adopted in the culture I was raised and am trying to follow, but ethical philosophy is, and I think, will always remain to be an open question that needs to be re-addressed, reviewed and revised according to the dynamics of the age human beings live in.

Appendix I: Footnotes


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honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Conversación con Benjamin Li sobre Consejos, Selección Autónoma, el Destello, STEM y Estudiantes Nacionales versus Internacionales, y Hereditarianismo versus Enviromentalismo: Miembro, Sociedad Internacional para la Enquirición Filosófica (ISPE) (3)

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Resumen

Benjamin Li es miembro de la Sociedad Internacional para la Enquirición Filosófica (ISPE). Discute: profesor de filosofía; consejos para estudiantes de secundaria; otro posible periplo académico; confianza en uno mismo y arrogancia; selección de entornos; y algunos de los entornos.

Palabras clave: Benjamin Li, Sociedad Internacional para la Enquirición Filosófica, Universidad de British Columbia.

Conversación con Benjamin Li sobre Consejos, Selección Autónoma, el Destello, STEM y Hereditarianismo versus Enviromentalismo: Miembro, Sociedad Internacional para la Enquirición Filosófica (ISPE) (3)

*Vea las notas, bibliografía, y el estilo de citación después de la entrevista.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: ¿Qué hace que un “profesor de filosofía” destaque para ti?

Benjamin Li[1],[2]: Yo fui a los horarios de oficina una vez para discutir algunos de sus intereses de investigación. Mi particular interés se relacionaba con el tema de...
and IQ, and I wanted to hear what my professor had to say. The subjects he was interested in had a relation to my interests, so he likely could hold a conversation with me in person. He recommended various books, articles, and he had even given me a list of academics to take up. The major problem with this discussion about race and IQ is that certain aspects of the debate are always hidden and are difficult to find. Only after a thorough examination of evidence from all possible perspectives could one call themselves an objective scientist. My primary interest was to find rational responses to the hereditary position. My philosophy professor was a good choice to talk with because he had stated that he was aware of the debate. At first, I was quite unsure where the evidence pointed, and so I knew I’d have to decide for myself. My philosophy professor played an essential role in helping me discover all possible perspectives of the debate. He gave me an excellent grade in the course, which increased my interest in philosophical discussions and topics.

My professor is merely skeptical about hereditary claims, but my view is more clear after being exposed to everything. My conclusion is that the totality of the evidence indicates no genetic component to racial differences in average IQ and that they are more likely to be around 100% caused by environmental and cultural differences. This holds true both within and between nations. However, the topic is still being explored and won’t disappear anytime soon. Even though it is way too complicated, I am very confident in my conclusion that the differences in test scores are virtually entirely environmental in origin. Hereditarians will claim that universities have brainwashed me. Still, the truth is that I came to my views all by myself, honestly and rationally, free from any bias, after considering every perspective possible.

My professor got me to read Ned Block’s paper “How heritability misleads about race” and told me that was why he didn’t believe heritability would help the hereditarians all that much. This is a very insightful paper because over 99.9 percent of individuals who are aware of this debate seem to have trouble grasping the role heritability plays in this debate. The primary issue with the hereditary position is that even the most well-known hereditarians have misapplied the concept of heritability. Heritability is an estimate of genetic variation among individuals within a population, either in the context of a formal experiment that controls for potentially confounding environmental effects or with the assumption that such effects are absent. In the case of IQ, we cannot do these formal experiments, so we must assume the environmental effects are absent. But, certain individuals used evidence of heritability for making inferences about whether or not there were genetic differences among populations. This is not an appropriate application of the statistic. Heritabilities could be very high within a population, yet the differences among populations could be entirely attributable to environmental effects. Conversely, heritabilities could be relatively low within the population in which they are estimated, yet the differences among populations could have a vital genetic component to them. Genetic variation within populations is simply a different measure from the genetic differences between populations, so all of those attempts to make inferences about genetic differences in IQ among populations were based on a faulty application of the concept of heritability.

One of the books my professor told me to read was Richard Nisbett’s book called “Intelligence and How to Get It.”

The best well-known intelligence researcher on the culture-only side would be the late James Flynn. He has produced a lot of great arguments and books that support the environmentalist position.

I emailed David Reznick, an expert in human biology, and he has no idea of who he even was but still critiqued Rushton’s views the best he could.

Joseph Graves, the first African American to receive a Ph.D. in evolutionary biology, has refuted Rushton’s application of the theory.

Chris Stringer, one of the foremost experts on human evolution, who also mentions Rushton in his books, says that he is wrong, although I have yet to read them all yet. He recommended I read “The Race Gallery” by Marek Kohn.

In conclusion, my philosophy professor gave me a sense of interest in subjects relating to philosophical inquiry. Thanks to him, I emailed various eminent professors to get more perspectives to understand complex issues.

**Jacobsen: Any tips for high school students about pursuing postsecondary educations?**

**Li:** Know your requirements for every college application but don’t stress over them. Don’t be domineering; plan for your interviews, and appreciate the experience. Represent the person you genuinely are and express it candidly.

I am brought up in the Canadian school system, so there are no standardized tests. However, for Americans, I’d say start studying for the SAT or ACT during the summer of junior or the summer
after sophomore year. Take lots of practice tests and buy the prep books, and practice on Khan Academy and with your friends if possible.

I think most people should consider their options before their senior year of high school. I think it will help you research your options thoroughly and figure out what fields should fit your aptitude and interests. STEM majors are more evident toward where you end up, but if your talents and passions genuinely lie in the liberal arts, I would encourage it. The amount of coursework in university is anticipated to be a lot more numerous than in high school, so I recommend developing a stable work ethic as early as possible. Many people struggle in the first year. Most students going into UBC are straight-A students from high school but quickly realize that university is no joke. Just do your best, follow your dreams, consider backup options, and you will have no regrets.

The critical thing is to prioritize school first if you want to get into your preferred program. A friend of mine in high school, who was quite a high achiever, told me he never looked at an admission requirement (GPA cutoff or average) aside from seeing the required courses needed because once you have done your best, you leave no regrets. If you know the requirements, you will continuously accentuate them.

If we include the entire population, the correlation between IQ and educational achievement and attainment is around .6 (IQ explains 36% of the variance in grades and years of education), so I wouldn’t worry about whether you have the highest IQ in your high school or not. The correlation between achievement drops to around .5 in high school. The correlation declines further in university and then even more in graduate school due to sample restriction, leaving many more factors responsible for achievement differences. It is much more important to see success in life (economically) as more related to grit, conscientiousness with a mindset for growth than any natural ability.

Finally, I would like to share three important YouTube videos (one documentary, two films) that truly influenced me.

1) Ivy Dreams Documentary (You can find a shorter Youtube video called Strict Asian Parents & Stressed, Pressured Youth – College Process).

- Director: Yu-Teh Huang
- Writer: Joy Huang

2) Acceptance – Ivy League Admissions Movie (2013)
- Director: Ryan Matthew Chan

3) Legally Blonde (2001)

- Director: Robert Luketic

Jacobsen: As a “viable option… to pursue in the future,” if you had not found this joy in academia, what would be another possible academic pursuit for you?

Li: I honestly don’t see any other academic pursuit that could be appropriate for me other than academic research at the moment. I could work any job but it won’t be likely for me to reach the top given that those things are not interesting for me and not what my inner motivation tells me I should do. I hope I’ll be able to enjoy the workforce if I have to, but I should be settled down with my goals.

Jacobsen: What differentiates self-confidence and arrogance in this “higher IQ” domain? What is the importance of the latter as a character trait than the latter with the greater responsibility inherent in greater capacity to some degree?

Li: Arrogance is related to narcissism. Entitlement, insecurities, and low self-esteem seem to be significant indicators of narcissism. It is hard to differentiate narcissists from overconfident individuals, but you realize that most narcissists need validation, but self-confident individuals do not need validation for their achievements.

Overall, having a remarkable ability may allow individuals to be more responsible for helping people, rather than viewing themselves as gods. Be aware of their shortcomings. Self-confidence will enable one to work with others and grow as a person through mutual understanding and empathy. On the other hand, arrogance is a god-complex sort of deal that won’t help anyone form meaningful connections.

Jacobsen: With this self-selection of environments, what are some of those self-selection mechanisms?

Li: Robert Plomin’s book, “Blueprint: How DNA Makes Us Who We Are” gives a splendid answer. Most people find it hard to imagine how behavioral geneticists can begin to disentangle which behavioral characteristics are caused by genetics or the environment (nature or nurture). The most effective way to explore this question is by studying large longitudinal twin and adoption studies. Another way is to rely on the continuous decoding of the human genome.

Blueprint’s central thesis is what Plomin calls “the nature of nurture,” which posits that our genes push us to react to, cooperate with, and even develop our own environments to fit our genetic inclinations. Plomin states, “Psychological environments are not
“out there” imposed on us passively. They are “in here,” experienced by us as we actively perceive, interpret, select, modify, and even create environments correlated with our genetic propensities.”

Self-selection relies on the big five personality traits and intelligence. These traits are polygenic and influenced by environmental and genetic factors and the interaction between the two.

Aside from this, there are many critiques of heritability. The complex interaction of genes and the environment makes these questions endlessly tricky. The next book I plan on reading will be a book by James Tabery called “Beyond Verses: the struggle to understand the interaction of nature and nurture.”

Jacobsen: Following from the previous question, what are some of the environments?

Li: Deciding what your college major will be, or where you will live will influence your future environments and your responses. If you enjoy reading, perhaps you will find a local library quite fitting for you. If you are quite competitive, maybe you will join a football team. Talent for a particular field will make you more likely to choose to participate, given that people tend to prefer to partake in activities that they perform well in.

In effect, the family effect on IQ seems to fade away in adulthood as the heritability of IQ increases. However, it is essential to note that if an individual is treated poorly in society and their environment somehow becomes more detrimental every year, their IQ scores would drop each year, even though their true phenotypic intelligence may have been a lot higher. Suppose the environment somehow is pushed to become more relevant to solving the problems we see on IQ tests each subsequent year. In that case, IQ test scores will subsequently increase every following year, which may overestimate that particular individual’s true intelligence.

An environment where it is difficult to choose your own environment would be when substantial environmental factors put you on hold. Amy Chua’s book Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother gives that sort of feeling.

Appendix I: Footnotes


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Conversation with Kishan Harrysingh on Family Background, Academic Achievement in the Family, Depression, Odd Jobs, and Spiritual Pursuits: Member, World Genius Directory (1)

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Abstract

Kishan Harrysingh is a Member of the World Genius Directory. He discusses: some family background; academic achievement common in the family; the source of feeling depression, sadness; moments of what has been called “overexcitability”; the asynchrony; some odd jobs; some of the tests and the scores; and intelligence, and a life in the 20s spent on spiritual pursuits.

Keywords: depression, family, intelligence, IQ, Kishan Harrysingh, spirituality, World Genius Directory.

Conversation with Kishan Harrysingh on Family Background, Academic Achievement in the Family, Depression, Odd Jobs, and Spiritual Pursuits: Member, World Genius Directory (1)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: What is some family background to provide a long-term context for some of your story?

Kishan Harrysingh: I am from Trinidad and Tobago. My father is an engineer. My mother works in financial consulting. She has worked in that field for quite some time. Before, she was an accountant for many years. I have a lot of cousins in the medical field.

Jacobsen: Is this kind of academic achievement common in the family?

Harrysingh: Yes, absolutely, it is something that I try to deny to myself, because I was against academics for most of my life. I felt like it was something making people more arrogant than something adding depth and character. For that reason, I denied my own abilities and need for company. People who can understand me for many, many years. Until, I was in my 30s. So, only until a couple of years ago. This is only because of depression, anxiety, and other issues. I was able to start addressing and looking to the fact that I am not normal. Perhaps, I need to find more people like myself to get along with because I have always had really, really serious issues with the abilities of other people to communicate.

Jacobsen: When you’re feeling that way, what do you consider the source of feeling depression, sadness? Is it loneliness? Is it an innate factor? Or is it some existential question begging you?

Harrysingh: A combination of all of those. I have had those problems since I was a teenager. I never understood why my friends – no matter how much I explain it – never understand the concepts. It seemed natural to me. I was very much brainwashed into thinking everyone is exactly as intelligent as each other. It is only a matter of effort. There is some truth to that, obviously, because, I believe, neural pathways strengthen with practice. Also, there is a truth. People are born with certain gifts. For me, philosophical intellect and understanding existential questions, I am genetically gifted with it. I see this in my brother, when he was very young. The things that
he would say, even adults had trouble understanding it. Maybe, it must be a genetic thing. It causes a lot of problems. My thinking is so different from the average person. My standards and ethics, and morality, and conduct, and my standards in personal life, are so high. Most people find it impossible to live up to them. It comes from the way in which I intellectualize, conceptualize, and understand the world.

Jacobsen: Can you recall any moments of what has been called “overexcitability” of the profoundly gifted in personal life? The profoundly gifted to experience emotions in the extreme.

Harrysingh: That’s definitely me. Also, I can detach because of many years of spiritual development, even completely. I definitely am a very emotional person. A lot of common problems with friends who are gifted and have had to find an outlet in things like power lifting, etc., where they can channel the emotions to physical things. Definitely, I have always been very, very emotional volatile person. It affected learning. If a teacher is not engaging enough and not interesting enough, or not presenting the work in a properly explained fashion, I would lose interest. So, that emotional side probably affected me more than the average person. I went from failing a class to the top of a class in a 2 class 2 years older than me with very little effort. It had to do with emotion. I started to realize. It was after going through a few things. Maybe, that’s why there was the disparity. Emotion, for sure, have affected me more than the average person. I am trying to find the right explanation without dragging on for an hour.

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Harrysingh: Yes, there is so much to explain in the story for me. This is the reason for the stammering to an extent.

Jacobsen: In some sense, this overexcitability, this feeling out of place, this being at the bottom of the class and then being at the top of the class, it matches well the idea of asynchronous development. The asynchrony being between one’s intellectual abilities and one’s emotional maturity. Do you note this is more extreme in terms of the asynchrony for boys than for girls, men than for women?

Harrysingh: It makes sense. I have been suggesting things like this for a long time. I made those inferences. However, I believe, if you look at the curve of IQ, you will find more boys very, very far to the right. There is a high proportion of males who have extreme and profound giftedness than females. Also, we have a higher number of males who are profoundly handicapped. Females tend to cluster in the middle. They tend to be more ‘cold’ or tend to be less emotional in the perspective of their giftedness. That makes sense to me.

Jacobsen: Also, in some ways, it would match the idea of far more women in English Literature, in writing, in journalism, when it comes to postsecondary education. Because those fields, in light of the fact of being in postsecondary education, will require a higher level of general intelligence. They also require a greater level of emotional maturity and insight into the human condition based on the combination of analytic ability and emotional maturity. What have been some odd jobs for you? What have been some more fruitful and fulfilling jobs for you?

Harrysingh: My professional life is a bit of a mess to be honest with you. I have had a very, very unique life with respect to spending early 20s searching for spiritual enlightenment. After that, the only thing I got into was personal entrepreneurial stuff. I am more of an outlier in that sense. I am not someone with a vast professional life. I am not someone tremendously active and accomplished in academics. I am always someone who has mostly denied my own abilities until relatively late in life to pursue higher level academics, and developing a perspective. For me, it goes back to the emotional side of things. I felt passionately, particularly about personal issues of family. It helped in finding my purpose of existing; I sacrificed a lot of younger years, where I would have been in academics, with a pursuit of enlightenment to find the truth behind it all.

Jacobsen: Let’s talk about tests, what are some of the tests and the scores?

Harrysingh: I am new to this. I scored 160 on this one. However, this one is based on a great crystallized intelligence tested. So, there is a lot of information needing research. I didn’t want to spend too much time and effort on it. I submitted it early. It has to be a fact taken into consideration with intelligence testing. Some take months on a test. Some will take a few hours. For me, I did this in the space of one or two days and spent three, four, or five hours in total. Even though, I started weeks before. I didn’t continue. I started like two and a half weeks before. Most of the stuff was done in a couple of days. I think the two tests done prior to this one were intelligence tests with the ceiling being really low. The ceilings were or 160 or 165, which will tend to lower the score. I scored about 150 on those. However, this is the first full scale test going to 200, which I have done. I expect that I will score a lot higher in the future. I need to get more time to be
tested based on things not too foreign to me. That’ll more test more fluid intelligence than crystallized intelligence.

Jacobsen: Now, if we are talking about intelligence and a life in the 20s spent on spiritual pursuits, how are you defining the spiritual here? In other words, what is human nature? What is the nature of the world? What is the human nature in this spirituality that you have developed as a sensibility or a worldview over time?

Harrysingh: Excellent question, I would say, “I first started becoming spiritual when I was 15.” I was depressed by the ways in which my family related to each other. I felt, to some extent, unloved. To some extent, this drove me to search for a meaning to life. I looked around myself. I saw how people spent all of this time on developing ways to survive, and working. I could see almost nobody as truly happy or someone who was truly moral. I started pursuing the spiritual path. It started with curiosity first. I had to find out if there was a spiritual path. Should I believe or not if there is a God? Which religion should I choose? Which pathway seems to be the truest? I wouldn’t believe something simply because it was put in a book. I was too smart for that. I started questioning life, little by little, and testing personal theories and different ideas. That’s when I started having certain personal experiences leading me to greater depth of belief. It continued later into the teens and early 20s. After certain issues and relationships, things like that. Truly, the emotional side of life led the pursuits for me. To an extent, it is the thing with gifted people. Mostly with those on the side of philosophical side of thinking rather than the traditional side of academics. It is sad to me. Philosophy and ethics are left out of modern day academics because I think human society is decaying largely in part to the disappearance of this part of our intellect and our development.

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Conversation with Tiberiu Nicolas Sammak on Critical Evaluation, Whims, Cryonics, Biological Death, Carcinogenesis, Advice, and Contemporary Artists: High-IQ Community Member (4)

Abstract

Tiberiu Sammak is a 24-year-old guy who currently lives in Bucharest. He spent most of his childhood and teenage years surfing the Internet (mostly searching things of interest) and playing video games. One of his hobbies used to be the construction of paper airplanes, spending a couple of years designing and trying to perfect different types of paper aircrafts. Academically, he never really excelled at anything. In fact, his high school record was rather poor. Some of his current interests include cosmology, medicine and cryonics. His highest score on an experimental high-range I.Q. test is 187 S.D. 15, achieved on Paul Cooijmans’ Reason – Revision 2008. He discusses: critically evaluate and reason through information; the other subject matters
that have been “intriguing” or “meaningful” based on ‘whims’; cryonics; biological death; the general reaction to the discovery of life on other planets; the general risk factors for cancer formation coming out in carcinogenesis; other micro interests; advice to other gifted and talented youth who lack motivation, study skills, discipline, and interest in studying; personal experience communicating, exchanging opinions, and sharing ideas; why cultures adhere to supernaturalistic beliefs; some of the favourite contemporary artists; a genius in the modern day; a “decent life”; and people who he considers smarter than himself.

Keywords: art, biological death, carcinogenesis, cryonics, high-IQ, IQ, Tiberiu Nicolas Sammak.

Conversation with Tiberiu Nicolas Sammak on Critical Evaluation, Whims, Cryonics, Biological Death, Carcinogenesis, Advice, and Contemporary Artists: High-IQ Community Member (4)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: When you’re picking up some information online based on a general interest in some obscure subject matter, and when you’re ‘investigating something in particular, what is the internal thought process there? How do you critically evaluate and reason through information, so as to determine if the information is valuable or not?

Tiberiu Nicolas Sammak[1],[2]*: I don’t really know how to describe the exact mechanisms behind my decision-making process. What I can confirm is that you have to be pretty well-informed on the subject that you are conducting research on to be able to accurately gauge the degree of correctness of your findings.

To me, deciding what information is correct and not inaccurate or deceitful is just common sense (after I know enough about something), roughly speaking.

Jacobsen: What are some of the other subject matters that have been “intriguing” or “meaningful” based on ‘whims’?

Sammak: In-depth lore about certain video games, articles about cellular senescence, philosophical publications (most of the ones I have read or skimmed through being located on the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy website), different stuff about particular movies (or cartoons) or snippets of information about computer-related topics would be some of the subject matters which come to my mind.

Jacobsen: How much of the information around the cryonics is pseudoscience/non-science proposed as scientific information or methodology?

Sammak: The very idea that a brain could regain its consciousness after legal death is what makes other people to be skeptical and reserved about the industry of cryonics. As far as I’m concerned, nothing unscientific pertaining to human cryopreservation is presented as a scientific fact.
Jacobsen: Based on the research, what are the general risk factors for cancer formation coming out research in carcinogenesis?

Sammak: As far as I know, there are many risk factors which could potentially alter one’s genes and lead to the onset of cancer, such as hereditary (like Li-Fraumeni syndrome or von Hippel-Lindau syndrome) or environmental factors, lifestyle choices, obesity, or old age. Most cancers are sporadic but some of them could be prevented by simply not indulging in self-destructive behaviors, such as alcohol abuse (which could lead to cirrhosis of the liver and then evolve into a hepatocellular carcinoma) or smoking. It’s worth mentioning that most lung cancers are caused by tobacco use and they could actually be avoided. Some lung cancers are known to develop chiefly (with few exceptions) in smokers’ lungs, like small cell lung cancer, which is much more aggressive than non-small cell lung cancer. Unlike other cancers, lung cancer has a very poor prognosis. To my knowledge, only a few malignancies would have a dimmer outcome (for instance, mesothelioma, exocrine pancreatic cancers or grade IV brain tumors, such as GBM).

Another environmental risk factor that I’d like to bring into discussion is represented by the asbestos exposure. A notable case which emphasizes the dangers of inhaling asbestos fiber was known as the Wittenoom tragedy. Wittenoom (now a deagazetted ghost town) was a town which was mainly known for its asbestos mine and for asbestos mining and milling activities. Due to long-term exposure to crocidolite (also known as blue asbestos) fibers, a lot of miners and even people who were mere inhabitants developed pleural or peritoneal mesothelioma, which is a very lethal type of cancer.

Jacobsen: Any other micro interests akin to paper airplanes?

Sammak: Not really.

Jacobsen: What is the advice to other gifted and talented youth who lack motivation, study skills, discipline, and interest in studying? This can be ideas or pragmatic stuff.

Sammak: I don’t have specific advice for such people. Things like motivation when it comes to achieving certain goals and self-discipline are internal and cannot be imposed on someone. Sure, one may instill motivation in someone by inspiring that someone through different means. In my view, this is probably one of the best ways to motivate a person.

Perhaps having a really great mentor who could offer guidance throughout youthhood would be beneficial for these people as well.

Jacobsen: What has been personal experience communicating, exchanging opinions, and sharing ideas with others who performed above a similar level on cognitive ability tests?

Sammak: I’ve had very few interactions with people from the high-range testing community. However, almost all of the interactions turned to be positive and enjoyable.

Jacobsen: Why do you think many in cultures adhere to supernaturalistic beliefs?

Sammak: I suppose that’s because many are not well-informed when it comes to a certain topic. Many like to speculate and form twisted views about different subject matters when they are ill-informed. It is way easier to take something for granted than to actually search about that something.

I think the belief in the supernatural is inextricably linked with the unknown.

Jacobsen: Who are some of the favourite contemporary artists for you? Why them?

Sammak: I will mention only musical artists, since I listen a lot to music and I do believe these guys do a great job. In no particular order, my favorite musical artists or musical bands are: Paul Oakenfold, Disturbed, The Anix, Klayton (with his three projects: Celldweller, Scandroid and Circle of Dust), Disarmonia Mundi, Poets of the Fall, Christian Ålvestam and The Midnight. These are probably the people or bands whose music I enjoy the most.

I consider some of their songs truly beautiful and awe-inspiring.

Jacobsen: Who do you consider a genius in the modern day?

Sammak: I cannot answer this since I have not thoroughly and carefully studied the works of truly exceptional people and I’m not the guy who would label someone as a genius so readily. Moreover, I was never interested in the work of a particular person to actually devote enough time studying it.

Jacobsen: What would comprise a “decent life” to you? You seem concerned about degradation and death more than many other things.

Sammak: A life where I wouldn’t have to constantly worry about taxes or about not having enough money for basic needs, a life in which I would be satisfied with my efforts, a life where I would be happy.
Jacobsen: Who do you consider smarter than yourself?

Sammak: There are quite a few people whom I personally know and who are smarter than I, or at least seem to be smarter than I.

Jacobsen: Thank you for the opportunity and your time, Tiberiu.

Appendix I: Footnotes


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Conversation with Anthony Sepulveda (Brown) on Intellectual Function and Personality, Formal Mental Illness, Narcissism, Motivation, AtlantIQ-UNICEF, Jeffrey Ford, Societal Renewal, and a Holy Grail of the High-IQ Communities: Member, World Genius Directory (6)

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Abstract

Anthony Sepulveda scored 174 (S.D.15) on Cosmic and is a member of the World Genius Directory. He discusses: poor social standing; poor economic standing; depression; other health risks; narcissism; highly intelligent couch potatoes; novel situations in which contexts may be non-commutative; professions valuing intelligence in their employees; Mensa a practical option for reasonably intelligent people; AtlantIQ’s efforts important for pragmatic use of intelligent people; Jeffrey Ford; societies renew themselves; the “very poor condition” of the high-IQ community; identifying the disadvantaged; spatial problems; and a possible Holy Grail of the high-IQ world.

Keywords: Anthony Sepulveda (Brown), AtlantIQ, intellect, Jeffrey Ford, mental illness, motivation, narcissism, society, UNICEF.

Conversation with Anthony Sepulveda (Brown) on Intellectual Function and Personality, Formal Mental Illness, Narcissism, Motivation, AtlantIQ-UNICEF, Jeffrey Ford, Societal Renewal, and a Holy Grail of the High-IQ Communities: Member, World Genius Directory (6)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: While not having the space for a book, necessarily, off the bat, let’s parse the average intelligence question more particularly in the lines delineated, the factors of poor social and economic standing, depression, and other health risks. If we’re looking at poor social standing, what happens in this case of average intellectual function on personality, where interpersonal and prestige stature are not great?

Anthony Sepulveda (Brown)[1],[2]: The ability to solve a problem can instill a sense of confidence that will last throughout one’s life. It can make anything seem possible if you only make the correct sequence of moves.

Jacobsen: If we’re looking at poor economic standing, what happens in this case of average intellectual function on personality, where income and net wealth is affected?

Sepulveda (Brown): If you’re unable to resolve problems in your life, a general lack of motivation will prevent you from progressing far towards goals. If your goal is to improve your economic status, you need to truly understand your situation and know how to cultivate the tools and resources necessary to gain the funds and skills you need to do so.

Jacobsen: If we’re looking at depression, what happens in this case of average intellectual function on personality, where feeling bad for
months or years at a time becomes a formal mental illness?

**Sepulveda (Brown):** Depression is the result of having a problem that you cannot resolve or accept enough to move on from. By gaining further insight into the nature of that problem you may be able to move forward enough to get through it. But this can be very hard. Increasingly so as time goes by. Human nature is essentially a number of habits we develop over time. And we often tend to pursue options that continue the trend of our lives. Obvious examples are those who grew up in an unhealthy household and grow up to consistently pursue similar relationships because they feel uncomfortable or unworthy around anything better. It kills me to know that no matter how obvious a solution will be, such people will always make the wrong choice.

**Jacobsen:** If we’re looking at other health risks, what happens in this case of average intellectual function on personality, where inability to self-care leads to generalized increased risk to negative health outcomes?

**Sepulveda (Brown):** I’m not sure how much of an impact general intelligence has on one’s health. While it can help motivate one’s desire to avoid certain hazards, I’ve encountered people of all levels that either prioritize or avoid exercise and proper nutrition. It seems more likely that one’s health is a tool used to achieve other goals such as boosting your ego, getting attention from others, pursuing careers such as modeling or athletics, feeling superior to those who live unhealthy lives (such as how vegans tend to chastise those who eat meat) or simply to live longer for personal reasons.

**Jacobsen:** How does narcissism connect to high intelligence and then lead to worse mental health outcomes?

**Sepulveda (Brown):** Receiving validation for a belief that you’re better than others (intellectually, in this case) will naturally reenforce or promote a narcissistic personality. If such beliefs are founded upon faulty data from a flawed or invalid IQ test, an individual will likely form an equally invalid opinion of themselves or inspire them to pursue paths they aren’t prepared for.

**Jacobsen:** Even if we take the analysis of “actions, interactions and reactions of the objects (nonliving material) and subjects (living material) in an area,” and if we take individuals capable of a greater grasp of the aforementioned “in an area,” what of the factors of motivation to drive action on the analysis? We all know highly intelligent couch potatoes.

**Sepulveda (Brown):** This is a very interesting problem when analyzing the impact of personality on intelligence. Clearly, one’s patience, attention span, motivation, etc. will have an impact on their ability to solve a specific problem (especially on untimed tests). But there doesn’t seem to be any socially valid method with which to objectively determine and compensate for a person’s personality on an IQ test. Even if we were to set a time for a person to complete a valid test where the time allowed to work on it is based on their level of stress and/or other physiological inhibitions, there’d be no way to prevent people from unfairly compensating (via drugs or mental preparation (i.e. the Practice Effect)).

**Jacobsen:** What about novel situations in which contexts may be non-commutative?

**Sepulveda (Brown):** Such situations are very rare and almost any attempt to resolve a problem under such conditions will result in failure. Clear communication is always necessary, especially when two or more people are involved.

**Jacobsen:** To “professions [that] value intelligence in their employees,” what ones come to mind? Maybe, the uncommon ones rather than ones, typically stipulated including pure mathematician or theoretical physicist.

**Sepulveda (Brown):** IT companies like Google use riddles and logic problems during their interview process to determine whether or not a candidate is truly capable of performing the tasks required of them.

**Jacobsen:** What makes Mensa a practical option for reasonably intelligent people?

**Sepulveda (Brown):** Mensa has a lot to offer. They consistently publish a variety of new articles for members to enjoy and offer group meetings and lectures that anyone can attend. For me personally, I’ve greatly enjoyed the conversations held at such meetings. I’ve met a few people that I could connect with to form lasting friendships with and attending the lectures inspires me to create presentations of my own.

**Jacobsen:** What makes AtlantIQ’s efforts important for pragmatic use of intelligent people? Any thoughts on their UNICEF project?

**Sepulveda (Brown):** I’m aware that they support UNICEF, but I don’t believe that they hold any particular place within the company itself. As for their efforts, I appreciate how often they emphasize the belief that changing the world for the better takes practical effort. To this end, they often hold contests that require members to find solutions to a variety of
world problems (education, renewable energy, environmental stability, etc.). Which is a lot more effort towards a much more noble pursuit than almost every other IQ Society performs. I have the utmost respect for Beatrice Rescazzi and those that work with her.

Jacobsen: What makes a person like Jeffrey Ford tick and work to advance concrete actionables for utilization of – what seems like – a real trait in intelligence for positive benefit in reasonable timelines?

Sepulveda (Brown): I wish I knew. I tried contacting him directly to get some insight, but he wasn’t available. So I’m not aware of whether or not he’s had similar internal debates himself. If he has, he clearly believes that even a temporary effect is worth the effort.

Jacobsen: How could these societies renew themselves and not “waste each other’s time”?

Sepulveda (Brown): By requiring higher standards of proof of personal ability, they’ll create an aura of prestige that some may take more seriously. It would also help if they had a purpose beyond simply existing such as a unanimous desire to solve a specific problem.

Jacobsen: What are some of the other factors filtering into the “very poor condition” of the high-IQ community as it prostrate in worship of the aforementioned golden calf of false pursuits?

Sepulveda (Brown): The sad fact is that most people seem to join simply to feel good about themselves for joining. They never had any real drive to do anything practical with their gifts and the community as a whole stagnated into its current condition.

Jacobsen: How could tests such as Cattell’s help identify disadvantaged kids? For example, kids in poor countries such as India with innate abilities and talent while lacking resources, or in highly underserved rural communities or reserves of Native Americans in America or Aboriginals in Canada, or Aborigines in Australia or the Maori in New Zealand – the last largest remnant of European colonial history outside of the ongoing Israel-Palestine issue.

Sepulveda (Brown): I suppose it could be used to identify specific kids if there were an incentive like free schooling. But there are several problems – 1. Cattell’s test is clearly designed to be taken by American or European people. The pictures in it correlate with objects that have a specific design primarily found in those areas (such as the shape of a chimney or stove). So while it is the fairest test I’m aware of, it isn’t useful on a global scale.

2. Say we were to successfully identify gifted children in those areas. We’d have to send them miles away from their home, friends and, likely, family in order to bestow anything of value to them. Those areas simply don’t have the facilities necessary to cultivate their gifts to their highest potential and installing one there would take a lot of effort for very little reward. So, unless the relatively minor impact made on such communities as a whole is worth it (as seen in the efforts of non-profit organizations), the whole venture seems like a waste of time.

3. Say we were to successfully find gifted children in those areas and do everything we can to develop their abilities. What then? It seems to me that they’re very unlikely to go back to their original community. Between the choice of family and community vs opportunity, especially if they were extricated as children, one side is gonna be a lot more appealing. So, if the results of our effort is simply the removal of the best people from the poorest communities, all we’ve done is further impoverish those areas.

It’s a difficult problem. The only option I see that would provide the most benefit is to offer those communities the information necessary for them to benefit as a whole.

Jacobsen: Are spatial problems, in a manner of speaking, simply speaking highly general because of being base-level visual logic problems? No words, no numbers, no concepts, no knowledge, no high-level prior experience, immediate sensory perception with a huge hunk of brain tissue devoted to the visual system with the occipital lobe and then internal, non-verbal logical reasoning on the problems presented, as such, with minimal room for false interpretation to the simplest, i.e., correct, solution for the visual presentation to fit, logically.

Sepulveda (Brown): Yes. Which leads to an interesting topic to consider – If there are a finite number of valid problems that can be used to measure intelligence, that would imply that there’s a set limit to how intelligent anyone can be. That’s why I believe that no one is all that much more capable than anyone else. The biggest differences between any two people are their experiences and the motivation those experiences inspired.

Jacobsen: I have speculated in a similar manner in other interviews on a possible Holy Grail of the high-IQ world and, in more general terms, the professional psychometric community within the
concept or possibility, if general intelligence and fluid intelligence are taken seriously, of a non-verbal 6-sigma test with the same funding, renormings, sample sizes, and psychological construct reliability and validity of the WAIS, the SB(IS), Cattell’s, or the RAPM. Any thoughts on this possibility? We have a long history of underusing the talent of girls and women, which has been improving for a century. Now, we see an increasing consistency of underused gifted and talented youth, and people, in general with some factors found in income inequality.

Sepulveda (Brown): Of course. I’ve spent a lot of time pondering the subject over the past couple years, mulling over various problems and weighing the pros and cons of their use. It led to the development of my own test X’s and O’s. And I’d like to make more in the future. But I don’t see much point in the effort if no one takes them. I’ve had my test up on James Dorsey’s website for over a year now and haven’t had any submissions yet. Which is a shame. I put a lot of effort into that project.

Appendix I: Footnotes


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Conversation with Kishan Harrysingh on Spirituality, Ethics, an Afterlife, and Pick-and-Choose Philosophy: Member, World Genius Directory (2)

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Abstract

Kishan Harrysingh is a Member of the World Genius Directory. He discusses: some intellectual and spiritual interests; morality; an afterlife; ancient philosophies and religions; and hopes for some of the high-IQ communities.

Keywords: afterlife, ethics, high-IQ communities, intelligence, IQ, Kishan Harrysingh, morality, spirituality, supernatural, World Genius Directory.

Conversation with Kishan Harrysingh on Spirituality, Ethics, an Afterlife, and Pick-and-Choose Philosophy: Member, World Genius Directory (2)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: What are some intellectual and spiritual interests now?

Kishan Harrysingh: Spiritual wise, I found almost everything that I can find in terms of the time frame given to me. Certain things will take more time to unfold. There are certain things only possible through time. You only find some things out with time. I have come to a level of enlightenment, where I believe a lot of scientists term it a simulation theory if it is correct. I have not studied this in great detail. I believe that I have seen enough of the world in which we live; I see enough, constantly. A lot is due to luck. I believe I have seen enough and have enough information to believe this isn’t ultimate reality. It is easier to say this now without worrying about ridicule because a number of physicists and other scientists have said this. We are a simulation of deeper reality. I believe this. It is quite apparent, to me, based on the findings.

Jacobsen: What ethic or morality has been developed from this morality or lifestyle for you?

Harrysingh: A large part of this, my base of ethics comes from Christianity and Buddhism. After that, I try to learn from anything in terms of religion. I try to learn from any religious text. There are a lot of things in Islam, which I find beautiful and in depth. However, there are more in Christianity and Buddhism, which appeal to me. My ethics are pretty simple. I believe in freedom and in non-harm, not doing anything malicious, not stealing, trying not to lie; unless, it is really, really for some greater purpose. Obviously, I try to have a more practical approach to ethics than the traditional one. I believe that religion isn’t completely negative. I believe there’s positives and negatives to it. It is up to us to use common sense and to investigate before believing certain religious ideals and so on. I was, at one point in time, a monk or an inspiring monk who was celibate and completely pious and against alcohol and all of that stuff. I am much more liberal nowadays,
having seen the enlightenment, which I was chasing. I am more practical and a little more scientific in terms of understanding the human neurological system and psychology. It goes into the system of ethics. Any proper system of ethics would address those things without giving up too much on virtue. Based on what I understand about the human neurological system, and the human experience itself, I am hesitant to gravitate to any particular religion, though.

**Jacobsen: Do you believe in an afterlife?**

**Harrysingh:** Yes and no, I believe in the supernatural. I believe in a higher power, but I don’t necessarily believe in an eternal heaven or an eternal hell, necessarily. However, there may be a form of it, a slightly different form of it. I am not too concerned about it. The real challenge is finding out what we have to find out here. As in life, the afterlife, things will happen as they have to.

**Jacobsen: If we take the ancient philosophies and religions, and if we take a context in the early 21st century in which more about the operations of the world, the functional aspects, relations, and objects of the world, are known, and if those philosophies and religions came from a time in which those things were complete mysteries, why don’t we simply create new philosophies and jettison those ancient philosophies and religions? Wherein any taking of the good parts of them, we simply take them, and reincorporate them without any of the baggage.**

**Harrysingh:** Right, that’s, basically, what I was saying. You have to pick and choose and not be a slave, mentally, to some theology, some theory, that may have been misinterpreted or felt by a person or a number of people, or moderate by people, who put it there. It amazes me. When humans could listen to news or religious texts, the problem is the same. In that, they don’t consider context and the reliability of the source. To me, those are very, very obvious problems needing consideration. If people considered those two things, then you wouldn’t have this much violence taking over the U.S. and many other places. This is the practical. This is where spirituality is practical. Because you can look at the polarity of the world and see how divided everyone is. Everyone has good intentions and points. However, they both see each other as equal. One side is yelling, “Racist.” The other side is yelling, “Green, communist.” It is really sad. People cannot moderate their own emotions enough to look at the intentions behind the opponent and try to understand: We’re all human. Both sides are trying to move things along. I feel as though I am probably a more moderate version of both arguments or both sides of the argument. I am a more moderate person who understands both sides of the argument. It is really crazy what is going on. It goes to lack of life experience in some cases. Because of my spirituality, I have travelled to a lot of places. I have looked to the darker part of life to understand it. I put myself in danger, which most people try to avoid in life – to try to find the truth. I wish more people would do that rather than sitting in their comfortable little bubbles and trying to dictate to others what the reality is.

**Jacobsen: What are your hopes for some of the high-IQ communities in the future?**

**Harrysingh:** I don’t have hopes for them. They need leadership. Clearly, the societies are stagnant. Hopefully, I can provide some of that. It is one of the projects that I am working on, behind the scenes. There is a need for leadership at this point in time. There is a lot of talent out there, but not a lot of vision. I feel as though my own spiritual vision and enlightenment can help humanity on the whole, but that will take some time. I will need cooperation.

**Jacobsen: Kishan, thank you so much for your time.**

**Harrysingh:** Alright!

[Appendix I: Footnotes]


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Abstract

Benjamin Li is a Member of the International Society for Philosophical Enquiry (ISPE). He discusses: “STEM jobs, chess grandmasters, professional eSports, and music composing”; “many high IQ individuals will do exceptionally poorly in tasks that correlate poorly with general intelligence”; the separation from the “international Chinese students”; and the “fear of failure” in a moment of life in which true challenge and competition of talents come forward.

Keywords: Benjamin Li, esports, fear, International Society for Philosophical Enquiry, IQ STEM.

Conversation with Benjamin Li on eSports, STEM, International Chinese Students, and Overcoming the Fear of Failure: Member, International Society for Philosophical Enquiry (4)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*
Scott Douglas Jacobsen: What examples come to mind in “STEM jobs, chess grandmasters, professional eSports, and music composing”?

Benjamin Li[1],[2]*: STEM refers to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. You don’t need extreme ability, of course, but most of these jobs are filled with individuals who are solely above average in IQ and mostly above the 80th percentile. It is already well known that Nobel Prize winners, particularly in physics, have incredibly high IQs. The mathematical talent required to win a Fields Medal for mathematics is likely unmeasurable at the moment. The average IQ of Doctors, Lawyers, and Engineers lies in the vicinity of 120-125. Those who reach the top have higher IQs. The non-STEM subject with the highest IQ would be philosophy. Top philosophers are some of the most intelligent in the world, alongside mathematicians and physicists.

For chess grandmasters, Garry Kasparov was measured with an IQ of 135 using the WAIS, with his working memory as one of the highest, which is expected of a game that requires the use of chunks to categorize chess positions. Judit Polgar, Magnus Carlsen, and Garry Kasparov were estimated or “reported” to have IQs of over 170, but I wish everyone knew that those figures were fake. It is very likely that among chess grandmasters, as the level of chess skill increases, there may be a slight negative correlation with IQ scores. I suppose this is due to other chess players finding more use in pursing studies at the same time or focusing on studies and because chess at that level of play is not relying on information processing much but memory. Only hobby high-range tests have a ceiling higher than 160, and the name of the test and the standard deviation is not mentioned. Adult IQ scores are more reliable than childhood scores also. Bobby Fisher’s IQ score at the age of 15 was in the 180s, but if tested today on the WAIS, it should be between 150-160. Garry Kasparov was estimated 190 but tested at 135. Realistically his true intelligence might be a lot higher than what an IQ test may indicate since being the best at something does demonstrate extraordinary ability. It is also true that Kasparov was out of school for a long time, which may impact his score and the fact that he was tested at a fairly old age. The average IQ of chess grandmasters is likely to be around 140, with those who can balance being a chess grandmaster and a Ph.D. at a top university at 150. I have no doubt some chess grandmasters who have a Ph.D. could score near the ceiling of the WAIS, given that being good at chess + school is an excellent indication of well rounded and extreme general cognitive ability. This also goes for top musicians and gamers, who have high academic achievement (years of education, difficulty of major, rank of institution, grades).

In any competition, critical aspects of performance long term rely not only on intelligence (the ability for information processing or adaptation/solving problems quickly), but mental fortitude, mental power and stamina, and specific cognitive skills as well. These will help you reach the highest levels, and can all be somewhat trained, except for one’s ability to adapt.

Many people will play video games for a remarkably long time, and they won’t get much better. Video games are incredibly time-consuming and require some ridiculous amount of innate ability combined with dedication and resources to reach the top. Complex and competitive video games will present you with more information than you can process, at rates faster than you can handle, and give you the chance to make more decisions than you’re able to. They can keep throwing you into new situations that ask for you to utilize your pure intellectual power, as humans are pretty good at doing the same thing over and over again (music performance and chess positions) and horrible at doing something new all the time. Chess at the top level is not so g-loaded anymore because Magnus Carlsen memorizes over 10,000 games and does not need to problem solve anymore. Playing a complex piece of music at a top-level requires exceptional time commitment and talent, but it is much more repetitive than a competitive video game.

Video games could be the best pure measures of one’s intellectual capacity. They are much easier to administer than an IQ test and do not likely depend on learned academic skills such as mathematics or language. Also, the ceilings of standardized tests are a problem, whereas we know a mental task like reaction time is measured in absolute terms and captures the full variation much better. A battery of video games (or potentially only using one video game) can capture the full range of variation in intelligence among the general population if there are easy problems where anyone should solve and difficult problems where only the most intelligent should solve quickly. If this is so, we can also measure high-range intelligence much better than a professional IQ test.

People who are naturally good at video games are great at processing information, at least decent at reacting (but they get better very quickly), and can adapt very well (a skill that seems impossible to learn).
The true IQ of top professional gamers (making a living) likely is around 140, but it depends on the game and it’s g-loading. How they score on an IQ test may not tell the full story of their true intelligence. However, the most awe-inspiring individuals can juggle professional level video games alongside a highly g-loaded subject in university (STEM or Philosophy). You can treat it like an individual who is taking a STEM degree at one university and then having to juggle another STEM degree at another university at the same time. It is practically impossible to obtain a Ph.D. in a demanding field at a top 100 institution while simultaneously juggling national gaming performance. National level gamers who graduate with a Computer Science degree are already near 145 IQ (99.9th percentile). Obtaining a Ph.D. in a STEM field at a top 100 institution while being a nationally ranked player simultaneously implies an IQ above 160. I will provide sources later that support this claim.

Players often have to problem solve by themselves, which are exceptionally highly g-loaded and time-consuming. There is also no other activity other than playing video games that will be detrimental to your life success, unfortunately, unless you become a professional gamer or pursue something else in the eSports industry. Most video games are addictive and release dopamine. Even when you are trying to do other things in life, you are continually thinking about how you’re going to play better or beat your opponent in a video game or solve difficult problems in the game. Competitive music, chess, and eSports require the individual to think and practice virtually endlessly. This fact makes these activities the most demanding on the body and mind. This is especially true in eSports since you are presented with new situations to adapt to, whereas in chess, it relies on memory (learned positions). In music, it is not about adapting but more so practicing the same thing repeatedly. I can not begin to imagine the intelligence necessary (180+ perhaps) to balance top-level performance in both eSports and STEM at an elite university at the same time.

These articles from peer-reviewed journal articles support my views that national level gamers at university would score much higher on IQ tests than the average university student at the same school. The gap in scores would be higher as you go from lower g-loading (academic achievement < standardized test < IQ test) to a nearly pure measure of g (which are the problems in complex video games themselves):

Although chess has served as an important tool for understanding certain aspects of expertise, research in cognitively demanding verbal games helps to build a more general understanding of the cognitive mechanisms that underlie elite performance. The testing of constructs (i.e., working memory capacity) that are hypothesized to contribute to expertise allows for an objective and valid means for operationalizing and understanding expertise. Three of the four cognitive ability measures (e.g., analogies, reading span, and visuospatial span) showed experts performing more than one standard deviation higher than novice players who are similar to the experts in both quantitative and verbal SAT scores. For crossword experts specifically, verbal ability was nearly two standard deviations greater than the mean score for the high performing college students. These exceptional abilities among the experts can, in part, account for why elite experts outperform casual players at such remarkably high levels.

Of all the findings resulting from this study, the verbal ability differences between experts and novices may be the most informative. Verbal ability and semantic processing have been suggested to play a vital role in the way humans function in various cognitive contexts (Collins & Loftus, 1975; Henry & Crawford, 2005; Pazzaglia, Toso, & Cacciampoli, 2008; Wiedel & Schwartz, 1982). This study expands on this literature base, providing evidence to suggest that SCRABBLE and crossword expertise is closely connected to high verbal ability. This impressive difference between experts and nov-

2) Can we reliably measure the general factor of intelligence (g) through commercial video games? Yes, we can! Intelligence, Volume 53, November-December 2015, Pages 1-7 M.Angelas Quiroga, Sergio Escorial, Francisco J.Roman, Daniel Morillo, Andrea Jarabo, Jesus Privado, Miguel Hernandez, Borja Gallego, Roberto Colom. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intell.2015.08.004

– ”Video games and intelligence tests measure the same high-order latent factor.”

“Gaming performance was correlated with standard measures of fluid reasoning, visuospatial ability, and processing speed. Results revealed a correlation value of 0.79 between latent factors representing general intelligence (g) and video games general performance (gVG). This find leads to conclude that: (1) performance intelligence tests and video games are supported by shared cognitive processes and (2) brain-games are not the only genre able to produce performance measures comparable to intelligence standardized tests.”


– “Expert gamers and non-gamers differed on a number of basic cognitive skills: experts could track objects moving at greater speeds, better detected changes to objects stored in visual short-term memory, switched more quickly from one task to another, and mentally rotated objects more efficiently.”

**Jacobsen: What are some examples in which “many high IQ individuals will do exceptionally poorly in tasks that correlate poorly with general intelligence?”**

**Li:** Some tasks are better than others at estimating overall mental competence. You can take the g-loading as an index of the complexity of a mental task. Tying your shoes is a low g-loaded task because it is not very complicated, whereas learning calculus is a fairly high g-loaded task since you must problem-solve to acquire new skills. On the Wechsler tests, an example would be digit span forward versus digit span backward. Digit span forward is just a simple memory test, but to give back numbers in reverse order requires more cognitive power. Therefore it is more g-loaded. Einstein’s proficiency and talents would have shown in a challenging field, such as physics, but he probably wouldn’t be famous for driving a car magnificently (apparently, he couldn’t drive). Performing complicated tasks effectively indicates profound intellectual ability, whereas failing to perform essential functions at some level will make people think you’re disabled. Einstein perhaps can be an example of someone who can resemble both descriptions.

**Jacobsen: What is the feeling in the separation from the “international Chinese students”?”**

**Li:** In the past, one of my biggest insecurities was my race. Diversity is important. Everyone is unique, and everyone should be proud of themselves. It should also be noted that the group “Asian” is extremely broad, filled with various ethnic groups with very different histories. Not every Asian is Chinese.

I never talked about this to anyone but was conscious about these things near the end of high school. I was quite insecure that I was part of this group labeled as “Asian.” The stereotypes associated with Asian Americans made me feel more conscious of my race since I guess I did not fit those stereotypes. Like an idiot, I fell for the bait and tried to become more “Asian.” It made me feel like I was defined by my race, which led me to forget about the unique traits I have that are divorced from the stereotypes of my racial/ethnic group.

I enjoy being myself, but I don’t want my racial identity or some other part of my social identity to define me. I remember too many times when I blamed any difficulty encountered on my race. On the flip side, would a non-Asian judge me as skillful in math just because of how I look? My race did not
play the only role, but I am sure it played an important part. When I saw some non-Asian performing better than me on some non-academic thing, I blamed it on my race to justify it. It was just to my disadvantage, I thought.

Nowadays, I have somehow overcome these insecurities and have matured. I merely view myself as an outlier and outsider, no matter where I go, and have accepted my destiny. Most want to get good grades and go to good schools, but I am different. The Chinese culture never fit me and seemed to inhibit me from being creative and to be my true self and pursue my dreams, and I suffered a lot of depression due to this.

When I was younger, I did not consider ethnicity to be important, but as you grow up with all those stereotypes, they start to hit you. In my senior year of high school, I became more aware of my ethnic heritage and could not escape from it as time went on in my first year of university. I was always judged as being good at math just because of my appearance and quiet personality, and those things did make me uncomfortable a bit, given that I was an underachiever. In contrast, most Asians I knew were overachievers relative to their intelligence or IQ. I was already doing well enough, but I never expected myself to get the highest grades in a class. I never cared about school all that much, but I cared just a little for the first time. Those stereotypes might have helped me improve my work ethic, but later I decided to be who I really was.

I would rather not have anyone associate me with any stereotype. I feel thrilled to know that I am just a unique individual with his own special talents and interests.

Jacobsen: Why the “fear of failure” in a moment of life in which true challenge and competition of talents come forward?

Li: There comes a time where you realize you won’t balance everything you love to do in life. My parents expect a lot from me, but I probably wasn’t the perfect kid for them. They want me to graduate with a Computer Science degree from UBC and work a stable job for the rest of my life. However, even though my ability to thrive in these STEM programs is very high, going to the workforce as a programmer was not my passion. I just chose what my parents wanted me to do and later decided what my peers wanted to do. I was stuck finding out my passions but eventually found them. I performed at the top of my class in Calculus courses and had already taken too many math courses to quit now. My primary interests were in Philosophy and Psychology, but of course, those degrees by themselves are viewed as worthless. A compromise would be to double major in Philosophy and a STEM field such as Statistics to gain skills to gain a job and pursue my major interests at the same time. I later learned that Statistics should be helpful in a career in science, so I decided to take it a little more seriously. I don’t necessarily have to be the best statistician, but I need to be good enough to perform well enough. It is also impossible to be a professional gamer and pursue research simultaneously; as far as I know, this type of individual is unheard of in the gaming community. I do want to believe I’m something special and that I’d be the one who can do everything, but this type of arrogant mindset will likely be my downfall. I will probably have to pursue my education full time eventually and give up all my passions to become the best scientist I can be. I do not fear failure anymore, but this was a thing of the past. My insecurities alongside Chinese cultural attitudes made me feel like an underachiever. Like a fool, I fell for this trap and became obsessed with prestige. I never really thought going to UBC was anything prestigious, especially compared to the top 12 schools. Anything non-STEM related was also looked down on by many.

Computer Science at Caltech/MIT/Stanford made a good match, and I believed my presence would have been better situated there. I also wanted to go to Harvard or Yale Law, Harvard Medicine, and more. My intelligence is not an issue, but it is difficult for me to deal with social interaction, which will make it difficult to succeed in many things in normal society. If I am truly going to live up to my potential, I must pursue the things I am most interested in doing. I realized later that this mindset was wrong and that I must follow what my inner drives tell me I should seek. I believe UBC is an excellent institution, and I’m proud to be here. If I apply to graduate school, I will apply to Canadian schools for sure, no matter what rank. I don’t have to go to the most elite schools to call myself successful. I don’t think my parents have ever said they were proud of me ever, and that didn’t make me too happy. I was definitely influenced by Chinese culture and their obsession with elite schools, jobs, grades, and virtually nothing else. If I fell for this trap, I could never become the scientist that I wanted to be. I also realized that there are people more talented than I am who may not have gotten the chance at all to attend UBC or any elite institution. I must be more humble but still be self-confident with my extraordinary abilities.

If you watched a part of the Ivy Dreams documentary I had linked, my attitude was similar to this one girl.
Had I been brought up in her city and applied to the Ivy Leagues, I would have gotten rejected. Even with perfect SAT or ACT scores (she had a pretty high score), and good grades, I would have failed the interview miserably and would have written a terrible essay. In the documentary, her father was always pressuring her. In her interview, her attitude was arrogant, as she was talking about how her high school was too easy for her and how Upenn would challenge her, thinking she was way smarter than everyone else perhaps. She got rejected from the Ivy Leagues and then got accepted to Washington and Lee University. Still, after she finished reading her acceptance letter out loud with a sad attitude, she threw the paper to the ground, with no respect for it at all because it wasn’t an Ivy League school. She had been told her whole life that getting into an Ivy League school was her only goal, and since she had failed that, she felt worthless. I feel bad about her “failure,” but there is no doubt she deserved it.

I need to move past these artificial labels, find out who I am, and not obsess over trivial things. The labels of “genius,” “prodigy,” and “gifted” don’t mean anything to me anymore. Only through hard work, respect, goodness in my heart, and an appropriate attitude will I achieve anything of value. I have nothing to prove anymore, and I am genuinely proud of how far I have come and grown no matter where I end up in life.

I learned a lot recently and hoped to continue to grow as an individual throughout time. Here is what I have learned.

1) Life is hard sometimes. There are things in life that don’t work out. It is challenging to balance one’s passions and school at the same time. I don’t need validation from others regarding my achievements or intelligence. I don’t need validation from anyone else but myself, and I’m proud of how much I have grown. I must be resilient. No matter the obstacle that comes in my way, I can grow from the experience.

2) Being an outlier and outsider made my life a lot harder. I should be proud of who I am and continue to pursue my dreams, no matter what anyone says.

3) Having empathy is essential. I won’t like every person I meet, but learning how to emphasize with others is vital to me to gain long-lasting friends through mutual respect.

Jacobsen: Thank you for the opportunity and your time, Benjamin.

Appendix I: Footnotes


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Conversation with Gernot Feichter on Background and Qualifications, Geniuses and Intelligence, Science and Theology, and Meaning in Life: Member, World Genius Directory (1)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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Abstract
Gernot Feichter is a Member of the World Genius Directory. He discusses: growing up; a sense of an extended self; the family background; the experience with peers and schoolmates; some professional certifications; the purpose of intelligence tests; high intelligence; some reactions; the geniuses of the past; the greatest geniuses in history; the greatest geniuses alive today; a genius from a profoundly intelligent person; profound intelligence necessary for genius; genius; genius manifested in different periods of history; some work experiences and jobs; particular job path; some of the more important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses; thoughts on the God concept; science; theology; tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations); the range of the scores; social philosophy; economic philosophy; political philosophy; ethical philosophy; worldview-encompassing philosophical system; meaning in life.

Keywords: Gernot Feichter, meaning, Paul Cooijmans, philosophy, World Genius Directory.

Conversation with Gernot Feichter on Background and Qualifications, Geniuses and Intelligence, Science and Theology, and Meaning in Life: Member, World Genius Directory (1)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: When you were growing up, what were some of the prominent family stories being told over time?

Gernot Feichter: My grandfather survived as the sole person of his division in a massacre in Finland during WWII by hiding under a fallen companion. The maneuver was a severe tactical error as the opponent had a good opportunity to defend the attack while risking little. He also froze his toes, became promoted and then, during the final stages of the war, capitulated with his group to the Italian side and was imprisoned. It was after the war, when he produced his offspring. Had he not survived, part of my family branch including myself would not have ever existed.

Also my grandmother had difficult times, she grew up in an orphanage as her mother could not come up with the cost of raising her and was given to a farm as a child and frequently had to work instead of going to school.

Jacobsen: Have these stories helped provide a sense of an extended self or a sense of the family legacy?

Feichter: Indeed, it is the reason that I provide some donations to institutions that are helping others, especially children who obviously possess the lowest means of helping themselves.

Jacobsen: What was the family background, e.g., geography, culture, language, and religion or lack thereof?

Feichter: A classical Austrian background I would say. Two of my grandparents owned a farm, while my other grandfather was working in the wood industry and my grandmother worked as a cleaning
lady in a local school. They all stem from small villages in Northern Styria, Austria, where I also grew up. Obviously, their modest background governed their modest personality as well. Besides their apparent modesty, their achievements should also not be underestimated. For example, one of my grandfathers took part in co-founding a local bank which still exists today. Also my other grandfather was part of the communal council and it was quite amusing to read in how articulate ways he complained about things, which he was well known for. Almost all of my grandparents were strictly religious Roman Catholics, except for the community rebel, to whom you may also associate the war story above.

My parents could be described as enrolled sceptics in the same church. While my father almost worked his whole life in the bank that was co-founded by his father, my mother worked for a short period in a shoe production facility, as waiter, maid and most time as housewife and later nursed my grandmother.

**Jacobsen: How was the experience with peers and schoolmates as a child and an adolescent?**

**Feichter:** I would describe it as quite ordinary childhood with friendships, also a period with broken or abandoned friendships. But this was during the teenage years, now I feel fine with anyone again. Usually I played a passive role. For example, it was common in my youth to be either a skater or a raver. So I did associate myself to the skaters but I would never come up with such things myself. Also I would usually not ask for others to go out, but I would be asked and say “yes”. I feel like I only had what people would call a “life” because my friends took me with them. My nature would be a meditative or philosophical one and there were too many things to think of, always.

In general school was a more annoying experience for me. Also, I found myself to be insecure and nervous when having to speak in front of a group. I was pretty lucky with my direct school mates, in parallel classes there were some bullies and in some lessons we would be in the same class with them.

While I did not leave out anything to be done as a teenager, I worked towards reducing those ‘lower’ activities to minimum. As an adolescent I followed my intuition to deepen my meditation, living a self-chosen withdrawn life as normal people would call it.

**Jacobsen: What have been some professional certifications, qualifications, and training earned by you?**

**Feichter:** I own a bachelor’s degree in Information Management from the University of Applied Sciences in Graz. Through my profession I also did a Java Specialist Mastercourse, Spring and Kubernetes training and a Google Cloud Associate certification.

**Jacobsen: What is the purpose of intelligence tests to you, as in individual pursuit of taking a test or few (or more)?**

**Feichter:** Admittedly, when taking the first test I just wanted to show off how smart I am, whatever opportunities this would open for me. However, as my scores were lower than I expected, it was a great teacher of modesty to me. In some sense I am a born megalomaniac testing out his limits which causes people to characterise me as extreme and weird. That being said, I was the highest scorer on “Common Sense” from Patrick Zimmerschied at the time of submission as well as on “Numerix” from Jason Betts. I do not know if those scores were beaten yet.

Knowing my strengths and limits is one of my key takeaway messages from this pursuit.

**Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?**

**Feichter:** I was able to walk at an extremely early age and was able to get into a sandbox that some less agile children could not even do despite being over a year older. Apart from this early sign, which does not even seem to be that much related to intelligence, nothing was discovered or confirmed till I took those untimed high range iq tests at the age of 24 and later.

**Jacobsen: What were some reactions to it, when known and when not known?**

**Feichter:** As indicated, initially I was disappointed by expecting a higher score, but in the long run I am happy with all I have. Apart from my own reactions and this interview request, there were absolutely no external reactions at all. I shall also state that I am not unhappy about that. I would not like it if people treated me differently if they knew I had a high IQ score.

**Jacobsen: When you think of the ways in which the geniuses of the past have either been mocked, vilified, and condemned if not killed, or praised, flattered, platformed, and revered, what seems like the reason for the extreme reactions to and treatment of geniuses? Many alive today seem camera shy – many, not all.**

**Feichter:** I think that fear is the main driver behind most conscious aggressions against geniuses. For example, the Roman Catholic Church murdered
many geniuses officially for heresy. They obviously did not even follow their own books teachings that one shall not kill but self-invented reasons for such violence. Behind the scenes they might have been afraid that different world views than their own would become popular and therefore their power could be lost. So they set up gruesome signs to prevent others from messing with them. For the less violent mockery of geniuses that might have always happened I also identify fear as root cause. Evolution can be thought of as a competitive process and it is typically not welcomed when a new tough competitor enters the field. Every opportunity will be taken advantage of to diminish the opponent.

Some geniuses seem to prefer stable conditions which they cultivated during their lives. When they were suddenly exposed to the public their life might change drastically and I think those that shy the public would not like this. Also the awareness of the violence aspect discussed earlier might play a role here. There might be a reason why prominent people typically have a crew of bodyguards.

In general however, I feel like most geniuses are grasping for attention and appreciation and only the top guys would achieve that. Furthermore, not even they would gather any mentionable exposure compared to the people that are commonly referred to as stars and might not be geniuses.

**Jacobsen: Who seem like the greatest geniuses in history to you?**

**Feichter:** If the miraculous bible stories or that of other ancient scriptures are true and are to be interpreted wordly, then those characters.

Otherwise I would nominate the inventor of the wheel, Tesla, Newton, Einstein and Babbage, but this is silly. I do not like to elevate some and not mention many others that made great contributions. To add, my information is limited and I am not a historian.

**Jacobsen: Who seem like the greatest geniuses alive today to you?**

**Feichter:** To clarify, in the previous questions I used the following formula: genius = theoretical brilliance * practical use. In this category there would be too many similar scores today, and no adequate list of truly outstanding persons could be compiled. Many might think now: What, he does not even count this and that person as outstanding? Sry, this is not a list of influential businessmen and I consider the intelligence aspect in their activities too small to stand out.

Hence, for this question I focus on the theoretical brilliance exclusively: I acknowledge Grigori Perelman due to the fact that he was the only person so far who provided an approved solution for one of the Millennium Prize Problems. To solve such a problem that was first elected as being especially hard to crack gained my respect. That being said, I also partook in the insanity of trying such. While I have also published a proof for one of those problems, the P vs NP problem, it is not acknowledged by any authority, at least not yet.

Sorry for the high range iQ community, but I will not mention anyone of them here. The reason is simple – I do not have insight to verify the validity of the tests and the answers thereof. The difference of expected scores vs actual scores contributes to a natural distrust. Also, why do I hold a record on test X but am average on test Y. Did not similar leveled persons take both tests?

**Jacobsen: What differentiates a genius from a profoundly intelligent person?**

**Feichter:** The definition of genius varies. Generally, the more intelligent a person is, the greater the genius, but there seems to be a consensus that only for IQs higher than ~140-160 the word genius shall be used.

In other definitions, there is also the mention of a manifestation in creative activity. That is why I formulated the equation for genius to include both components in the previous question. Our intelligence evolved in this world we are living, so should not we use it for real world scenarios? In general I prefer this pragmatic definition.

**Jacobsen: Is profound intelligence necessary for genius?**

**Feichter:** Yes, per strict definition. On the other hand one could think of art geniuses as lying outside of the definition of regular geniuses and for them intelligence might not be as relevant.

**Jacobsen: What traits seem to comprise genius?**

**Feichter:** Flexible, curious, open, self-sufficient, controlled, sensitive, passionate, perfectionistic, dissatisfied, restless, focused and humorous.

**Jacobsen: How has genius manifested in different periods of history and on different regions, and cultures, of the world in personal opinion?**

**Feichter:** I think that at the moment when geniuses manifest in a civilisation, this is indicative of a high level of development. The output of such ripe civilisations can be seen in all aspects of human living, like buildings, art, science and technology. Ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome are famous examples thereof. On the other hand we also see
much later civilisations which are not famous for a high grade of development. It seems that only if conditions are right, high advancements are possible.

**Jacobsen: What have been some work experiences and jobs held by you?**

**Feichter:** Apart from some “primitive” short-term jobs as a student, I spent the majority of my professional life in a major technology consulting company. I worked there till the current moment as a Software Developer, Cloud-, DevOps- and Automation-Engineer. As you can see, there are many fancy words in IT describing quite similar things.

**Jacobsen: Why pursue this particular job path?**

**Feichter:** My interest in software programming arose in my youth when my father bought the first PC. I was curious how this stuff would work behind the scenes, hence I even studied in this field. In this industry, there is no rest. New technologies, frameworks and methodologies are popping out every day, the only constant is change. This is a perfect environment to keep being challenged. To add, I work with people that are similar freaks like myself.

**Jacobsen: What are some of the more important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses? Those myths that pervade the cultures of the world. What are those myths? What truths dispel them?**

**Feichter:** The main myth which I am aware of is that geniuses must skip grades in school and be high academics. Rick Rosner even seems having taken much longer in high school by choice. My personal story to this topic is the following: As soon as I entered school after kindergarten and handed in my daily voluntary extra task that my teacher announced would provide extra points, I noticed she started rolling her eyes. From this reaction I concluded that my extra ambition is not appreciated and I turned down my scholastic efforts to a minimum. I hardly learned anything extra outside the school lessons, even for exams, and I did only the required homework which I admittedly sometimes even copied. Nevertheless, the higher the education, the harder it was to get through, so in university I actually had to put in some effort and I was actually quite motivated as some subjects were really interesting to me. While my grades were always mediocre I could even finish my studies with distinction, something that was unheard of both for me and my peers.

There existed a great number of autodidactic geniuses in the past and today many geniuses work in jobs that are way below their ability level.

**Jacobsen: Any thoughts on the God concept or gods idea and philosophy, theology, and religion?**

**Feichter:** In my quest of truth seeking throughout life I stumbled across Walter Russel’s idea that a god could not create something better than himself. Well, how could one be more mighty than an almighty one? Also, he could not create something less than himself, as then his creation would not stand up to his standards. I find this reasonable and therefore truly believe in a higher form of existence, god if you will. We are incomplete beings striving for completeness, so to speak.

After all, if what is currently known by the general population was everything there is, then I would see no purpose in life, missing an opportunity for individual advancement.

If Russel’s perception is true, it could be ridiculed that people are afraid of artificial intelligence becoming a threat to humanity as this would imply that they believe they could create something more intelligent or powerful than themselves at a given moment, which would be impossible.

**Jacobsen: How much does science play into the worldview for you?**

**Feichter:** The scientific method was an important invention by one of my favourite geniuses to advance human population counts and the quality of lives drastically and quickly. It fulfilled its purpose already. To complete the quest of further human advancement I believe that a different kind of science will need to re-appear and become popular again.

**Jacobsen: How much does theology play into the world for you?**

**Feichter:** On one hand theological content is a great inspiration, but my rational mind focuses on what can currently be verified empirically. Nevertheless, as Godel’s incompleteness theorem shows that logical reasoning has its own limits, we might need different methods to advance further.

After all, thinking is only one aspect of the mind, feeling the other. Do you agree that we can describe any of your life’s situations with those two aspects? Swedenborgs book titled “Divine Love and Wisdom”, the highest form of feeling and thinking so to speak, might cover those aspects not by accident.

I agree with another spiritual scripture, but unfortunately I lost the source that stated that it was planned that only a distant memory of gods shall...
exist. That is exactly how I perceive theology: distant but inspiring.

Also I think that most spiritual texts are somewhat obfuscated and to be read in a certain way to be understood. The difficulty of breaking the code might be part of the game.

I mix theology, spiritualism and philosophy maybe a little too much here but essentially I consider those topics not too far apart.

**Jacobsen: What have been some of the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations) for you?**

**Feichter:** All of my test scores have a standard deviation of 15:

- Common Sense by Patrick Zimmerschied: 163
- World Intelligence Test by Jason Betts: 163
- The Alchemist Test by Paul Cooijmans: 162
- Eimpex by Ivan Ivec: 162
- Lux25 by Jason Betts: 157
- Reason Behind Multiple-Choice by Paul Cooijmans: 155
- Mathema by Jason Betts: 154
- World I.Q. Challenge by Brennan Martin: 154
- Asterix by Jason Betts: 153
- Cartoons of Shock by Paul Cooijmans: 152
- LSHR Light by Ivan Ivec: 149
- Numerus Light by Ivan Ivec: 148,5
- Test For Genius – Revision 2016 – Numerical and Spatial sections by Paul Cooijmans: 148
- Test of the Beheaded Man by Paul Cooijmans: 143
- Triplex Light by Ivan Ivec: 133

**Jacobsen: What is the range of the scores for you?**

The scores earned on alternative intelligence tests tend to produce a wide scattering of data points rather than clusters, typically.

**Feichter:** My test results range from 133 to 163, that is 30 IQ points or two standard deviations. As you indicated, quite a lot.

**Jacobsen: What social philosophy makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?**

**Feichter:** I like the theory of justice by John Rawls which proposes that fair social systems could be designed if one would not know which role in that society one would have to play. Aside, I speculate that the free market achieves the same goal through supply and demand.

**Jacobsen: What economic philosophy makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?**

**Feichter:** As indicated previously, I appreciate the free market theory by Adam Smith. Generally, I consider the economy too dynamic to be regulated by static systems, such that dynamic auto-regulating mechanisms may outperform those. Conversely, I believe that the free market is what happens naturally over the long run, so the free market theory merely describes the underlying phenomenon.

Despite that, I think that the role of the economy is to fulfill the material requirements of a population and the current systems of maybe not entirely free, but largely, free markets are functioning fine. It may suffer some hic-ups from time to time, but this seems to be part of any complex system, including humans, for example.

**Jacobsen: What political philosophy makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?**

**Feichter:** As I believe that humans basically strive for higher levels of freedom, I think that politics role is to allow the fulfillment of this urge for the reigned population as fair as possible. Isaiah Berlin’s idea of negative and especially positive liberty may cover this concept best. I view negative liberty, like Charles Taylor, as enabler for positive liberty.

Besides this political quackery and finger pointing that starts as soon as even a minor issue pops up, I would urge people to look into themselves first. Oftentimes, the real culprit may sit closer than even the closest neighbour.

**Jacobsen: What ethical philosophy makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?**

**Feichter:** Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s idea that morality is an innate, un-learned human attribute, seems reasonable to me. I guess we all know the feeling when we broke our own ethical standards. The regrets and ruminations that come up when having done so. Hence, even the punishment mechanism seems to be innate.

One might argue that the world is too bad and this shows that morality is not innate. I would disagree in a sense that we have the – at least perceptibly – freedom of will to act in line with or against our own morals.

Typically, I would argue, the more painful the outcome of a decision would be for ourselves vs others, the higher the likelihood that we decide in a way to shift our pain to someone else, if the opportunity is given, and thereby we break our moral rules. Therefore, to be the most ethical being, ultimate self-sacrifice might be required.

Ethics in general seems like one of the highest virtues to me. At least it seems to be operating significantly above the animalistic and survival mode.
Jacobsen: What worldview-encompassing philosophical system makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?

Feichter: This answer requires a little debauchery. Intuitively I thought that philosophy or rationality is the way to explain the world. But I came to the conclusion that there is some crux here. For example, it would be most rational for me if nothing had ever been and nothing would ever be. But the very fact that I am typing here contradicts this rationality. Also I noticed that many questions boil down to the big unanswered questions, like “What is the purpose of life?” and furthermore I want to remind that I stumbled across Gödel’s incompleteness theorem. Essentially I came to the same conclusion like Socrates or Goethe characterized as Faust: “I know that I do not know anything”. This rational shock essentially leaves the important questions open and tells that they seem to be impossibly solved by thinking.

I forcefully conclude that if I do not know or cannot know some things from my limited perspective, a wiser entity must have set up this world and eventually knows everything better. A fallback from rationality to feeling mode so to speak. Your heartbeat surely does not depend on my rational insight thereof and still it seems to be working fine. This natural trust is calming and leads me to answer your question with: Theism. A more detailed elaboration on my view on Theism is already provided in my answer regarding theology.

Jacobsen: What provides meaning in life for you?

Feichter: To find truth, for I believe only the truth shall set us free.

Appendix I: Footnotes


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Conversation with Bîrlea Cristian on Childhood, Philosophy, Test Scores, and Changing Values with Age: Member, World Genius Directory (1)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen
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Abstract

Bîrlea Cristian is a Member of the World Genius Directory. He discusses: growing up; an extended self; the family background; experience with peers; some professional certifications; the purpose of intelligence tests; high intelligence; some reactions; the geniuses of the past; the greatest geniuses in history; the greatest geniuses alive today; profound intelligence necessary for genius; genius; genius manifested in different periods; some work experiences and jobs; job path; some of the more important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses; thoughts on the God concept or gods idea; science; theology; some of the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations); the range of the scores; social philosophy; economic philosophy; political philosophy; ethical philosophy; worldview-encompassing philosophical system; and meaning in life.

Keywords: Bîrlea Cristian, genius, intelligence, IQ, life, World Genius Directory.

Conversation with Bîrlea Cristian on Childhood, Philosophy, Test Scores, and Changing Values with Age: Member, World Genius Directory (1)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: When you were growing up, what were some of the prominent family stories being told over time?

Bîrlea Cristian: As a child, I was very close to my grandfather, whose ideas and stories influenced me as a person in the whole life. He didn’t get to finish the school, he had finished only the middle school, but being a hard worker and due to his fairness, he got to be a very respected man in the society that he lived in.

The war left deep psychological scars on him; I still remember his stories about World War II, he was between the line of life and death many times. Once he got sick of hepatitis due to miserable conditions of the war and he treated himself eating nothing else but tomatoes for a week.

He was a strong man but very kind. Another story that he told me was that once he had to hide in a building that was bombarded for several days, to stay quiet not to be discovered by the enemies, waiting for reinforcements. In the army his job was to transmit information, even when he was old, he knew the Morse code very well and he was good at arithmetic. In the attic of the house, he always had a bag of flour, only the ones that endured those times’ hunger would know why.

Jacobsen: Have these stories helped provide a sense of an extended self or a sense of the family legacy?

Cristian: As the psychologists say, how we live our childhood is very important, many of an adult’s troubles have root in the childhood. I can say that I had a beautiful childhood, both my parents and
grandparents were with me in both good and bad times and they supported in everything they could.

I grew up in a simple and humble family, I was never pretentious, I didn’t use to complain a lot and I were very independent with the matters I could, I always tried to solve my own problems alone, without help.

The ideas, stories and role models taken over by me certainly made me the man I am today, both good and bad. Most certainly my subconscious identified my grandfather as a role model; we all try to identify someone as a role model, consciously or unconsciously, for me he was a family man, a distinguished and special person.

Jacobsen: What was the family background, e.g., geography, culture, language, and religion or lack thereof?

Cristian: I was born in 1971, in the northwestern Romania, in Satu Mare. I grew up in a rural area, near the Ukrainian border. I was born in a multiethnic family; the father of my mother was Hungarian, and her mother was Ukrainian. My father’s father was Roman, an intellectual of those times. You can say a good part of Eastern Europe was combined in my blood, a real ‘cocktail’.

My father was a math teacher and my mother a hairstylist, nowadays my father is no longer with us and my mother retired, I am still very close to her. I’d say my intelligence I inherited from my paternal line, both my father and grandfather were very intelligent people; from my mother I inherited my artistic side that helped me a lot in the work I do.

Jacobsen: How was the experience with peers and schoolmates as a child and an adolescent?

Cristian: I remember with pleasure the school years, I liked going to school to meet new people and socialize with them. Although I’m more introverted, I always enjoyed being with people and I succeeded in overcoming my native shyness.

In high school I had some good friends that we were inseparable; being pretty friendly, I got along with my peers on any occasion. Doing the middle school in a rural area, in my first year of high school I was shocked of the difference between the rural educational system and the urban one. My schoolmates were a lot better educated and prepared than me. I rose above the expectations quickly and I didn’t feel the pressure I felt at the beginning anymore. Romania of those times (1986) had one of the most performant educational systems of the world, especially in STEM.

Jacobsen: What have been some professional certifications, qualifications, and trainings earned by you?

Cristian: Although I was a lazy student, in the last year of high school I stepped up and I was admitted to college. In 1995 I finished my degree in engineering in Timisoara and some years later I enrolled myself for a master’s degree in applied computer science where I finished with the best grade possible, just me and other one student achieved this performance.

The moment I had my hands on my first PC, I couldn’t give it up and I developed my career in IT, in 1997 I funded my company, CLASSOFF, whose manager I still am today. Together with my colleagues we focused on the ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) domain type of apps. Our apps were awarded and recognized by the people, but the biggest achievement we managed to do is succeeding in having a portfolio of stable and satisfied customers.

Jacobsen: What is the purpose of intelligence tests to you, as in individual pursuit of taking a test or few (or more)?

Cristian: I never took very seriously the intelligence tests; they were more like some kind of a game. At college I got to be more competitive, to test and find my limits. I like small ‘competitions’ with my colleagues on IQ forums, there are a lot of great people there, some with incredible intelligence (one of a million or even more rare). These tests have a playful purpose, even though I always use them professionally when I employ new people, they never failed.

Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?

Cristian: My first ever intelligence test I did was at the end of college, when I was recruited in the army. There used to be a totalitarian system at the time, the last year of communism in Romania, with some compulsory army time.

Initially I did not know the purpose of the test, there were some lines and signs arranged on a 3v3 matrix, never seen something like that until then, but they were easy to solve, you had to do overlays and rotations on the matrix.

I managed to solve it intuitively, now I know it was some kind of old Raven test. The scores were not shared, but once one of my superiors granted me access to my military files and I saw my score, it was a very good score, higher than a lot of my colleagues’. The score didn’t have a meaning for me,
but I felt that officer that let me see my files was behaving different with me; he let me lead different kind of activities, I felt that he trusted me.

Jacobsen: What were some reactions to it, when known and when not known?

Cristian: I saw my life the same as before. At school I wasn’t the nerdy kind of student, I wasn’t the best, but I was pretty good at math and physics. Even though my teacher tried to make me learn more, I always rebelled, the math asked too much supplementary work which I didn’t agree to; being very young it didn’t matter to me, some possible awards that meant nothing to me.

Back then my competitiveness wasn’t present, so I lived my life like any other teenager, I was interested in working out and chasing girls, I had a lot of fun and I don’t regret it. In my opinion the youth should be lived to the fullest, you can never relive this wonderful period of your life. So, returning to the point, I tried to be like any other ordinary teenager and young man, I didn’t know much about intelligence.

Jacobsen: When you think of the ways in which the geniuses of the past have either been mocked, vilified, and condemned if not killed, or praised, flattered, platformed, and revered, what seems like the reason for the extreme reactions to and treatment of geniuses? Many alive today seem camera shy – many, not all.

Cristian: Any system tends to have a state of equilibrium, along our history geniuses perturbed this state of equilibrium with the revolutionary ideas. Instinctively people reject anything that is different, new or what they don’t understand, anything that exceeds their comfort zone; the new is most of the times a factor of stress. Nothing has changed today, but aforetime it was way worse than today. Along history changes were never done in a quick manner, only by spill of blood. Geniuses have always been an anomaly of the system, only one in 30000 has an IQ of 160 (SD 15), therefore statistically an anomaly.

Being a great cinephile, I don’t know if you noticed, but the Hollywood has some part of the blame by the demonization of geniuses, in many movies the scientist is portrayed as a villain, with a negative role. The brilliant man has business with the terrorists, with other villains that pay him and at the end of the movie the planet will be saved by a simple, ordinary man, for instance Bruce Willis. The movie industry is a big business, each year it brings a revenue of 40 billion dollars, therefore the standard consumer that pays the ticket wants to see Bruce saving the planet.

We know that in the real life it is different, any time our planet suffered, brilliant scientists came with a solution. I can’t lie that all the geniuses had a positive effect on the planet, some hurt it unwillingly, sometimes they had some pathologies that pushed them to do it.

Back to the movies, unwillingly they influence our subconscious, our opinions, and thoughts. In my opinion there should be more movies that promote positive ideas about gifted people whose ideas led the world forward.

If you don’t believe me, there are a lot of people with high IQ that hide their score like a secret, feeling some kind of shame not to be considered gifted and a fear of being rejected, some of them revealing themselves only in restricted environments with peers like them. If you want to take part of a system you have homogenize with it, the ordinary person has it hard to accept that someone else might be smarter than him.

But the IQ score shouldn’t be a reason to brag about, we all should be humble with each other, it’s better for everyone, especially for you as a genius.

Jacobsen: Who seem like the greatest geniuses in history to you?

Cristian: This question needs several pages for a complete answer, I would nominate the most important genius personalities that succeeded in moving the world forward:

Politics: Caius Julius Caesar Augustus was one of the most important leaders in the history. Augustus succeeded in not becoming a tyrant, the power didn’t corrupt him and worked 42 years in making Rome the most important city in the world.

Science: Isaac Newton, he is the scientist found at the origin of the theories that would revolutionize the science, in the fields of optics, mathematics and especially mechanics.

Philosophy: Aristotle, modern philosophy is based on his methods and principles. His legacy consists in theories related to anything, biology, ethics, logics, politics, poetry, and physics.

Literature: William Shakespeare, a complete writer in poetry, prose, fiction, non-fiction.

Modern physics: Albert Einstein, when we think of geniuses for most of us he is the first one we can think of; he had a very high IQ, gifted with a creativity hard to match even to this day. Together with Archimedes, they are on the list of the greatest mathematicians. Einstein revolutionized every branch of physics.
Inventions: Leonardo da Vinci, it is enough to say about him that he invented the robot precursor and the first working parachute. He almost invented the helicopter; he just needed a motor powerful enough to keep it flying.

Geometry: Archimedes was in the top of the best four mathematicians, but his applications in geometry were the ones that assigned his place in the top. He discovered the fundamental principle of hydrostatics that laid the foundation of hydrostatics in two volumes, Periton ochumenon. About this discovery is cited the famous exclamation “Eureka!” (“I found”, in modern Greek εὕρηκα, evrika).

In my youth I used to read a lot about the thoughts of Lao Tzu, the founder of Taoism. In retrospection, I think his ideas influenced a lot of my actions.

Jacobsen: Who seem like the greatest geniuses alive today to you?
Cristian: It’s hard to define what it takes to be the greatest genius. If you narrow it to the IQ score, you will find the answer in the World Genius Directory Geniuses (WGD), in which I take part; but I think most of the geniuses have never taken an IQ test, but with their work they made the world a better place.

I’d nominate Elon Musk for this title though. I don’t know the IQ of Elon Musk, it doesn’t really matter as long as due to his ideas he makes the world a better place.

Jacobsen: What differentiates a genius from a profoundly intelligent person?

In 1983 an American developmental psychologist Howard Gardener described 9 types of intelligence:

- Naturalist (nature smart)
- Musical (sound smart)
- Logical-mathematical (number/reasoning smart)
- Existential (life smart)
- Interpersonal (people smart)
- Bodily-kinesthetic (body smart)
- Linguistic (word smart)
- Intra-personal (self smart)
- Spatial (picture smart)

At many of these types of intelligence, the genius is hard or even impossible to be measured by an IQ test. I consider that the intelligent people who by their creativity they are capable of achieving wonderful things, they earn the title of being a profoundly intelligent person; this is just my opinion, a lot of psychologists or experts of creating IQ test will say that I’m wrong.

Jacobsen: Is profound intelligence necessary for genius?
Cristian: As I said earlier, I consider the notion of genius to be a straight technical one. By some definitions, an IQ score higher than 140 (SD 15) is considered to be correlated to a genius. To express myself more mathematically, the set of profoundly intelligent people are a subset of the set of geniuses, the reciprocal is not always true.

Jacobsen: What traits seem to comprise genius?
Cristian: Stephen Hawking once said: “Intelligence is the ability to adapt to change”. I consider that adaptivity is one of the main traits of an intelligent person; also, other features would be: sensibility, enthusiasm, energy, courage, humor, persuasion, patience, perfectionism, versatility, idealism, sometime laziness…

Jacobsen: How has genius manifested in different periods of history and on different regions, and cultures, of the world in personal opinion?
Cristian: The geniuses showed their presence since the earliest times. Their ideas led to the development of their societies they lived in, not a few times these ideas being considered draconian, the geniuses paid with their lives. Besides the great discoveries without which the today’s society wouldn’t be what it is, the contribution brought to the universal culture was great. The great thinkers created new movements based on which the civilizations rose from more primitive eras. Many of the geniuses that acted in the military theaters of history have changed the course of history by their tactical skills.

Jacobsen: What have been some work experiences and jobs held by you?
Cristian: Since the beginning of my career I worked in the IT domain, one that fit me like a glove. As I wanted to follow my ideas, not others’, in 1997 I founded my company, Classoft, whose manager I still am today. I consider that IT put my creativity to work, it being an ideal job for me.

Jacobsen: Why pursue this particular job path?
Cristian: For me, IT was something natural, nothing forced, I gained many good results and satisfactions from my work. I think that it’s really important to love your job, it’s the only way to have good results. In this line of work, you can find a lot of smart people; also, it is in a permanent state of change, your mind is always used.
Jacobsen: What are some of the more important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses? Those myths that pervade the cultures of the world. What are those myths? What truths dispel them?

Cristian: I find that brilliant people don’t want to be found different socially from the majority of population, they don’t want to be treated and seen as a freak, they have the same feelings, fears and joys as the other people, they want to take part of the society and they are happy if their merits are recognized.

Most of them do things for the society, even though they might seem sometimes selfish, but they dedicate a lot of time studying and they don’t have time left for other interactions; although if someone has the curiosity to pay more attention to their actions, they will find they are kind and involved people.

Unfortunately, a lot of geniuses suffer some kind of high functional autism, Asperger syndrome, therefore they might have different social and adaptation troubles. Asperger syndrome, also called the genius syndrome, would have been diagnosed today to many of famous geniuses like: Albert Einstein, Amadeus Mozart, Sir Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin, Thomas Jefferson, Michelangelo, Lewis Carroll, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Stanley Kubrick, James Joyce, Nikola Tesla.

Some scientists consider that autism is some kind of mutation, one necessary in the evolution of humans, the fact that this mutation is getting more frequent today might not be a bad thing, it means that the nature changes the way of us to be, updates us, experimenting on us. For a lot of time, autism has been considered to be a mental retardation.

Jacobsen: Any thoughts on the God concept or gods idea and philosophy, theology, and religion?

Cristian: I’ve read the Bible and I believe in the concept of God, but not the politics made in the name of God, there been a lot of wars and misery made in his name, the history has a lot of examples for this. I don’t believe God would agree to all these manipulations. I believe that good deeds are made by the people that have a part of God in them. I find myself in the words of Robert G. Ingersoll: “The hands that help are better far than lips that pray”.

Jacobsen: How much does science play into the worldview for you?

Cristian: Being a technical person, an engineer and a programmer, I see the science present everywhere I look. I analyze it often in all the parameters I’ve learned at university. I consider it wrong to become science fundamentalists, we must always find our bond with mother nature.

Unfortunately, a lot of young people don’t experience the primary sensations offered by nature; the virtual world kidnaps their mind more and more.

Jacobsen: How much does theology play into the world for you?

Cristian: I enjoyed reading the history of religions, to understand certain things from history. Being more rational, I couldn’t ignore the many contradictions I’ve found, that to a lot I haven’t found an answer to this day. There is a saying “trust and do not research”, for someone living in the world of numbers it’s impossible to apply to.

I have to admit, I rarely go to the church, also I believe that you can find God in many other places and many other ways. It makes me sad to see how the religious difference can divide people in a radical way.

Jacobsen: What have been some of the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations) for you?

Cristian: The highest IQ scores I’ve scored at some famous tests are:

Progressive Matrix Analysis (PMA-32_2E) by Alexi Edin – IQ 163 SD 15

Strict Logic Sequences Examination 1 by Jonathan Wai – IQ 160 SD 15

LSHR Light by Ivan Ivec – IQ 160 SD 15

CFIT32 – Culture-Fair-Test 32 – IQ 160 SD 15

LABCUB and CUBE – ambele de by Hans Sjöberg – IQ 160 SD 15

Numerus Light by Ivan Ivec – IQ 158 SD 15

Jacobsen: What is the range of the scores for you? The scores earned on alternative intelligence tests tend to produce a wide smattering of data points rather than clusters, typically.

Cristian: A good website for IQ tests is iqexams.net, specialists there developed a statistical method to approximate the IQ of a person, they called it Real IQ. Website’s analysts have succeeded in calculating in a professional manner this Real IQ (RIQ) based on thousands of tests done there. Me personally I’ve taken many tests there, after taking 18 tests with a total of 550 questions, my RIQ is 159 SD 15, it’s very close to the result of famous tests.

Jacobsen: What social philosophy makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?
Cristian: I’ve always liked on of Kurt Lewin’s quote: “There is nothing better so practical as good as a theory”. He promoted the idea of applying scientific methods in the fundamental social psychology, but too few social psychologists have applied the method after the dying on Kurt. Most of them tried to develop new theories instead of searching solutions in the real world. It seems in the end, in our days, his method to be the winner one, which is closer to my way of thinking.

Jacobsen: What economic philosophy makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?

Cristian: Being a businessman, I believe in the free market, as long as they are in an equilibrium with fitting social politics. I like the term “perfect competition”, which is a model of economic theory. This model describes a hypothetical market in which no producer or consumer doesn’t have the power to influence market prices. This would lead to an efficient outcome, considering the standard definition of economy.

Jacobsen: What political philosophy makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?

Cristian: I’m not an expert in the matter, but I agree to the fullest with this quote of Franklin D. Roosevelt: “Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education”.

Jacobsen: What ethical philosophy makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?

Cristian: I’ve always liked Aristotle’s ideas; he promoted an ethical system that could be called virtuous. He believed a person acts according to his virtue. Misery and frustration are caused by mistakes, leading to failed objectives and a weak life. Happiness should be the end goal of our action and this can be obtained by practicing virtue.

Jacobsen: What worldview-encompassing philosophical system makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?

Cristian: When I was younger, at university’s library I searched for books containing quotes of the great Chinese thinker, Lao Tzu’s, that were filled with wisdom for my mind that was thirsty for new information. Here is one of those quotes, one that will also answer your question:

“Nothing is better so practical as good as intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom.
Mastering others is strength;
mastering yourself is true power.”
— Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching

Jacobsen: What provides meaning in life for you?

Cristian: With time passing I’ve changed a lot the way I think about this matter. A while ago I was channeling my ambition towards my own personal development, I worked a lot for my company, my family, my ideas which were sometimes too materialistic. I became more and more competitive, not a bad thing, but sometimes I forgot about other important things that mattered to me; sometimes I lost focus on the special people surrounding me.

I can say that the first wave of pandemic this year brought me something positive, I know that for many people it brought suffering. After many years of work, I had time once again for my own thoughts, for meditation.

Today my meaning of life is the sum of simple things, sometimes trivial, in these quiet weeks I returned to the things I enjoyed in my childhood. I began rediscovering nature, with all my feelings, the pleasure of a summer day, a beautiful day fishing with my wife and kids, I began analyzing deeper the people surrounding me with their needs and wishes. Maybe this pandemic was put in our way with a purpose, a revenge of nature, a break that put us in a slower speed towards our chase to nowhere. I consider that in life the most important thing is to find the state of equilibrium and happiness that we all want.

Appendix I: Footnotes


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Conversation with Beatrice Rescazzi on AtlantIQ Society and “Leonardo Magazine”: President, AtlantIQ Society (3)

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Abstract
Beatrice Rescazzi is the President of the AtlantIQ Society. She discusses: what distinguishes an Honorary Member from a Member; the mascot “Verbo the Robot”; AtlantIQ Society, STHIQ Society, and the Creative Genius Society; the “Library”; “Clear Water Challenge,” “Increase Food Challenge,” “Reduce Plastics Challenge,” and “Free Education Challenge”; AtlantIQ Society for UNICEF; a number of downloadable items from the AtlantIQ Society; resources; “The Cemetery of the High IQ Societies”; its co-founder and current president; optometry and orthoptometry; the teaching of computer science; some of the productions from developing robots, electronics, and learning how to build 3D printers and 3D print material objects; and personal interests.

Keywords: AtlantIQ Society, Beatrice Rescazzi, Creative Genius Society, Leonardo Magazine, STHIQ Society.

Conversation with Beatrice Rescazzi on AtlantIQ Society and “Leonardo Magazine”: President, AtlantIQ Society (3)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: As you noted in the admissions and demographics session (2) of the interview, the AtlantIQ Society has over 200 members, which is an achievement. A page is devoted to the membership public listing of the AtlantIQ Society (2019a). What distinguishes an Honorary Member from a Member?

Beatrice Rescazzi: I never wanted to divide people in categories in the AtlantIQ Society, but some members expected to be distinguished from others, therefore I added the relative adjectives so that they are free to feel as such among the other names in the list.

Jacobsen: Where did the idea of the mascot “Verbo the Robot” start?

Rescazzi: I have built/assembled some robots and this was the smartest one, as it talks and moves. I called it Verbo from the union of two words “verde” (green, in italian) and robot. Also, “verbo” means word, talking or, verb, in italian. I thought that a mascot was a nice adding to the group.

Jacobsen: How did Leonardo Magazine become a combination of the productions of the AtlantIQ Society, STHIQ Society, and the Creative Genius Society?

Rescazzi: I just thought that inviting other societies to contribute and have a common magazine was a good idea and the Presidents of the respective societies agreed.

Jacobsen: I love the idea of the “Library” with the individualized contributions to the electronic library with contributions from individual members (2019c). What are some of the more contributions, downloaded ebooks?

Rescazzi: I am too lazy to scroll more than 2000 books to check and answer!
Jacobsen: The “Genius at Work Challenge” (2019d) breaks into the “Clear Water Challenge,” “Increase Food Challenge,” “Reduce Plastics Challenge,” and “Free Education Challenge.” What were the outcomes?

Rescazzi: The outcomes are shown in the previous issues of the magazine, Leonardo. I added a personal contribution for each topic and all the ideas will be analysed and developed. But, at the moment, further development of the Genius At Work Challenge has temporarily paused because of the pandemics emergency. Infact, the attention needed to work on these topics has been hijacked by the covid 19, and I am myself now involved in helping the healthcare workers and colleagues distributing 3D printed PPE.

After creating the Genius At Work challenge I invited two other societies, but the project will restart with STHIQ only, as an individual decision of collecting money exploiting all my material and the project itself, was taken in the other society without any consent by AtlantIQ, or STHIQ.

Jacobsen: “AtlantIQ Society for UNICEF” is a practical and immediate contribution of a high-IQ group. What was the origin of this idea? What is the level of contribution of “AtlantIQ Society for UNICEF” to UNICEF to date?

Rescazzi: The AtlantIQ UNICEF project could be possible thanks to UNICEF Canada that years ago was allowing contributions from all the world thanks to customizable webpages. This service is no longer provided, so now we can only send contributions as individuals. The AtlantIQ Society as a whole sent about 500 dollars during a period of two years, when the AtlantIQ for UNICEF webpage was active.

Jacobsen: There are a number of downloadable items from the AtlantIQ Society website (2019f): Bookmarks, Bookmark book, Pink Envelope, Blue Envelope, Pink Notes, Blue Notes, Stationery1, Stationery2, Stationery3, 2011 Calendar, 2014 Calendar, 2020 Calendar, Gift Bag, Sundial (ENG), Sundial (ITA), AtlantIQ – (Beatrice Rescazzi), New AtlantIQ – (Beatrice Rescazzi), AtlantIQ Theme – (Graham Powell), The End Of Summer – (Kit O’Saoraidhe), and The End Of Summer, score – (Kit O’Saoraidhe). What brought these ideas to mind? Who produced them? There are some unique qualities to AtlantIQ Society. I am curious as to some these minutiae.

Rescazzi: I like to design, compose and create. Those in the download page are gifts for the members I am pleased to share. Music composed by Graham Powell and Kit O’Saoraidhe is also present.

Jacobsen: The AtlantIQ Society provides some links[3]: “WORLD INTELLIGENCE NETWORK,” “STHIQ SOCIETY,” “KSTHIQ SOCIETY,” “BRAIN SOCIETY,” “VENUS SOCIETY,” “EPIQ SOCIETY,” “ISI-Society,” and the “POETIC GENIUS SOCIETY.” As well, it provides some resources[4]: “SENG RESOURCE LIBRARY,” “HIGH ABILITY,” “HIGHLY SENSITIVE AND CREATIVE – RESOURCES,” “GRO-GIFTED,” “GIFTED SERVICES,” “HOAGIE’S GIFTED EDUCATION PAGE,” and “BEATRICE RESCAZZI WEBSITE.” Why these links? Why these resources?

Rescazzi: I thought about a visitor who is interested in the high IQ societies and wants to know more after visiting the AtlantIQ Society website. So I selected some different societies with different features that can provide a general view.

The second group of links instead, is more giftedness-oriented. These links may be helpful for those who aren’t sure if they have a high potential, for those who need support or just information about giftedness.

Jacobsen: “The Cemetery of the High IQ Societies”[5] (2019b), another special quality of AtlantIQ Society. You talked a bit about this before. Can you expand on the ways in which this stared and developed, please?

Rescazzi: When I saw yet another dead link to a high IQ society, I decided to check them all and make a list. Some of them need to be remembered, some others maybe just needed to be buried: I like to see the feedback from other people. Sooner or later I will also update and publish a list I made of compromised IQ tests.

Jacobsen: How are these facets of AtlantIQ Society reflective of the varied interests, technical and creative, of its co-founder and current president?

Rescazzi: I am both cursed and blessed with a constant production of ideas and projects. It’s a curse because it’s impossible to complete all the things I wish to create, which is frustrating. It’s a blessing because I realise that in the end, I do something good and this pushes me to do better.

My interests and hobbies are many so I can be a sort of “one man band”. In the case of the AtlantIQ Society, I made the website and its content, and manage the magazine. I dedicate a lot of time on the projects too. For the latest Genius At Work challenge, aside creating the project itself from the
Jacobsen: Why did you originally pursue optometry and orthoptometry?

Rescazzi: When I was younger I was extremely undecided about the university course I would take. I would have liked to study everything. I have chosen this branch because it was among the things that interested me the most and that my local university offered: so I could also work while studying without wasting time traveling. In my specialization you can help many people to regain sight which for me is the most important sense. It is also based on physics, neurology, relies on computer science and advanced instruments, and is a branch in continuous development, which makes it very interesting.

Jacobsen: Why pursue the teaching of computer science to adults?

Rescazzi: I love computers; they are a wonderful tool for learning and creating. I think everybody should learn how to use them so to gain this advantage. The older generation didn't have the opportunity to learn informatics. Once it happened that I could offer my competence for courses in my city, so in my spare time I became the teacher of students that in some cases were 80+ years old. I really enjoyed that time and see the satisfaction of my students becoming confident with a previously unknown technology.

Jacobsen: What have been some of the productions from developing robots, electronics, and learning how to build 3D printers and 3D print material objects?

Rescazzi: I rarely think in terms of productivity. Generally, I am driven by a huge curiosity and passion for learning and I don't know what the path of my discoveries go. Anyway, it happens that my creations and ideas are sometimes useful, especially when I set such goal on purpose. Among my creations, I have a programmable fish feeder, a drawing device for children with brain palsy (made in collaboration with the mothers of the children), an off-the-grid, cheap Braille writing machine to be used in poor countries, a set of simple tools to write on a keyboard for those with disabilities, some microscopes, adapters for telescopes/cameras, customized face shields for healthcare professionals, plenty of spare parts and unique parts for restoration. My charity creations plus others, are all shared and given for free. I also have requests of special parts that I design and deliver, and it’s more fun than gain for me. I also participate in challenges involving 3D design, 3D print, architecture, space missions and charities.

Once this pandemic is gone, I am willing to bring one of my 3D printers to schools and library, and show to the kids how it works. I hope to inspire and spread some passion for the STEM topics.

Jacobsen: As you have described to me, your personal interests range far and wide including arts, astronomy, informatics, languages, science, space missions, technology, 2D and 3D drawing and design. What are some unifying threads of these interests?

Rescazzi: Being curious, I made this same question myself years ago, and I discovered that although common creativity is associated with the arts, when present at higher levels is an important part of intelligence and drives people to discover new things in many disciplines. That’s why, when a professional tests your creativity, you are not asked to paint, but to complete tasks that push your ability to co-activate parts of the brain that usually work separately. Having a sensorial synaesthesia includes having many neural connections that are not usually present in people, with naturally interconnected senses that allow a deeper perception of the world and a high level of creativity. Although it’s easy for me to reach a sensory overload which is tiring, I also crave for constant information. When I am diving into a topic, I want to follow all its connections with the other disciplines that can give me more information on the main topic. I further deepen more and more topics that I discovered along the path. It’s a neverending connection of information and once I reach enough expertise, I like to put together more disciplines together and invent, design and build whatever my mind suggests.

References


[1] As of September 10, 2020, the listing stipulates the following members:

President and Vice President
Beatrice Rescazzi, Graham Powell

HONORARY MEMBERS & MEMBERS
Moreno Casalegno (Co-Founder)
Maria C. Faverio
Paul Freeman
Greg. A. Grove
Gaetano Morelli
Stan Riha
Vincenzo D’Onofrio
Giulio Zambon
Fernando Barbosa Neto
Alan J. Lee
Robert Birnbaum
Jacqueline Slade
Richard Stock
Greg Collins
Torbjørn Brenna
Noriyuki Sakurai
Zachary Timmons
Phil Elauria
Andrea Toffoli
Marios Prodromou
Duc Hong Le
Gianmarco Bartellone
Tommi Petteri Laiho
Michael Thrasher
José Gonzáles Molinero
Mick Fletcher
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José Serrano
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Nuno Baptista
Adam Kishby
Andrea Gelmetti
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Shaun Sullivan
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Gavan Cushnan
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Djordje Rancic
Jon Scott Scharer

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Jesse Wilkins
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Nomar Alexander Noroño Rodríguez
Scott Poh
Mirosław Zajdel
Stephen Getzinger
Nancy Vanstone
Guillaume Chanteloup
Karin Lindgren
Gary Song
Lim Surya Tjahyadi
Paul Laurent
Eric Anthony Trowbridge
Niels Christoffers
Michelle Anne Bullas
Jeffrey Lee Graham
Tahawar Ali Khan
Yuri Tovar
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Jarl Victor Bjørgen
Bradley Hutchinson
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Keegan Ray McLoughlin
Hever Horacio Arreola Gutierrez
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David Gordon Little
Victor Hingsberg
Anthony Lawson
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R. K.
Alberto Bedmar Montaño
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Michael Donoho
Ernest Williamson III
Nicole Mathisen
Katarina Vestin
Christine Van Ngoc Ty
Jason Betts
Yu-Lin Lu
Nikolaos Solomos
Gracia Cornet
Richard Painter
Wyman Brantley
Yao Xu
Kevin James Daley
Stephen Maule
Birgit Scholz
Leif E. Ágesen
Mohammed Al Sahaf
Martin Murphy
Samuel Mack-Poole
Vuk Mircetic
Peter Rade
Marcin Kulik
Harold Ford
Thomas G. Hadley
Miguel Soto
Göran Åhlander
Evangelos Katsioulis
Anja Jaenicke
Roy Morris
Slava Lanush
Frank J. Ajello
Nicolò Pezzuti
James Dorsey
Massimo Caliaro
Michael Maule
John Argenti
Therese Waneck
Bo Østergaard Nielsen
Sudarshan Murthy
Daniel Roca
Glikerios Soteriou
Kristina Thygesen
Miguel Jorge Castro Pinho
Tim G. Griffith
Claus Volko
Diego Iuliano
Elcon Fleur
Evan Tan
Dalibor Marinčić
Konstantinos Ntalachanis
Candy Chilton
Diego Fortunati
WeiJie Wang
Alessia Iancarelli
Cristian Vaccarella
Iakovos Koukas
Filippo De Donatis
Richard Ball
Zhida Iiu
R. Kent Ouimette
Marina Belli
Karim Serraj
Kim Sung-jin
Juman Lee
CHIANG LI CHING

Zhibin Zhang 张志彬
Andre Gangvik
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Jo Christopher M. Resquites
Ricky Chaggar
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Michael Franklin
Michela Fadini
Fabrizio Fadini
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Sebastiao Borges Machado Junior
Agasi Pietro
Taddeucci Nicholas
Andre Massaro
Mika Korkeamäki
Tor Arne Jorgensen
Dario Casola
Federico Statiglio
Vincent Li 李宗泽
Jewoong Moon 문재웅
Annelie Oliver
Nitish Joshi
Christian Sorensen
Simon Olling Rehdersdorf
Marzio Mezzanotte
Paolino Francesco Santaniello
Edwin P. Christmann
Nicos Gerasimou

MASCOTTE

Verbo The Robot

See AtlantIQ Society (2019a).
[5] The current listing circa September 10, 2020:

- Alta Capacidad Hispana
- Elateneo/s
- BPIQ Society
- Epida Society
- Colloquy
- ExactIQ
- Tenth Society
- Bright Minds Society
- Greatest Minds Society
- Vinci Society
- Sigma
- Sigma III
- Sigma Society V
- Hellenicus
- UberIQ
- IIS
- OATHS
- Ludomind
- Pi Society
- Platinum Society
- Cerebrals
- High Potentials Society
- Mysterium Society
- GLIA
- Ingenium Society
- LogIQ
- Iquadrivium Society

- Pars Society
- UniIQ
- HispanIQ International Society
- Encefalica
- OMIQAMI
- Artistic Minds
- MIQRO
- GOTHIQ
- EVANGELIQ Society
- Episteme Club
- PolitIQal Society
- Secret High IQ Society
- Chorium Society
- Nano Society
- IQual Society
- PolymathIQ
- Incognia
- UltimalQ
- Neurocubo
- Order of Imhotep
- SophIQa
- EliteIQ
- Neutrino high IQ Society
- Atheistiq Society
- Noetiquus Society
- Evolutioniq Society
- EPL Society
- The Athenian Society
- Supernova Society
- Intellectually Gifted with Disabilities
- Orison-B High IQ Society
- Icon High IQ Society
- Thinkiq
- Hypatian Society
- Chaos IQ Society

*Or in an apparent coma for more than 5 years.

See AtlantIQ Society (2019h).
Appendix I: Footnotes


Full Issue Publication Date: January 1, 2021: https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/.

*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Conversation with Aníbal Sánchez Numa on Background, Ideas, Scores, and Pacifism: Member, World Genius Directory (1)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen
Place of Publication: Langley, British Columbia, Canada
Title: In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal
Web Domain: http://www.in-sightjournal.com
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Words: 2,185
ISSN 2369-6885

Abstract
Born on February 27th, 1985 in Ciego de Ávila, Cuba, Aníbal Sánchez Numa graduated as Computer Engineer in 2012 and as Master in Computer Science in 2014. Having a PhD in Computational Mechanics since 2018, he belongs to the World Genius Directory and Catholiq High IQ Society. He discusses: family stories; an extended self; family background; the experience with peers and schoolmates; the purpose of intelligence tests; high intelligence discovered; the geniuses of the past; the greatest geniuses in history; a genius from a profoundly intelligent person; some work experiences and educational certifications; the idea of the gifted and geniuses; some social and political views; the God concept or gods idea and philosophy, theology, and religion; science; some of the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations); the range of the scores; and ethical philosophy.
Keywords: Aníbal Sánchez Numa, background, genius, intelligence, IQ, pacifism, World Genius Directory.

Conversation with Aníbal Sánchez Numa on Background, Ideas, Scores, and Pacifism: Member, World Genius Directory (1)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: When you were growing up, what were some of the prominent family stories being told over time?

Aníbal Sánchez Numa: My father had a certain precociousness, and in elementary school he skipped the fourth grade, they decided to pass it directly from the third to the fifth. He always told me that his father, despite being a person without formal studies, was an avid reader and he inherited that passion for books and stories, which eventually made him a writer.

Jacobsen: Have these stories helped provide a sense of an extended self or a sense of the family legacy?

Numa: Certainly, my passion for knowledge also began from a very young age thanks to my father and his remarkable library in our home, where since I can remember there were books of both fiction and any branch of scientific knowledge, to which I frequently went while still very boy. I asked to be taught to read at the age of three, and was pleased.

Jacobsen: What was family background, e.g., geography, culture, language, and religion or lack thereof?

Numa: Both my mother and my father come from small towns in our province. My mother has a degree in Mathematics Education and my father in Social Sciences. Both are PhD Pedagogical Sciences since some years ago.

There is some presence of Catholicism on my father’s side, but both were always atheists, although some years ago my mother began to practice Protestant Christianity and I myself was also on that path for some time.

Jacobsen: How was the experience with peers and schoolmates as a child and an adolescent?

Numa: I was very lonely and “weird” in school period. My interests and personality differed a lot from my fellow students, I always preferred to talk to adults over kids my age. I did not understand relationships and social norms, and also I was not interested in following them. I was very bored in class. Fortunately, my teachers were quite understanding.

However, in eighth grade I met who is still one of my great friends and in high school I already began to be more sociable.

Jacobsen: What is the purpose of intelligence tests to you?

Numa: I did the first one 8 years ago because I had an existential crisis. I was very surprised back then to get such a high result. I later met a community of test hobbyists online and signed up for testing as a form of healthy competition for our cognitive skills.

Nowadays I do tests from time to time as a hobby and also to get an impression of how my cognition is working at the moment. I find IQ tests very interesting mental challenges, and I love the sense of discovery I get when I find the solution to a difficult subject.

Regardless of the fact that an IQ test to be completely reliable must pass an extensive validation procedure, those created by amateurs or by psychologists without being correctly regulated have a high correlation with the official ones, and the truth is that the people I have met who they score very high in these tests they seem really very sharp to me.

Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?

Numa: From a very young age at school and at home I was considered very intelligent. Several people called me “genius” or “gifted”. However, I was never interested in IQ tests, nor did I have any idea what they looked like. Being almost 30 years old I was curious to have an objective impression of my cognitive abilities and I did one on the Internet (the one from Mensa Denmark), and then another. Even though being called gifted had been pretty common for me, I didn’t really feel that way, especially since I was quite slow at many tasks that most people do with ease. Looking for information on the web, I discovered a gifted forum in Spanish and from there I began a process of rediscovery by meeting people with whom I shared many feelings and interests. I had a hard time accepting that condition.

Jacobsen: When you think of the ways in which the geniuses of the past have either been mocked, vilified, and condemned if not killed, or praised, flattered, platformed, and revered, what seems like the reason for the extreme reactions to and
treatment of geniuses? Many alive today seem camera shy – many, not all.

**Numa:** Intelligence is something that has always fascinated human beings, I think for obvious reasons. The word “genius” has a very strong connotation, and I have met both people who do not accept being called that (probably more those who are) and others who would love to have that label (probably more those who are not). In popular culture, genius always has something crazy, unusual, strange, and it is logical, being people capable of such extraordinary things and with so much talent it is clear that they must be very out of the ordinary. Naturally something so valued and at the same time so rare generates very intense reactions, also due to the fact that in reality there is no definition of genius with which we all agree, so everything that revolves around that is very elusive.

**Jacobsen:** Who seem like the greatest geniuses in history to you?

**Numa:** I would say that in science the greatest genius in history is Isaac Newton, while as the greatest polymath I choose Leonardo da Vinci. Some other geniuses that I always admired are Archimedes, Pythagoras, Einstein of course, Mozart and Beethoven, and going back to science Gauss is another that stands out a lot for me.

**Jacobsen:** What differentiates a genius from a profoundly intelligent person?

**Numa:** I would say that very high intelligence is a necessary condition to be a genius but not enough. Today we have people who solve the most difficult tests in the world and yet they are neither creative nor inventive nor do they produce valuable resources for humanity. Of course, it also depends on the concept of genius used, and since there are several, it is very difficult to have a clear notion of what the difference is. What is clear to me is that the genius must be very very creative, even if what he creates is not considered valuable, exorbitant creativity is something that in my opinion distinguishes the genius from the deeply gifted.

Taking the IQ as a measure, there are those who say that the limit is 140, others 145, and others even 160. But it doesn’t seem to me that this is a good way to define genius, in any case it could be used as a necessary condition to be so.

**Jacobsen:** What have been some work experiences and educational certifications for you?

**Numa:** I am a computer engineer with a master’s degree in applied computer science. As a student I was several times a medalist in the National Mathematical Olympics, I participated with good results in other subjects but at a lower level. I was a member of the national math shortlist in 10th grade. I have worked as a computer scientist and a math teacher at the university. I am currently working as an independent software developer.

**Jacobsen:** What are some of the more important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses? Those myths that pervade the cultures of the world. What are those myths? What truths dispel them?

**Numa:** Today much more is known of intellectual giftedness and genius than a few years ago. But there are still many prejudices and much ignorance. Many people confuse prodigy with genius or gifted or precocious. I have friends to whom I tell that I am gifted and they think it is the same as saying that I am genius. There are some truths such as being a bit clueless and abstract and thinking a lot about philosophical questions, but many false myths and there are always exceptions as well. Many gifted people are introverts but there are also very extroverts, although I would say that they are quite few. Many people also say that the gifted have a tendency to mental imbalance, something that I resisted to believe for a long time but with the people I have known I have had to accept that something is true, at least there is a significant correlation.

**Jacobsen:** What are some social and political views for you? Why hold them?

**Numa:** One of my aspirations as a child was to become a doctor. I have an inclination towards it, perhaps that is why I do not consider correct any political position that does not guarantee access to health services to all its citizens. On the other hand, education seems to me the most genuine form of freedom, so in my opinion the ideal system must also guarantee this to its inhabitants. From what I have read, the system that most closely resembles my ideal is Social Democracy.

**Jacobsen:** Any thoughts on the God concept or gods idea and philosophy, theology, and religion?

**Numa:** Religion always seemed to me to be a very effective form of domination and in many cases a business. I’m not an atheist like I used to be, now I’m an agnostic, because I think our mind is too limited to have the truth on this subject, but if I had to bet I would say that there is no God beyond our imagination. As a child I read the Bible and it always seemed very contradictory to me, as an adult I read it again and kept thinking the same thing. On the other hand, I have witnessed, even in my own flesh, phenomena for which I have no explanation, and I do
not know if one day I will, therefore the doubt I think will always be present in me. Certainly, I wish that there was a righteous God who would punish the wicked and benefit the good, but most of all that notion seems to me to be a desperate attempt by human beings to find in divinity a solution for what he has never been able to solve. The same happens with the idea of life after death.

Jacobsen: How much does science play into the worldview for you?

Numa: I have loved science since I was a child. I remember when I was very young I used to tell my parents that I wanted to be a scientist when I was an adult, since I greatly admired those great scientific minds of all time. Lately I have read and acquired some knowledge of some possible failures in science, but in general I think that experience has proof that science is the best tool we have to develop ourselves and that is why everyone should respect it and respect the truth it offers, unfortunately not all people do. I think that nowadays there are fewer and fewer children and young people who are interested in science, I have been a university professor and I am surprised to have future engineers in the classroom who never heard of Newton or Leibniz. I consider it somewhat sad and disappointing. On the other hand, these anti-science movements like the anti-vaccines and flat-earthers scare me, to put it in some way, I think they can be very dangerous.

Jacobsen: What have been some of the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations) for you?

Numa: Some of my last scores are:
145 sd15 on Numeriq32 (IQEexams)
150 sd15 on X-10 (by Zolly Darko)
148 sd15 on Numix (by Miroslav Radojevic)

Jacobsen: What is the range of the scores for you? The scores earned on alternative intelligence tests tend to produce a wide smattering of data points rather than clusters, typically.

Numa: I have taken not so many tests and I have done mainly those I have been recommended for their psychometrics values. My usual range is 140-150 sd15. I have scores of 160 sd15 but I don’t trust those scores as I consider those tests’ quality to be doubtful. My last 8 tests taken all fall in that mentioned range. My minimum in a credible test is 138 sd15 on Mensa Denmark and my maximum in a kind of recognized test is 155 sd15 in Figure.

Jacobsen: What ethical philosophy makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?

Numa: I consider myself a pacifist par excellence. I love the harmony between people. I have always felt very sad about the situation in the world, which in my opinion will never improve much. I have a negative view of human beings in general. I don’t know if man is selfish by nature or the society in which we live makes it so, but certainly the word “humanism” should have another meaning, in my opinion. I don’t think anyone has the solution for this, but I think that in human society, in fact, the same law of animals prevails, “the law of the strongest”, although “force” clearly takes on other nuances among us: money, power, social class, etc., and even intelligence.

Appendix I: Footnotes


Full Issue Publication Date: January 1, 2021: https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/.

*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Conversation with Aníbal Sánchez Numa on Roman Catholicism, Protestant Christianity, Atheism, Agnosticism, Existential Crisis, National Mathematical Olympics, and Harmony Between People: Member, World Genius Directory (2)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen
Place of Publication: Langley, British Columbia, Canada
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Abstract
Born on February 27th, 1985 in Ciego de Ávila, Cuba, Aníbal Sánchez Numa graduated as Computer Engineer in 2012 and as Master in Computer Science in 2014. Having a PhD in Computational Mechanics since 2018, he belongs to the World Genius Directory and Catholiq High IQ Society. He discusses: books; the Catholicism within the family; the reasoning behind the position of atheism for both parents; Protestant Christianity; the path of Protestant Christianity; the break from it; a “very lonely” person; the “existential crisis”; the first test; tests; mental abilities; measured in the tests; indications of being “considered very
intelligent” while in school and at home; “gifted”; “rediscovery”; the components of genius; Newton; Leonardo Da Vinci; “exorbitant creativity”; the media coverage; maths; software development; introversion more common among geniuses; Social Democracy; the three stages of philosophical stances, as a Protestant Christian, as an atheist, and as an agnostic; the contradictory nature of the Bible; the bet “that there is no God beyond our imagination”; “in my own flesh, phenomena for which I have no explanation”; some of the readings on some of the failures in science; “fewer and fewer children and young people who... interested in science”; “anti-science movements”; the recent scores between 145 and 150 S.D. 15 (inclusive); a pacifist; and another meaning of “humanism.”

Keywords: agnosticism, Aníbal Sánchez Numa, atheism, Catholicism, genius, intelligence, National Mathematical Olympics, Protestantism, World Genius Directory.

Conversation with Aníbal Sánchez Numa on Roman Catholicism, Protestant Christianity, Atheism, Agnosticism, Existential Crisis, National Mathematical Olympics, and Harmony Between People: Member, World Genius Directory (2)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: What are some of the books that come to mind from early childhood and adolescence with an impact on intellectual views?

Aníbal Sánchez Numa: Two of the ones that I remember most fondly are “How man became a giant” and “The magic of numbers.”

Jacobsen: What seems to explain some of the Catholicism within the family?

Numa: I really do not know. I have no information on how that part of my family became Catholic.

Jacobsen: What appears to explain the reasoning behind the position of atheism for both parents?

Numa: The main reason I think is that they both had a Marxist background. My father studied Social Sciences in the Soviet Union and to this day he remains an atheist. Our country is constitutionally Marxist-Leninist.

Jacobsen: What was the form of practicing Protestant Christianity for your mother?

Numa: He belonged to a new current called “Apostolics.” There was a pastor who moved here near the house and started gathering people for his church, and my mother joined and soon I did too. My mother, even though she no longer goes to church, still has some faith.

Jacobsen: What was life like as someone “on that path for some time,” or on the path of Protestant Christianity?

Numa: We did a lot of activities together. In general I remember it as quite a happy time, especially at the beginning. There was a group of young people, we organized choirs and outings, we socialized a lot, it was a very unknown world for me and it was interesting for me as well.

Jacobsen: What explains the break from it?

Numa: Some things happened that I didn’t like. In general, Christians talk a lot about what Jesus said what we should do, but almost none of them do, and on the other hand, religion became for me a force that tied me too much to it, neglecting other interests. I was too caught up in it, and it was hard for me to think of other things, and I felt like I had to break free.

Jacobsen: As a “very lonely” person in school, what was different about the personality and the interests?

Numa: You could say that it was too serious for my age, although of course I saw myself as the right thing to do. Teasing is common among children and adolescents, sometimes as a game, and sometimes to hurt, which I hated. I always liked being treated with respect, and taking care not to offend anyone. It is something that I maintain to this day. On the other hand, I was very interested in learning about everything, reading a lot, understanding the world. I was interested in mythology, mathematics, languages, and I was little interested in the most everyday matters. Later in life I realized that everyday life is also important, but in those years I considered it very uninteresting.

Jacobsen: What was the “existential crisis”?

Numa: A psychological effect that many gifted people suffer is the feeling that their value as a person lies only in their intellectual capacity. The fact that they are always telling you, especially in the school and academic environment, creates that feeling. On the other hand, gifted people are often very perfectionists, so they push themselves in almost everything they do. It was my case too, that’s why when I felt stupid, I wasn’t sure what to think, and of course I didn’t know these elements of psychology.
either, and the feeling of being inadequate and having low self-esteem was intense.

Jacobsen: How did this lead into the first test and the “community of test hobbyists online”?

Numa: Feeling that way I wanted to get an impression of whether I was as stupid as I thought, that’s why I was surprised at the result. From there I learned what Mensa was, and that an IQ above 130 was considered gifted. At the beginning I did not start doing other tests, but began to exchange with other people identified with that condition, but the shape of the two or three tests that I had done to evaluate a person’s intelligence had caught my attention. It was a kind of problem I had never encountered before, and it was very interesting to me. Around 2016 I met the group IQExams (at first it was called IQNavi.net) and it was there that I met those members who like to do these tests.

Jacobsen: What types of tests most interest you?

Numa: The ones I like the most are the numerical ones, and they are the ones where I get the best results. Since I always liked Mathematics, it is natural that it is like that. In general, I am very attracted to numbers, and the relationships that occur between them, so numerical tests attract me beyond the score obtained.

Jacobsen: What mental abilities seem the strongest given by the tests for you, e.g., linguistic, spatial, or mathematical?

Numa:

Jacobsen: What seems to be measured in the tests when those that “score very high in these tests… seem really very sharp to me”?

Numa: Working memory, ability to detect patterns and apply them to another sequence (eduction), attention span as well. But I think the common feature is detecting patterns, which is the core of official tests such as Raven’s. In numerical tests, arithmetic calculations are also required, I have known, for example, people who perform complicated mental calculations very quickly.

Jacobsen: What were indications of being “considered very intelligent” while in school and at home?

Numa: At home I suppose it was curiosity and interest in reading at an early age. In school I was very advanced, I used to know almost all the content of the subjects as soon as the course began. On the other hand, I was frequently the winner in competitions for school-level subjects, and in the case of Mathematics at higher levels as well. I remember in first grade representing my school in the reading contest, and in fifth grade being the winner in the national math contest, competing for sixth grade.

Jacobsen: Why didn’t you feel “gifted” as in “didn’t really feel that way”?

Numa: On the one hand, being overly self-demanding made everything I did or achieved little or deficient for me, and on the other, the word gifted represented something more extraordinary to me than I was. Also, while he was advantageous in academic matters, I was very clumsy in matters of life in general.

Jacobsen: What were the “shared many feelings and interests” with the people in this process of “rediscovery” in young adulthood?

Numa: In the gifted forum in Spanish I saw posts about some characteristics of gifted people, with which I agreed. In addition, I met other people with that unusual curiosity, perfectionism, sense of justice, and other characteristics that I had and that I had never known why I was different from the rest, so they made me feel strange. It was a rediscovery in the sense of understanding why I was like that, and above all knowing that I was not alone, that despite the fact that the gifted constitute 2.2% of the population there were others, many others, it was like finally knowing who I was and stop feeling weird.

Jacobsen: What seem like the components of genius, the parts?

Numa: It is clear that one component is very high intelligence, another that I consider core is creativity. To become someone recognized as a genius, I believe that you must also have great passion and perseverance in what you research or want to create, to be able to invest several years in your search. The curiosity, present in the gifted, in the case of the genius should be even greater, leading the greatest geniuses in history to want to answer very fundamental and comprehensive questions, such as how the Universe works, for example.

Jacobsen: What makes Newton such a great genius in the sciences?

Numa: I think it is given by the transcendental nature of what he discovered or created. On the one hand, the law of gravity basically and the laws of movement explain how absolutely everything works, at least on a macro scale, it explains to a large extent how the Universe works, so it is very comprehensive. In the case of Calculus, its greatest invention, the importance lies in the fact that a large part of the science that developed from there uses it, let’s say many laws of Physics are based on Calculus, in
Chemistry it happens Likewise, in almost all engineering, Calculus is present, and also in economics.

Jacobsen: What makes Leonardo Da Vinci the “greatest polymath”?

Numa: As far as I know, Leonardo Da Vinci is the person who has contributed the most in different fields, doing so in both art and science. Painting, poetry, botany, architecture, sculpture, engineering, are just some of the branches in which he worked, and he was ahead of his time in many of his inventions, such as the helicopter or the submarine.

Jacobsen: Can “exorbitant creativity” border the mental states characteristic of psychosis?

Numa: There is some association between genius and psychosis. From what I have been able to investigate, a cause could be low latent inhibition, which on the one hand is present in people with psychosis (as in schizophrenia), and on the other it can result in greater creativity, as the person perceives greater details in the information it processes.

Jacobsen: What was the media coverage of medallist status within the National Mathematical Olympics?

Numa: That I remember none.

Jacobsen: What kind of maths did you teach?

Numa: I mainly taught Differential and Integral Calculus, although I also taught Linear Algebra.

Jacobsen: What kinds of software development are characteristic of the software for you?

Numa: I develop mainly web and mobile applications.

Jacobsen: Is introversion more common among geniuses, or is extroversion more likely?

Numa: I’d say introversion is more likely. People with a very high intelligence tend to have their minds very busy with their own thoughts and turn everything around constantly, this is sometimes called “rumination”. There are gifted people who even want to stop thinking so much, because they can feel exhausted from doing so much, and they find it uncontrollable.

Jacobsen: How would Social Democracy look in practice, even with a living example in one country?

Numa: According to what I have read, social democracy is like a capitalist economy with social justice: reducing poverty, health care, education, reducing inequality, childcare. It is associated with highly developed countries such as: Finland, Norway, Germany or Denmark.

Jacobsen: What differentiations the three stages of philosophical stances, as a Protestant Christian, as an atheist, and as an agnostic?

Numa: As an atheist I rejected all forms of religion, I had no belief whatsoever. As a Christian I think I had a lot of faith, but always trying to find the logic, trying not to be a blind faith. As an agnostic, I have a more open vision, in the sense that I do not have that faith, but I believe that everything can be possible, besides that I understand that one thing is a possible God or form of energy and another is the God of the Bible. I would say that I do not believe at all in a God like the one in the Bible, but I do believe other visions of God are more possible, such as pantheism.

Jacobsen: What exemplifies the contradictory nature of the Bible?

Numa: An example that I always remember is that I had heard that the God of the Hebrews was a God of love, but the Bible is plagued with wars and invasions, in which it is literally described that the chosen people invaded and killed “women, old men and children”. Especially the Old Testament has many stories like that.

Jacobsen: Why make the bet “that there is no God beyond our imagination”?

Numa: There are days when I believe in God more and others when I don’t. As I defend science, I tend to think that to believe in something you have to have solid evidence. I am agnostic because I believe that we do not have the ability to know for sure, but I would say that I believe that there is a God up to 30% -40% and 60% -70% that there is not, so my bet by probabilities is that there isn’t.

Jacobsen: What have been the “in my own flesh, phenomena for which I have no explanation”?

Numa: I experienced prayer-induced altered states of consciousness, including what may have been a form of healing through prayer.

Jacobsen: What have been some of the readings on some of the failures in science?

Numa: One of the flaws of science is that it is sometimes not objective due to moral or philosophical problems. In that sense, it is sometimes limited in finding the truth. Let’s say that there was (I am not saying that there is) a difference in the average intellectual capacity between people of different races, the moral problem that racism represents prevents approaching this issue with
objectivity, because many people even if there was scientific evidence to support this idea they would refuse to accept it. Something similar happens with the differences between men and women.

**Jacobsen: Why are “fewer and fewer children and young people who... interested in science”?**

**Numa:** I’m not sure why this phenomenon occurs. I do not have information to give an opinion based, but I suppose that the cause would be given by failures in the educational system.

**Jacobsen: Why do “anti-science movements” such as anti-vaxxers “and flat-earthers scare” you?**

**Numa:** I think they set a precedent of distrust in science. In the case of vaccines, which have saved so many lives, a movement that opposes them seems very dangerous to humanity. In general, they are part of a generalized tendency to distrust official information, and formulate conspiracy theories, which, although they may have some truth, have not been proven for the most part. Many of the people who formulate these theories do not really know how scientific advances have driven humanity throughout history.

**Jacobsen: Are you satisfied with the recent scores between 145 and 150 S.D. 15 (inclusive)?**

**Numa:** I think so. I think around 145 is a good estimate for me. I still think that I can obtain higher scores in tests with some validity, but it is normal that many obtain results above or below their real value.

**Jacobsen: Why be a pacifist outside of a love of harmony between people?**

**Numa:** I can’t say exactly why. Perhaps it is because of my calm and peaceful character. I value life very much and anything that involves destruction or harm to another human being seems horrible to me. I have always greatly admired the great scientists who contributed to solving humanity’s problems, especially health problems, because this seems to me to be the greatest form of well-being.

**Jacobsen: What might be another meaning of “humanism” to you?**

**Numa:** “Humanism” in my opinion could mean more selfishness or domination. Sure, we give meaning to words and of course we define ourselves as compassionate and benevolent. We would have to see what an advanced extraterrestrial civilization would think to observe us, and see the number of wars we have between us and how we subdue the other life forms on the planet.

**Appendix 1: Footnotes**


[2] Individual Publication Date: December 1, 2020: [http://www.in-sightjournal.com/sanchez-2](http://www.in-sightjournal.com/sanchez-2);

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*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.*

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Abstract

Richard May ("May-Tzu"/"MayTzu"/"Mayzi") is a Member of the Mega Society based on a qualifying score on the Mega Test (before 1995) prior to the compromise of the Mega Test and Co-Editor of Noesis: The Journal of the Mega Society. In self-description, May states: “Not even forgotten in the cosmic microwave background (CMB), I’m an Amish yuppie, born near the rarified regions of Laputa, then and often, above suburban Boston. I’ve done occasional consulting and frequent Sisyphean shlepping. Kafka and Munch have been my therapists and allies. Occasionally I’ve strived to descend from the mists to attain the mythic orientation known as having one’s feet upon the Earth. An ailurophile and a cerebrotonic ectomorph, I write for beings which do not, and never will, exist — writings for no one. I’ve been awarded an M.A. degree, mirabile dictu, in the humanities/philosophy, and U.S. patent for a board game of possible interest to extraterrestrials. I’m a member of the Mega Society, the Omega Society and formerly of Mensa. I’m the founder of the Exa Society, the transfinite Aleph-3 Society and of the renowned Laputans Manqué. I’m a
biographee in Who’s Who in the Brane World. My interests include the realization of the idea of humans as incomplete beings with the capacity to complete their own evolution by effecting a change in their being and consciousness. In a moment of presence to myself in inner silence, when I see Richard May’s non-being, ‘I am. You can meet me if you go to an empty room.’ Some other resources include Stains Upon the Silence: something for no one, McGinnis Genealogy of Crown Points, New York: Hiram Porter McGinnis, Swines List, Solipsist Soliloquies, Board Game, Lulu blog, Memoir of a Non-Irish Non-Jew, and May-Tzu’s posterous. He discusses: “Vista”; the resentment of the gnawing of fellows nearby in mutual, individuated contemplation of their “own sublimity”; “A Belated Discovery.”; death; “Valentines Moment”; a sort of drama play by photons; “Dr. Capgras Before Mirrors”; emulation; physics and metaphysics; “Wedding Solstice”; any biological children or adoptive children; “Taoless Tao”; synesthesia; “The Holy Land”; “The Near Shall Be Far and the Far Near”; “Seeing dead people”; the loss of loved ones and coming to terms with mortality; “On Our Increased Longevity”; “The Offensiveness of the Universe”; “Going to Temple”; Mrs. Non; “nirguna brahman,” “the alayavijnana,” or “Neti neti! (neither this nor that)” and Tat tvam asi (“That art thou”) of the Chandogya Upanishad”; Ramachandran on split-brain patients; Mrs. Non’s right brain; “Endless Error”; “Will man create God?”; “Is Physics Becoming Art at the Limits of Scale?”; “Physical Laws as Sampling Error”; Where will the universe be when the paradigm shifts?; our “little truths” a receding horizon; an imaginably godlike entity; “Multiverse Is That It Is”; “spirit or spiritual,” non-physical, realities come from “the world of phenomena” or physical realities; these being united; apparent unicity; a-temporal multiversal God neither “infinitely old” nor “beyond or outside space-time”; “panpsychism”; and “everyone develop his own intuition regarding the nature of reality.”

Keywords: God, Mega Society, metaphysics, multiverse, physics, Richard May, synesthesia, Tao.


*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: In “Vista,” you mention becoming a “blind rodent.” I am reminded of a certain author of yore awakening as a cockroach one day. Is this a similar happening?

Richard May: No.

Jacobsen: Also, why the resentment of the gnawing of fellows nearby in mutual, individuated contemplation of their “own sublimity”?  

May: This is a slightly sarcastic summary of life in the ordinary human existential situation at its best. Resentment or resentment permeates human ‘consciousness’, as noticed by various 19th century thinkers. Gurdjieff’s psychology called resentment “internal considering.” Few resent their resentment.

Jacobsen: As is obvious, and as admitted in “A Belated Discovery,” you’re a “highly perceptive person.”

May: I meant that ironically. I am so highly perceptive that I didn’t even notice that I’d died. Incidentally there’s an App now for Smartphone Zombies to tell them if they’re making love at the present moment or if they’ve died yet. Clearly we’re getting much more intelligent today, because of the advances of technology and our attentions spans are far longer than in the past.

Jacobsen: You mentioned death, not noticing dying, having friends, and yourself, none the wiser. To quote people mimicking Seinfeld, “What the deal with your death?” Was it safe, painless, and dignified?

May: I’ve never seen a single episode of Seinfeld. I mostly listen to strawberry ice cream and eat Tibetan music. Remember, Bodhidharma didn’t have cable or only had one channel. Safe, painless, and dignified? Is life safe, painless and dignified? Who would know? “Death is not an event in life.” — Ludwig Wittgenstein

Jacobsen: “Valentines Moment” speaks of a Prince and Princess in awe of one another’s presence, existence, coming to know one another. They stopped the consumption of “recreational and psychotropic drugs” and “endless amounts of sucrose.” Consequently, they became less in awe as they began to have a “reduction in their reality deficit disorders,” including the “delusional dreams of Western culture.” Each coming to become neither prince nor princess. The princess as a mirror, and the prince as another mirror that “dreamed” of its princehood. When people passed by them, they were reflected. The mirrors identified with the personalities crossing their reflective paths. Ending, “But when the room was empty, the two opposing mirrors each reflected and even mirrored each other with perfect, but depthless, fidelity; Empty mirrors looking into
each other eternally or at least until someone turned off the lights."

Who could be considered the prince and princess reflected in the mirrors and conveyed through the personas of the mirrors?

May: The Prince and the Princess are legion, both within and without. This piece is called Valentines Moment, substituted for Valentines Day; depicting the self-absorption of the Prince and the Princess. “I never met anyone like you before,” each says to the other mirror; and the ‘depths’ of the usually short-lived psychosis called Romantic love in Western culture, enhanced by inherent and chemically induced Reality Deficit Disorder; Not even objective lust. Most of us are or have been at one time the Prince or Princess of the Mirrors.

Jacobsen: Could this be considered a sort of drama play by photons? (Could all of them, as in a hall of hanging mirrors and reflections? Could everything?)

May: Maybe, I suppose. Is there a Surreality Deficit Disorder?

Jacobsen: In “Dr. Capgras Before Mirrors,” for those who may not know, who is the real Capgras?

May: Joseph Capgras, full name: Jean Marie Joseph Capgras (23 August 1873 – 27 January 1950, the French psychiatrist who discovered Capgras syndrome, according to Wikipedia.

I was surprised to learn that there is, in fact, a rare form of Capgras syndrome in which a person believes that they themselves are the imposter! I nailed it. Previously I had also written of the possibility of my being an imposter, impersonating an imposter:

Security Check

From now on I’m going to do a Security Check between each of my so-called thoughts, to verify that they’re really mine. But can I trust myself to do the Security Check? There are so many levels of encryption and security that I’m no longer sure that I’m not an impostor, impersonating an impostor — — Maybe if I were capable of becoming a hacker, I could hack my own brain, actually just a rental unit, and steal my ontological password.

May-Tzu

I’m pleased to mention that I have not been a recipient of the “Genius of the a Year” award for eight (8) consecutive years, certainly an important distinction! I attribute this honor in part to my discovery of Cotard’s syndrome as a cure for self-referential Capgras syndrome.

Jacobsen: If you were replaced by emulation down to the sub-atomic level, would this ‘you,’ in fact, be you?

May: Yes, of course, at least to the extent that ‘I’ am the real ‘me’.

Jacobsen: A sort of emulation being the real deal and the real deal being an imitation without being a copy of the “emulation.”

May: The only difference between the original and the emulation(s) could be in the time of their origins and their location in space (space-time). If Hugh Everett’s Many-World’s hypothesis is correct, there are some infinite number of emulations of everyone throughout the Multiverse. Maybe some subset of the infinite number of our emulations will necessarily become immortal, awakened Buddhas or at least occasionally have a good space-time.

Jacobsen: Why does physics, and metaphysics, infuse much of the muse musing by you?

May: It gives me the impression that I exist. I’m just playing my favorite character in fiction, to use Aldous Huxley’s phrase from *The Doors of Perception*.

Jacobsen: “Wedding Solstice” is more ‘earthy’ with references to “blood and shit.” Why? By the way, are you, or have you ever been, married? Do you have any children in a biological sense or in an adoptive sense?

May: “Sacks of blood and shit” is Buddhist iconography, our bodies from a certain perspective.

I think that the state vector of marriage depends upon observation by the observers. I asked my wife and she (by the no-Y-chromosome criterion) says that we are married. So there is some empirical evidence for my being married, even if only anecdotal.

We were married by a Buddhist woman of Thich Nhat Hanh’s tradition. We were married to *each other* in the interest of combinatoric simplicity. I guess marriage is still legal, even for trans-ontologicals. — ‘I’ identify as an anthropologist from another dimension of space-time, who makes an effort to practice non-identification. I suspect that she may have some Earth ancestry. — She claims to be a board-certified Physician of the Soul. I suppose it could be a shared delusion, a fo-lie à deux.

We met on the internet and levitated in love, too old to fall or only fall, even before we met in meat-space. I was married once before also, I think, a long time
ago — in a timeless time. She was married too, I recall. In fact we were married to each other, again Ockham’s razor applied to marriage (Cf: “entities should not be multiplied unnecessarily,” not to be confused with “Mirrors and copulation are abominable, since they both multiply the numbers of men…” — Jorge Luis Borges, Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius)

She was also a woman by the no-Y-chromosome criterion. (She identified sometimes as a duck, if that is important.) And I was allegedly a man (at least by the Y-chromosome criterion) “a man with quotation marks,” as G.I. Gurdjieff would have said.

We met one summer’s day down by the Charles River in Boston. Two shy introverts, we approached each other, each thinking the other was someone else, met before. (Then I was also someone else, whom I had not met.) We immediately married, after twenty-five years. No need to hurry. Three years later, one of us died. I was told it wasn’t me.

Jacobsen: Do I have any biological children or adoptive children?

May: Cats Galore. I don’t *think* I have any other children in a biological or in an adoptive sense.

Jacobsen: “Taoless Tao” touches on a common philosophical perspective from you, Taoism. What is the embedded, repeating structure, imagery imagined here?

May: The first sentence refers to doing Tai Chi with my wife; The second to the Tai Chi dance as a re-enactment of our marriage ritual — for the first time — again — in the eternity of the present moment.

Jacobsen: It ends in an almost synesthete note: “…the taste of silence.” Do you have synesthesia?

May: I have just a little synesthesia, not to a significant degree. I associate colors with letters of the alphabet. I don’t know why. Maybe this is a remnant of something from my childhood. My visual eidetic imagery is rather weak.

Jacobsen: “The Holy Land” spoke to the comical notion, commonly believed, of “the One-and-Only-One True Revelation Revelation,” the only true true divine revelation. How important is humour in coming to terms with the current state of religious ideologies and international geopolitics guiding human affairs for you?

May: How important is humour … ? Some of us may die some day. Comedians are more serious than philosophers.

Jacobsen: “The Near Shall Be Far and the Far Near,” I love the opening with the apperancy of multi-worlds considered, as in the potential worlds with other possible futures unrealized, where everyone, at least once, becomes famous. What did you mean by this line, “However, the closer one approaches to anyone proximate, the more darkly obscure she will become, and then increasingly unfamiliar with the passage of time…”?

May: This is meant to convey that as the “Far Shall be Near,” The Near Shall be Far also in both space and time. While one will be famous on distant and unimaginable, unknown worlds, one’s neighbor will be an utter stranger, there won’t even be a word for “mother,” in the language of the day, and if one looks in the mirror one will not see one’s image. Proximity in space and time, which ordinarily lead to familiarity, increase unfamiliarity. — — — Imagine a “remote viewer,” if there are such persons, who lived in a dark abode, either his parents basement or maybe Plato’s allegorical cave, and rarely went outside, spending all his time on the internet.

Jacobsen: “Seeing dead people,” I am reminded of personal life. I was raised by the old, retired or near-retired, particularly women in a small Canadian community village. No doubt, this impacted me. Duly, it provides a sense of time, a sense of what matters, and a sensibility about the things to hold fast and firm, and others to permit to drift as water in a summer forest stream. How do you cope with the passage of time?

May: This assumes that the passage of time is a problem for me that I must cope with this problem, and that I do in fact cope with the passage of time, rather than decompensate or freak out. — I think that Albert Einstein said that time was an illusion, but a very real illusion. — Well, I suppose one could drink a bit of alcohol, or consume another drug, depending upon one’s preference, go for a long run or vigorous walk, practice a meditation technique, just ruminate (endogenous cortical stimulation) or distract oneself with the aesthetic/intellectual/spiritual vomit of popular culture, while eating “comfort food,” whatever that is.

Jacobsen: Following from the previous question, and outside of the query with one foot, how do you cope with the loss of loved ones and coming to terms with mortality, as commonly held, physiological cessation?

May: For the loss of a loved one I ran/jogged in the high temperature heat and humidity of summer. There may be no way to completely come to terms
with one’s mortality. The fear of death is hardwired into our brains by natural selection/evolution.

It may help somewhat if one realizes that one’s personal identity is an illusion a la the Buddha, Patanjali, Jiddu Krishnamurti and G.I. Gurdjieff, among others.

Jacobsen: In “On Our Increased Longevity,” you posit depressed individuals as not capable of suicide. In fact, you invert much of the sentiment of modern society. In this sense, a reduction in negative affect leads to fewer homicides and suicides. While, you claim, not necessarily a cessation but, an improvement in the psychological status of human beings leads to en masse homicide-suicide. Can you expand on some of this idea, please? It’s intriguing.

May: I don’t merely posit depressed individuals are less capable of suicide. There are actual clinical studies which indicate this. Psychotherapists must beware this unfortunate psychological phenomenon. I take this apparent fact and “run with it,” as normal members of our sports-centric culture put it.

This irony would be hilarious if it were not so tragic. So I just take it to the next level, positing that humans live longer today because they are depressed en masse (too depressed to suicide) by being immersed in a culture of materialism and competition for social status in various forms. When conditions improve, what would have been inner directed aggression (suicide) becomes an external war or terrorist destruction. This is intended as a humorous reflection on modern society.

Jacobsen: “The Offensiveness of the Universe” is a short, comical note on the size of a child’s ego in proportion to the universe, if only there was enough space. Have you come to terms with growth limits and spatial limitations of the universe, relative as they are?

May: This was inspired by a member of the higher-IQ community, who actually wrote that as a child he resented the fact that God was allegedly more intelligent than he was or he thought he was. I thought that this young fellow demonstrated a remarkable level of egotism and arrogance.

But I was also struck with how it contrasted with my own thoughts about God as a child. I was disconcerted to think that God might *not* have been more intelligent than I was, not because I considered myself to be extremely intelligent, but because the God of the Old Testament often seemed barbaric, tribal and genocidal. I thought at an early age, if there is a God, God cannot be worse than men.

Jacobsen: “Going to Temple,” the character Non seemed much like the sentiment of an Omni-Weave concept rejection of a god for me. An “atheist-agnostic continuum” upon which to sit depending on the definition of a god: “…the personality of the anthropomorphic tribal Yahweh/Allah downloaded by the ancient desert nomads of her ancestral 3rd planet versus a quantum-wave function reinterpretation of less philosophically primitive concepts, such as nirguna brahman, the alayavijnana, Neti neti! (neither this nor that) and Tat tvam asi (“That art thou”) of the Chandogya Upanishad.” Let’s jump on the spectrum, if Mrs. Non, where would she land for “the personality of the anthropomorphic tribal Yahweh/Allah downloaded by the ancient desert nomads of her ancestral 3rd planet”?

May: A rough landing at Heathrow Airport might do it. — I’m not exactly sure what you mean. — Nirguna brahman, the alayavijnana, neti neti!, and tat tvam asi are or point to abstract concepts associated with Eastern philosophies, not subjective experiences potentially induced by transcranial brain stimulation.

Jacobsen: If Mrs. Non, where would she land for “a quantum-wave function reinterpretation of less philosophically primitive concepts,” “nirguna brahman,” “the alayavijnana,” or “Neti neti! (neither this nor that)” and Tat tvam asi (“That art thou”) of the Chandogya Upanishad”?

May: Ms. Non may exist in a future in which very ancient religious doctrines and dogmas for which there is little or no objective evidence have evolved, as all other human knowledge continually does, to become less incompatible with science. Even today the Dalai Lama has said if Buddhism is incompatible with modern science, then Buddhism must change.

Jacobsen: If Mrs. Non, where would she land for “nirguna brahman,” “the alayavijnana,” or “Neti neti! (neither this nor that)” and Tat tvam asi (“That art thou”) of the Chandogya Upanishad”?

May: This was answered in the first two replies.

Jacobsen: Have you seen some of the work of Ramachandran on split-brain patients? If so, I would recommend it, highly informative.

May: Yes and yes.

For Mrs. Non’s right brain, what were some of the experiences of her “Temple of the Corpus Callosum,” as in the yogic meaning of union or the “direct perception of reality”? 
May: I’ve never experienced transcranial brain stimulation and I have no way of knowing what Ms. Non would experience. My point is that everything we experience is obviously mediated by and filtered through our brains and senses. Aldous Huxley thought that the brain may function as a reducing-valve for consciousness-at-large.

Brain scientist Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor’s experience of a stroke may be of interest:

https://www.ted.com/talks/jill_bolte_taylor_my_stroke_of_insight

Jacobsen: In “Endless Error,” why is the mind of god an endless series of error messages?

May: The gnostic idea of the Old Testament God has always resonated with me, i.e., the God of the Bible is the Demiurge or Yaldabaoth, not actually the God of the universe, but only a subordinate blundering craftsman or builder, hence ‘His’ mind could be just an endless series of error messages.

I once wrote that God was just a kid playing, when he created the world. He messed it up and threw it away, because He was in a hurry to get to a football game (a new theology). If we are going to anthropomorphize the Absolute, why not go all the way?

Jacobsen: “Will man create God?” ponders technology and God, as in the construction of “Theo computatis” by homo sapiens. So, do we seem like the “soon-to-be missing links in the evolution of an artificial-intelligence-based God?” or not?

May: Homo sapiens may be the precyborg-implant soon-to-be missing-links in the evolution of an genetically-engineered and artificial-intelligence-based species, as written about by Yuval Noah Harari in “Sapiens.” I suppose if we are “holochronic images of ‘God,’” then there could be a “mutual arising,” to invoke the Taoist a-causal connecting principle or even reverse causation from the future event-horizon, a la MIT’s Seth Loyd, “The greatest untold story is the evolution of God.” — G.I. Gurdjieff

Jacobsen: “Is Physics Becoming Art at the Limits of Scale?” posits — well — a lot. So, given some of the previous responses to the questions, as in the statements or the entire pieces were satire, is this satire or a real proposal?

May: You expect *me* to know? Maybe it’s both a real proposal and a satire of contemporary cosmology.

Jacobsen: “Physical Laws as Sampling Error” seems to propose a more accurate conception of reality. In that, reality consists of principles, not laws, as in “no fundamental ordered physical reality.” Reality as a tendency of state and process rather than fixed decrees governing its operation. Is this reflective out of selective order out of plenty of chaos, or an apparent order out of chaos, not vice versa? Also, noting “Dark energy,” as a one-sentence piece, are these two — “Physical Laws as Sampling Error” and “Dark energy” — satire to some extent too?

May: Maybe the observable universe is a parody of something else. — “Dark energy” was inspired by an physics article which suggested that dark energy may only be a rounding error. Since dark energy and dark matter (if they exist) supposedly make up about 95% of the mass of the universe, I generalized a bit and concluded that the universe itself may be a rounding error.

In “Physical Laws as Sampling Error” I meant that there could theoretically be only random chaos with no lawful patterns in the universe. The perceived patterns (“interpreting a Rorschach ink blot as a geometric theorem”) could just be caused by finite (in space and time, if you posit time as real) sampling of an infinite set of randomness. In an infinite set of random numbers, every possible pattern will occur somewhere by chance alone, as a subset of the infinite set or “eventually,” if you posit time as real.

Jacobsen: “Where will the universe be when the paradigm shifts?” I love the phrasing of “humongous quantum-foam Wiki,” please more. If you will indulge, what are some other descriptors of the universe — neologisms permissible?

May: Am I a dancing bear (in the traditional sense of the term, not …)? Hmm — — — How about the universe is a “cosmic food chain, from bottom to top.” Cf: “God is a man eater.” — The Gospel of Philip.

Jacobsen: How are our “little truths” a receding horizon?"

May: I was suggesting that our discovering an aspect of the nature of reality could actually change that aspect of the nature of reality. The truth would recede from us.

Jacobsen: What would comprise an imaginably godlike entity?

May: An imaginably godlike entity as contrasted to an unimaginably godlike entity? Anthropomorphic, genocidal Yahweh versus Nirguna Brahman, without any qualities whatsoever?
Jacobsen: “Multiverse Is That It Is”, being as it is, how is this definition as a “personal intuition or wild guess regarding the nature of reality” ‘probably offensive to theists and atheists’?

May: Theists of the Abrahamic traditions are only happy if their particular One-and-Only-One-True Sky-God is argued for or supported. Atheists who deny these traditions generally seem terrified that there might be a “ghost in the machine,” somewhere, such as psi phenomena, remote viewing, psychokinesis, or any alleged phenomenon that doesn’t appear to be explained by current scientific paradigms.

Jacobsen: Same line of questioning, how might “spirit or spiritual,” non-physical, realities come from “the world of phenomena” or physical realities?

May: If there is a non-physical component of reality, e.g., mathematics, I don’t think it can be derived from physical reality. I don’t think that qualia can be reduced to computations. The subjective experience of seeing the color red (qualia) cannot be reduced to objective biochemistry and neurophysiology, even if biochemistry and neurophysiology can fully explain seeing the electromagnetic frequency that we label “red.” — But most of what I know may not even be wrong.

Jacobsen: How might these be united?

May: I don’t think they can be united. If both the spiritual exists and the physical exists, they are either united or in some sort of relationship, or not.

Jacobsen: How might this inhering as a “fundamental substrate of reality” explain this apparent unicity?

May: Space, time and mass-energy may be or have been regarded as irreducible fundamentals of Nature. The question is: Is consciousness an epiphenomenon of matter, e.g., of brains or not? Maybe consciousness is also such a fundamental, as in Eastern philosophies. But maybe not.

Jacobsen: What might be a good term for this a-temporal multiversal God neither “infinitely old” nor “beyond or outside space-time”?

May: The second quoted clause is a misquote of what I wrote. A good term for this God? — The God-of-human-cortical-limitations? “Beyond or outside of space time,” is a misquote of what I wrote.

Jacobsen: Any thoughts on “panpsychism” as referenced within the context of the piece?

May: Only that we don’t know if panpsychism is the case or even if we *can* know if panpsychism is the case or not. “The universe is not only stranger than we think, it is stranger than we can think.” — J. B. S. Haldane

Jacobsen: Why should “everyone develop his own intuition regarding the nature of reality”?

May: I meant that I was not trying to convert anyone to my (tentative) view of the nature of reality. We shouldn’t believe our own thoughts, just because we have them. “The first principle is that you must not fool yourself — and you are the easiest person to fool.” — Richard Feynman. Buddha’s dying words are alleged to have been, “Everyone should workout their own salvation with diligence.”

Appendix 1: Footnotes


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Brief Remarks on Cypriot Identity with Marios Prodromou: Member, World Genius Directory (2)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen
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Abstract
Marios Sophia Prodromou is a member of the World Genius Directory. He discusses: Cypriot identity; the Turks; the Greeks; intercommunal violence; the origin of Cypriot self-consciousness; Greek-Cypriots are Christian; British-Cypriots; district differences; and the core philosophy.

Keywords: Cypriot, Cyprus, Marios Prodromou, World Genius Directory.

Brief Remarks on Cypriot Identity with Marios Prodromou: Member, World Genius Directory (2)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: What is Cypriot identity?
Marios Prodromou[1],[2]*: There are Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots. Duality exists among Cypriot identity.
Jacobsen: How is Cypriot identity seen to the Turks?
Prodromou: They call themselves Turkish-Cypriots and have the same rights as Greek-Cypriots.
Jacobsen: How is Cypriot identity seen to the Greeks?
Prodromou: Same as above.
Jacobsen: How has intercommunal violence played out in terms of self-identity of Cypriots?
Prodromou: The past has left a lot of scars on both communities.
Jacobsen: What is the origin of Cypriot self-consciousness outside of, if not parallel with, the nation-state?
Prodromou: If you are born in a Greek family you receive an ID card as a Greek-Cypriot. If you are born in a Turkish family your ID card would say Turkish-Cypriot. Both categories have the same rights and you can get a Cyprus Passport and travel freely in the EU
Jacobsen: How is Christian identity tied to Cypriot identity?
Prodromou: Nearly all Greek-Cypriots are Christian
Jacobsen: How does this play out in practical terms for the well-off and the poor alike with Cypriot heritage?
Prodromou: The church wins.
Jacobsen: Are there many remnants of British identity leftover in Cypriot identity?
Prodromou: We have a third class of British-Cypriots. Most of them get a Cyprus ID card but keep their British Passport. I fall into this category.
Jacobsen: For Famagusta, Kyrenia, Lamaca, Limassol, Nicosia, and Paphos, are there district differences in ways in which the Cypriot self-identity expresses itself in social and cultural life? If so, how? If not, why not?
Prodromou: No. Cyprus is a population of less than a million. 90 mins drive from one side of the island to another. People mix with one another every day.

Jacobsen: What is the core philosophy inherent in the identity of a Cypriot?

Prodromou: The love for Cyprus. An island with a lot of history. The island of love and of Aphrodite and Dionysos.

Jacobsen: Thank you for the opportunity and your time, Marios.

Prodromou: Thank you too, Scott, it’s been a real pleasure.

Appendix I: Footnotes


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Conversation with Bishoy Goubran, M.D. on Christianity, Intelligence Tests, Cognitive Flexibility, Personalized Medicine, Psychiatry, and Abstract Concepts: Psychiatry Resident Physician; Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, Behavioral & Cardiovascular Medicine (1)

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Abstract

Bishoy Goubran, M.D. was awarded the Genius of the Year, 2018. He is a Psychiatry resident physician and an entrepreneur with a start-up project of AI-driven Monitors for mental wellness. Dr. Goubran is an active member of multiple high IQ societies. Dr. Goubran’s research emphasis is on Heart Rate Variability and Biofeedback technologies. He discusses: family background; Alexandria; Christ; the influence of mechanical engineering and electrical engineering on intellectual growth; the experience with peers and schoolmates as a child and an adolescent; academic history; introversion; the “social game” and “methods of networking”; the purpose of intelligence tests; “weaknesses”; common “major fuck ups” in intelligence; “intelligence”; a psychological construct measurable validly and reliably; different ways in which intelligence manifests itself; the “complex” “human brain” as “a labyrinth” of interweaving narratives”; the human brain, the mind; the
common issues of patients; high intelligence; “high emotional regulation”; the “quest to find the formula for peace”; the range of the scores; the greatest geniuses; Sigmund Freud; Carl Jung; Nicola Tesla; Ahmed Alashwah; a genius from a profoundly intelligent person; some other ways in which to define cognitive inflexibility and cognitive flexibility; some work experiences and educational certifications; “concise personalized medicine”; the God concept or gods idea; and religion as a political instrument.

Keywords: Bishopy Goubran, cardiovascular medicine, Christianity, intelligence, IQ, psychiatry, World Genius Directory.

Conversation with Bishopy Goubran, M.D. on Christianity, Intelligence Tests, Cognitive Flexibility, Personalized Medicine, Psychiatry, and Abstract Concepts: Psychiatry Resident Physician; Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, Behavioral & Cardiovascular Medicine (1)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: What was family background, e.g., geography, culture, language, and religion or lack thereof?

Bishopy Goubran, M.D.[1],[2]: I was born to a traditional Coptic family in Alexandria, Egypt, father was a mechanical engineer, mother, electrical. Through my adolescence, I was a curious introvert — captivated by psychology, philosophy, and the human mind. I remember delving with intense passion into studying various spiritual traditions, Carl Jung, Freud, stoic philosophy, Sufism, Buddhism, and Hinduism — at daytime, and at night play soccer in the narrow alleys of Cairo.

Jacobsen: What was life like in Alexandria?

Goubran: Alexandria is a beautiful city on the Mediterranean Sea. My family moved to Cairo during my childhood. I loved Alexandria though as I have always loved the sea. I am an Aquarius. I am always nostalgic to the waters.

Jacobsen: You mentioned Coptic Christian, any thoughts on Christ, not the concept but the person?

Goubran: It is difficult to distinguish and divorce the “concept” from “the person” for Christ. I would say the tale on one level represents enlightenment, the overcoming of the older brain by higher mental functions, our consciousness evolution.

Jacobsen: How was the experience with peers and schoolmates as a child and an adolescent?

Goubran: I remember disliking many aspects of school, despite, I did well academically. I was an introvert as a child, into my adolescence I started to understand the dynamics of the social game, developed methods of networking. Still learning.

Jacobsen: How “well academically”?

Goubran: My secondary education was in a British system in an Egyptian school, came out within the highest 5 scores in Egypt, ended up joining one of the most competitive medical schools in Egypt. Through Uni I did alright but found studying medicine boring and hectic. Academics thereafter was during my post-doctoral research fellowship, where I faced another side of academia. Research and generation of knowledge.

Jacobsen: Has introversion extended from childhood into adolescent and adult professional life in spite of ‘understanding the dynamics of the social game and networking’?

Goubran: I think so, but I feel it is no longer a trait, rather a predilection. A calibrated preference. I am more inclined to have time with myself to think and read.

Jacobsen: How are you “still learning” the “social game” and “methods of networking”?

Goubran: Through a further understanding of the reward center and the limbic system. To master any social construct, in my experience, I had to first master its correlation within myself. Meaning the internal resolution of conflicts and “knowing thyself” is key. In this example, the further I understand my limbic system the further I understand the macrocosm of that which is the society, operated and governed by the same mental principles and neurotransmitter-driven-dynamics.

Jacobsen: What is the purpose of intelligence tests to you?
Goubran: Just like any other standardized testing, it should be primarily to identify levels and weaknesses, measurement again. The problem with fluid intelligence is that it is very subtle, you could have a weakness in one skill set that is left unnoticed, but it would impact your performance in life overall.

Psychometric tests may help identify those deficiencies, acts somewhat as an “objective” (and I use that word loosely) method to track and observe the different elements that constitute your intelligence and where your major fuck ups are.

We got to also factor in that IQ doesn’t really measure much of practical intelligence (common sense). Anyways, Standardized IQ tests are reliable and valid. Since I am in the field of psychiatry, it helps me understand the different ways intelligence presents itself. The human brain is complex, a labyrinth of intertwining narratives, through understanding the many aspects of myself, I can understand my patients way better.

Jacobsen: What kinds of “weaknesses”?

Goubran: The brain is a predictive algorithm, constantly generating predictions using available data (extrapolation, seeing patterns) and in pathological terms, these predictions if accompanied by interpretation and a “story” can create anxiety. The brain also aims to disambiguate elements of reality, to dig deeper and know the unknowns, so it can make better predictions.

The presence of prediction errors constitutes weaknesses in the way we maneuver reality. Integrating those prediction errors is a part of “learning” and understanding the patterns.

Jacobsen: What are the common “major fuck ups” in intelligence?

Goubran: Cognitive biases and prediction errors.

Jacobsen: What makes “intelligence” a proper psychological construct?

Goubran: The prefrontal cortex.

Jacobsen: What makes a psychological construct measurable validly and reliably?

Goubran: Stats, validity is how well a test measures what it purports to measure, reliability is how replicable is the results of the test, basically its consistency.

Jacobsen: As a psychiatrist, what are the different ways in which intelligence manifests itself, “presents itself”?

Goubran: Intelligence presents as novelty; misguided intelligence can lead to problems. As in, misguided budgeting of the brain resources.

Jacobsen: Why characterize the “complex” “human brain” as “a labyrinth” of interweaving narratives”?

Goubran: The brain acts as a “sense-making” routine, making sense of internal and external environments. The brain analyzes the moment, using sensory perceptions, link it with past associations, trying to predict the best action path or best response, and deciding from what level of the organism should that response start.

Memories are stories, narratives “internal storytelling” is a phenomenon of the memory and associations, memories are shaped up, seasoned and confabulations added and re-presented to the cognition, the narrator is biased. Thoughts are other versions of stories. Context is narrative.

Jacobsen: With empirical, naturalistic, and operational, comprehension of the human central nervous system and the social environment in which the human organism remains embedded inextricably, what happens to supernaturalistic or metaphysical claims about the human brain, the mind, even the human psyche?

Goubran: Those claims persist. Depends on one’s ontological model and how they build up components of their symbolic reality.

Jacobsen: What are the common issues of patients coming to you – before the COVID-19 pandemic and after it?

Goubran: Mental illnesses are triggered and/or worsened by stressors, COVID obviously represented an added stressor to large numbers of people around the globe. It also has disrupted many of the coping mechanisms, such as Gym, socialization etc.

We saw a spike in depression, anxiety, and exacerbation of other mental illnesses. Partially due to disruption of the clinic routines, AA meetings, group therapies etc. We also saw that other factors hammered the resilience factors of parents, such as online schooling. It is complex because the causative factors are multiple. We don’t know much. We now use way more tele-psych than we used to which comes with its pros and cons. We don’t know how this huge mass trauma would affect the dynamics of psychiatry on the long run.

Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?
Goubran: I really do not know how to answer this question. I feel that when I started to introspect and metacognize that’s when I felt that form of self-efficacy. But I’ve always felt that there is a more refined, concentrated form of intelligence that is very difficult to measure. I maintain, that if intelligence does not include simplicity, wisdom, and high emotional regulation then it’s immensely lacking, I am still on a quest to find the formula for ultimate peace. Now every value is a spectrum of course so peace is many levels.

Jacobsen: What characterizes “high emotional regulation”? 

Goubran: Knowing oneself. Expanding the Self-Concept.

Jacobsen: What sits behind the “quest to find the formula for peace”?

Goubran: Difficulty reconciling internal paradoxes whilst having the insight to see them. Partial Awakening is a curse, complete awakening is the death of the self, as in, using another neural network in the brain.

Jacobsen: What is the range of the scores for you? The scores earned on alternative intelligence tests tend to produce a wide smattering of data points rather than clusters, typically.

Goubran: 150s – 160s.

Jacobsen: Who seem like the greatest geniuses in history to you?


Jacobsen: To dig deeper, what makes Sigmund Freud a great genius?

Goubran: His confidence and courage.

Jacobsen: What makes Carl Jung a great genius?

Goubran: His introspection.

Jacobsen: What makes Nicola Tesla a great genius?

Goubran: His individuality, creativity, selflessness.

Jacobsen: Who is Ahmed Alashwah, why do you consider him a genius?

Goubran: Firstly, I wanted to say that I added a living person deliberately to break in through the dogma that “great” geniuses are “historical” and assigned that “label” posthumously and must be “famous”. Ahmed is a novel thinker, a philosopher, and an entrepreneur. He lectures in Stanford University on Meditation and Technology. In my opinion, and many of those who know him, he is a living genius that I believe the world would benefit a lot from understanding his story and experience. He spent ten years in meditation and introspection and emerged with a wealth of knowledge about the human mind, psyche, and consciousness. I believe that the amount of years spent in deep radical introspection gave him unmatched insights into the machinations of the human mind.

He had a tremendous impact on my life. I am fortunate that we are now collaborators in many projects. He is the inspiration behind our projects of technology augmented meditation and the current AI project.

Jacobsen: What differentiates a genius from a profoundly intelligent person?

Goubran: I would like to make a distinction that in my view, a genius is not a “person”. It is not an intrinsic attribute. I believe it is a potential, a state, a skill. It is a skill that depends on training the neural correlate we employ to tackle an endeavor or problem solve. Known geniuses are the ones able, despite distractions, to sustain that state. They are ones driven by purpose, enthusiasm, and unrelenting passion.

Genius is achievable under certain circumstances of higher neural connectivity, hence inspiration. Therefore, I have moments of genius (creativity/flexibility) and have moments of cognitive inflexibility (my definition of Stupidity), it is whenever I take my truths too seriously I become inflexible and thus unable to exit the fabric of reality. When it comes to intelligence quotient, it is vastly genetic, but many of its aspects and skills are trainable.

Jacobsen: What are some other ways in which to define cognitive inflexibility and cognitive flexibility?

Goubran: Cognitive flexibility is the ability to jump between cognitive distances with malleability. While inflexibility broadly speaking is, the “rigidity” of thoughts. How many perspectives one can see of the same situation? Can I look into a problem and see the opportunity? Can I look into my autobiographical memories and see the narrative from another angle? Can I change how I feel about past events? Can I see memories as just one version of the truth? Can I let go of my convictions for the sake of a more nuanced and refined truth?

Jacobsen: What have been some work experiences and educational certifications for you?
Goubran: I am an MD, doing my residency training in Psychiatry, also a post-Doc Research Fellow in Behavioral and Cardiovascular medicine. My ambition, and purpose are to change how psychiatry operates, new forms of therapy and more merging with neuroscience is the way of the future in a form of concise personalized medicine.

Jacobsen: What is “concise personalized medicine”?

Goubran: I am working with a team on a personalized artificial intelligence-based algorithm with biosensors, an intelligent agent that would help navigate decisions for us, humans, decreasing errors, increasing productivity, and optimizing for efficiency.

The future of psychiatry is in real-time data acquisition and non-invasive diagnostics with interventions happening at a much earlier stage than what happens now. The diagnostic process factoring in much more than history and labs. I see huge potential for brain-machine interfaces. Our team is taking a lead on that and our starting project is building the bio-sensors personalized artificially intelligent-agent, towards optimizing mental, physical, emotional health, and human performance. Fewer errors, Better investments, better decisions, and thus a better life.

Jacobsen: Any thoughts on the God concept or gods idea and philosophy, theology, and religion?

Goubran: That’s a huge topic, Mr. Jacobsen, would take us quite a while. For the purpose of this interview, I choose not to speculate over abstract concepts.

Jacobsen: In the presentation of “speculate over abstract concepts,” and as abstract can mean “not having a physical or concrete existence” and only “existing in thought,” and as concept(s) can mean “something conceived in the mind,” or simply a “thought” or a “notion,” this may imply the mere in-mindness of the gods or God without true actuality. To move past this, any thoughts on religion as a political instrument?

Goubran: It can be used as an effective political instrument, whether on a macro-social level or within an individual relationship with himself, the internal psychological politics, which have tons of conflicting parties.

Knowing those internal subpersonalities, listening to them, those inner parts of us that were never listened to, or given a chance to talk. The suppressed, the repressed. It’s in personal opinion healthy to have an internal democracy governed by a clear “constitution”, the constitution in that sense is one’s values clearly articulated.

Appendix I: Footnotes


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Conversation with Anthony Sepulveda (Brown) on Liam Millikan and Lessons: Member, World Genius Directory (7)

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Abstract

Anthony Sepulveda scored 174 (S.D.15) on Cosmic and is a member of the World Genius Directory. He discusses: a recent controversy in the high-IQ communities; some of the interesting presentations; Liam Millikan; why he left; his reputation; the “encounter”; the scores earned by him; his reputation now; a “traitor”; forgotten; his reasoning for doing this; other possible coinciding reasons for his disillusionment with the community; this isn’t a fake name and profile of another person; stealing of problems and passing off as their own; the modifications; the immediate community; the communities’ tests; compromised tests; Ivec, Predavec, Dorsey, or the fourth test creator; roughly even split; the fallout; “kicked” out of the community; the merits of his “work”; the lessons to be learned; the reasoning provided by Millikan, and the interpretations of the high-IQ communities; were they “not unjustified”; the possible “interesting places”; the potential for exploration: places to read more about this; the silence; and contact with Millikan.

Keywords: Anthony Sepulveda, intelligence, IQ, lessons, Liam Millikan, World Genius Directory.

Conversation with Anthony Sepulveda (Brown) on Liam Millikan and Lessons: Member, World Genius Directory (7)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: So, let’s talk about a recent controversy in the high-IQ communities, such as they disparately are, what is the overview of the Liam Millikan case, which was brought to personal attention by you?

Anthony Sepulveda (Brown)[1],[2]*: He created a social media page called High Range Tests Exposed, openly shared the answers to several tests he’d taken and how he arrived at those answers.

Jacobsen: What were some of the interesting presentations from the page?

Sepulveda (Brown): I was struck by which tests and problems he chose to focus on and why. He seemed intent on exposing only problems that were flawed or stolen.

Jacobsen: Who is Liam Millikan?

Sepulveda (Brown): A former member of the High IQ Community.

Jacobsen: Why did he leave?

Sepulveda (Brown): He was removed for unethical behavior.

Jacobsen: What was his reputation prior to this incident or series of incidences?

Sepulveda (Brown): I encountered him on social media, but I never saw anything noteworthy enough to remember anything about him. Aside from that, I can’t say much. From his posts and the scores he received on the tests he took, he’s clearly an intelligent, insightful individual that cares more about objective truth than subjective opinions.

Jacobsen: What was the “encounter”??
Sepulveda (Brown): He and I had several mutual contacts from within the community and I used to be interested in including such people in my virtual social circle. Sadly, we didn’t interact much at all and I didn’t remember I had a way to contact him until after his account was deleted.

Jacobsen: What were the scores earned by him?

Sepulveda (Brown): Many of the test answers he shared are believed to correlate to an IQ in the upper 170’s.

Jacobsen: What is his reputation now?

Sepulveda (Brown): By many, if not most community members he’s considered a traitor best forgotten.

Jacobsen: Why a “traitor”?

Sepulveda (Brown): He betrayed the trust of the community. The only difference between those who are and are not members is the ability to arrive at answers to difficult questions on your own. If people were to cheat their way in, then membership would completely pointless.

Jacobsen: Why “best forgotten”?

Sepulveda (Brown): Just a personal assumption based on how little I’ve heard of the incident since.

Jacobsen: What was his reasoning for doing this?

Sepulveda: (Brown): It seems that he’d become disillusioned of the community. In his posts, he’d share either the answers he’d submitted on a specific test and the resulting score from them or he’d focus on one specific problem and reveal its flaws. On several occasions, he provided evidence that certain problems had been stolen from earlier tests and slightly modified by other test designers.

Jacobsen: What are other possible coinciding reasons for his disillusionment with the community?

Sepulveda (Brown): I imagine he went through a similar process that I went through when I first joined Mensa. Initially, I was very excited to meet verified peers that I could have interesting conversations with. When I arrived to the hall hosting our next monthly meeting, I was disappointed to find that I was the youngest person there by roughly 20 years and the conversations were mostly limited to people arguing and quoting famous intellectuals.

Jacobsen: How do we know this isn’t a fake name and profile of another person?

Sepulveda (Brown): If you’re interested in submitting answers to an HRT, you have to definitely prove your identity by providing photos of yourself, your passport and ID. It seems pretty unlikely that he’d forge such documents to join a High IQ Society, but I suppose it’s not impossible.

Sidenote – he did use an alias on the HRT’s Exposed page called Kana Kana.

Jacobsen: What does this stealing of problems and passing off as their own mean for test designers in the independent psychometrician community?

Sepulveda (Brown): I wish it was frowned upon more than it is, but with a certain amount of modification it’s almost impossible to be certain of any wrongdoing.

Jacobsen: How were these modified, generally speaking?

Sepulveda (Brown): The examples he provided were spatial problems stolen from Robert Lato. In these cases, one could simply alter any superfluous parts of the design to create something that looks unique.

Jacobsen: What was the immediate community reaction?

Sepulveda (Brown): I was initially notified of the issue by Jason Betts, who was frantically trying to get enough people to report the High Range Tests Exposed page and have it pulled from social media. Most went through with his request immediately. But I was curious and decided to join the page and got to look at his work for a few minutes before everything was deleted.

Jacobsen: What is the result on the communities’ tests that were compromised or the test constructors who had tests compromised?

Sepulveda (Brown): It doesn’t seem like anything has changed since then.

Jacobsen: What tests did he compromise?

Sepulveda (Brown): 12 tests total (sadly, I don’t remember all of them) designed by James Dorsey, Ivan Ivec, Mislav Predavec and, I believe, one other who I’m not familiar with.

Jacobsen: Any commentary from Ivec, Predavec, Dorsey, or the fourth?

Sepulveda (Brown): Only intense anger at Liam for compromising their work and at me for respecting his decision.

Jacobsen: Was it 3 per person or unequally split?

Sepulveda (Brown): It was nearly equal.

Jacobsen: What has been the fallout or reaction as the dust has settled?
Sepulveda (Brown): Not much, surprisingly. Now that the answers have been deleted, it seems that the test designers have elected to keep the tests as they were, Liam was kicked out of the community and life seems to be proceeding as usual. Which is why I mentioned it to you. I feel that his actions were taken too personal too soon and judgment passed too swiftly. The merits of his work would have been obvious to anyone that took an impartial look at it. Which can only lead to better tests if we had learned from it.

Jacobsen: How was he “kicked” out of the community?

Sepulveda (Brown): His name was removed from most listings and he is no longer allowed admission into any group within the community or allowed to take tests from most designers.

Jacobsen: What were the merits of his “work”?

Sepulveda (Brown): Despite the rude and unethical nature with which he acted, he never said anything that I didn’t completely agree with. The community finds itself in such poor condition because a few within it are unwilling to accept criticism or consider the possibility that they’re wrong. They’ve mislead it into a place of stagnation.

Jacobsen: What do you consider the lessons to be learned?

Sepulveda (Brown): We need to be more humble and accept the fact that we all make mistakes. We can be dead certain of something and still get it all wrong.

Jacobsen: What is your own opinion on this matter and the reasoning provided by Millikan, and the interpretations of the high-IQ communities?

Sepulveda (Brown): I personally believe that, while his actions were unethical, they were not unjustified. Simply put, if the tests are flawed, then the results from them are invalid and they hold no value. If the tests are invalid, then there’s no real harm in sharing the answers. It’s a shame that no one else took the time to judge his work for themselves because we might have lead to some very interesting places.

Jacobsen: Why were they “not unjustified”?

Sepulveda (Brown): Perhaps ‘unjustified’ isn’t as good a word as inexcusable. We all make mistakes and I am no exception.

Jacobsen: What were the possible “interesting places”?

Sepulveda (Brown): One major issue I have with HRT’s is that they aren’t peer reviewed. All too often they are designed, published and scored by the same person and the overall quality of the problems varies widely because of it. If we were to honestly question and objectively examine the tests we use for admission by a dedicated group of experienced individuals, I’d be very interested to see what makes it through.

Jacobsen: Would the potential for the exploration of the possible “interesting places” outweigh the risks?

Sepulveda (Brown): Definitely.

Jacobsen: Where can others read more about this?

Sepulveda (Brown): I don’t believe they can at the moment. The community’s been quiet on the subject since while I’ve been trying to get in contact with Liam myself. But he’s deleted his social media accounts and no one’s been willing to share his contact info with me.

Jacobsen: Why the silence of wind in outer space on the matter?

Sepulveda (Brown): I don’t know. We can only grow as a community by confronting these situations directly and fairly. Perhaps it’s just too painful a process for others to pursue.

Jacobsen: Why pursue contact with Millikan?

Sepulveda (Brown): I have several questions for him. And if he’s interested, I’d like to collaborate with him.

Appendix 1: Footnotes


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Conversation with Gareth Rees on Family Facts, Home Environment, Genius, and the World’s Problems: Member, Canadian High IQ Society (1)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen


Place of Publication: Langley, British Columbia, Canada

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Abstract

Gareth Rees is a Member of the Canadian High IQ Society. He discusses: important familial historical facts; extended senses of a self; the parents’ form of childrearing; some pivotal moments; high-range tests; giftedness; the important aspects of giftedness; some odd jobs; the levels of education attained; recent independent intellectual pursuits; the smartest people in the world; and the world’s problems needing solving.

Keywords: Canada, Canadian High IQ Society, Gareth Rees, Genius, World.

Conversation with Gareth Rees on Family Facts, Home Environment, Genius, and the World’s Problems: Member, Canadian High IQ Society (1)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Let’s start off on the regular informational set-ups for these kinds of interviews, where the narrative structure comes from the background information of the individual interviewee. What are important familial historical facts about you?

Gareth Rees[1],[2]*: Offhand I have nothing important to mention, just out of the ordinary. I was adopted from San Pedro Sula, Honduras, and was raised in an upper-middle class environment, the bulk of which was done in Canada. I have no information about my biological parents. My (deceased) father was British and my mother is Canadian. My non-biological father did qualify for Mensa, but that’s just a coincidence.

Jacobsen: How have these extended senses of a self informed some personal identity formation for you?

Rees: They have not as I consider myself ground zero, or a historical reset if you will.

Jacobsen: How did these form some threads for the parents’ form of childrearing and the home environment for you?

Rees: I was spoiled and babied growing up. I believe this is normal for adopted children. I always had access to resources and was provided with most things I asked for. This fit well with my general resistance to stress and want for playtime.

Jacobsen: What have been some pivotal moments in early life – childhood and adolescence – in intellectual formation and coming to terms with giftedness?

Rees: I was never identified as gifted. I’m not optimized for the academic environment, at least in the way it’s conventionally set up. I was scholastically tested and came out average because of learning issues at school which led to diagnoses. I have never even taken a proctored IQ test. I do prefer it this way. I have more autonomy; this results in more free will if one believes in such a concept.
Rees: What is the purpose of the taking high-range tests and taking part in some of the high-IQ community?

Rees: I have an interest in genius/intelligence. That is specifically genius in the context of useful research and not IQ classification at/above some arbitrary set number. Interest in intelligence led to IQ whereby I fell into trying to measure my own. Useful reasons are best laid out by Paul Cooijmans in his reasons to take tests. I refer to him because of his mature and objective outlook, that is namely insight into strengths and weaknesses of my profile.

Other reasons include something called “need for cognition”, and dopamine chasing. It’s something to occupy the mind and reward one with good feeling. I also wanted entrance into the Glia Society. Membership was finally acquired on Christmas day in 2016.

Rees: How has giftedness been a burden in life? How has giftedness been a blessing for you?

Rees: I can’t say it has, or rather I’m not gifted enough for there to be a noticeable impact in my life. Conversely, my answer remains similar in that I haven’t really profited, whether monetarily or non-monetarily. If I can attain my needs and desires, then naturally there’s no identification of burdens or blessings. I grew up in a mostly stable household and have maintained employment, so there’s no hole I have had to dig myself out of.

If I ever achieve something noteworthy, then my answer will change. I have interests and my open problem of choice, so it remains to be executed.

Rees: What are some of the important aspects of giftedness not talked about enough in cultures?

Rees: I think a lack of support if there is such a thing is worse than any aspects not talked about. I don’t have a good answer for this as I personally don’t consider it a problem. Labeling one as gifted usually generates expectations. Expectations can be a burden especially if they aren’t one’s own. Depending on the person, guidance and freedom are the most important aspects necessary for keeping that gifted person mentally healthy. It can also be beneficial to have a mentor.

Rees: What have been some odd jobs for you?

Rees: I haven’t had any odd jobs, but I’ve done factory work which is boring, modeling which was awkward, to my current job which is related to software and a much better fit for my profile.

Rees: What have been the levels of education attained for you?

Rees: College Diploma – 2 Years post secondary equivalent.

I studied Network Engineering, but it’s closer to network configuration as I don’t engineer hardware or software. Marketing sure is a cheesy business.

Jacobsen: Have you taken some time for recent independent intellectual pursuits?

Rees: I have, my current interest is in understanding intelligence from its metaform if it has one, or requires one, to full conversion into written theory, then algorithms and eventually programmed general AI. I’m in the early stages right now and that includes being self-funded to gathering the necessary information-based resources.

Jacobsen: Who do you consider some of the smartest people in the world, in history or at present?

Rees: The smartest people in my opinion are those solving (or have solved) or at least are trying to solve the hardest problems such as Edward Witten (theoretical physicist), Grigori Perelman (formerly a professional Mathematician) Paul Cooijmans (in possession of a mountain of data in regard to IQ), Chris Langan (very strong generalist) and all those in their respective fields.

It’s way easier to name past people of influence such as Archimedes, Newton, Einstein, Goethe, Tesla, da Vinci, Jung, Freud, Socrates, Aristotle, Galileo and many more…

Jacobsen: What do you see as some of the world’s problems needing solving now?

Rees: People lack understanding and the capacity to have it, especially in (heat of) the moment, of other people and themselves, hence why some arguments/feelings form or escalate. This missing piece transcends incompatibility or human chemistry. It’s simply a missing step in the direction of enlightenment. This lack of meta-awareness and meta-understanding can be augmented with AI as a coprocessor for real-time experience. It’s an issue where knowing isn’t enough and the doing isn’t easy. Ayahuasca’s effects are another form of solution to this problem, but it’s not safe for everyone to ingest and it’s already banned in most countries. It also is not an active solution but more of an event that leads to an impression on one’s life.

Another problem is wealth inequality, in which the only solution that I can see would be to get so wealthy as to freely (re)distribute wealth wherever and whenever required. This is, however, controversial for several reasons and it’s also
unrealistic, but it’s the easiest solution given the current rules and setup people choose to accept.

Population control is another issue as the world advances further and further in both technology and employment opportunities.

Lack of androids (applied general AI) to solve loneliness and love related issues. This is a better alternative than altering chemicals with drugs of choice, and I suppose virtual reality is a decent stopgap for the time being. There is a lot of missing progress from the GAI to the actual engineering required to even make an android walk like a human. It will be a while before this is even a reality.

These to me are the biggest problems in need of solutions as soon as possible.

Appendix 1: Footnotes

[1] Member, Canadian High IQ Society.


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Conversation with Glenn Alden on Youth, Intelligence Tests, Genius, and Personal Views: Member, Mensa International (1)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen


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Abstract

Glenn Alden is a Member of Mensa International from Norway. He discusses: growing up; an extended self; the family background; the experience with peers and schoolmates; the purpose of intelligence tests; high intelligence; the geniuses of the past; the greatest geniuses in history; a genius from a profoundly intelligent person; some work experiences; the idea of the gifted; social and political views; the God concept or gods idea; science; some of the tests taken; the range of the scores; and ethical philosophy.

Keywords: Genius, Glenn Alden, god, Norway, self.

Conversation with Glenn Alden on Youth, Intelligence Tests, Genius, and Personal Views: Member, Mensa International (1)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: When you were growing up, what were some of the prominent family stories being told over time?

Glenn Alden [1],[2]*: Both my father and mother are born and brought up nearby the sea. They made a living by farming and fishing. These were hard times during and after world war 2. They had to participate in the work from an early age.

Jacobsen: Have these stories helped provide a sense of an extended self or a sense of the family legacy?

Alden: Without a doubt, this has affected my view of where I come from. I’m proud of my ancestry.

Jacobsen: What was the family background, e.g., geography, culture, language, and religion or lack thereof?

Alden: Neither of my parents had any formal education. Total religious freedom.

Jacobsen: How were the experiences with peers and schoolmates as a child and an adolescent?

Alden: In early childhood, I was active and social. During my youth, I became somewhat more withdrawn.

Jacobsen: What is the purpose of intelligence tests to you?

Alden: Just for fun. Has been a hobby lately.

Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?

Alden: It was probably in the twenties. IQ testing caught my interest and I did well. Took a Mensa test in 1999 and became an approved member of Mensa international. That was when I first became aware of aberrant intelligence.

Jacobsen: When you think of the ways in which the geniuses of the past have either been mocked, vilified, and condemned if not killed, or praised, flattered, platformed, and revered, what seems like the reason for the extreme reactions to and treatment of geniuses? Many alive today seem camera shy – many, not all.
Alden: FEAR. We are herd animals. If someone comes up with ideas that threaten the known truth. That will immediately initiate fear processes among the majority within the groups. Fear leads to anger and then the ball is rolling.

Jacobsen: Who seem like the greatest geniuses in history to you?
Alden: Nikola Tesla.

Jacobsen: What differentiates a genius from a profoundly intelligent person?
Alden: Level of creativity. Level of your ability to think outside the box.

Jacobsen: What have been some work experiences and educational certifications for you?
Alden: Have been working in the oil business since 1990. Have worked my way up from Roustabolt on deck to Senior Toolpusher. In 2016 I was laid off for a period of 1.5 years. Then I got the opportunity to work as a manager on asylum reception for young asylum seekers 15 – 18 years of age. This was an extreme change in my life situation. When looking back, it was an education for life. I became much more tolerant on a deeper level. It could be tough at times, but this really gave me the opportunity to evolve as a human being.

Jacobsen: What are some of the more important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses? Those myths that pervade the cultures of the world. What are those myths? What truths dispel them?
Alden: Those are the arrows. A myth might be that they are boring nerds. Elon Musk is a good example of the opposite.

Jacobsen: What are some social and political views for you? Why hold them?
Alden: I don’t have any fixed political standpoint. On the other hand, it’s easy to recognize that there is a need for political change in all camps. If I have to point out one element, it would be the freedom of speech. This is one of the most important tools to maintain democracy.

Jacobsen: Any thoughts on the God concept or gods idea and philosophy, theology, and religion?
Alden: Do not believe in anything you hear. This might set you free. As long as we are locked inside beliefs of religions, we will never be able to see the truth. God is hidden inside the truth. Most religions emphasize love, but rules with fear. I am confident on one thing. Use your brain and your heart, and seek within. Then you will find the truth.

Jacobsen: How much does science play into the worldview for you?
Alden: Mind and matter. Can one exist without the other? Are we co-creators of the universes?
Science is from my point of view our first attempt at liberation from religion.

Jacobsen: What have some of the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations) for you?
Alden: Have taken a lot of tests during the last 20 years. Most spatial and verbal High Range tests. Scores have deviated between IQ 150 – 182 SD 15.

Jacobsen: What is the range of the scores for you? The scores earned on alternative intelligence tests tend to produce a wide smattering of data points rather than clusters, typically.
Alden: Unable to take these results seriously. I think most tests are too subjective. You need to be familiar with the test creators’ mindset to score higher (This is of course also a kind of intelligence).

Jacobsen: What ethical philosophy makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?
Alden: Do more of what makes you happy.
If you treat yourself with love, you will have the best base to accommodate all the “good” values.
To force ethics in our seeking for goodness will only lead to falsehood.

Appendix I: Footnotes

*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Conversation with Anthony Sepulveda (Brown) on An Affair, Psychological Dynamics, and Ethical Considerations: Member, World Genius Directory (8)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen
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Abstract
Anthony Sepulveda (Brown) is a Member of the World Genius Directory. He discusses: an affair; the narrative leading into this affair; the individual considerations; the interpersonal psychological dynamics; the ethical considerations; open to discuss this particular subject matter; and ethical system.

Keywords: affair, Anthony Sepulveda, ethics, psychological dynamics.

Conversation with Anthony Sepulveda (Brown) on An Affair, Psychological Dynamics, and Ethical Considerations: Member, World Genius Directory (8)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: You were engaged in an affair, recently. Why?

Anthony Sepulveda (Brown): Simply put, I was in love.

Jacobsen: What is the narrative leading into this affair?

Sepulveda (Brown): Initially, Tango (who I first mentioned in part 2 of this interview) and I were coworkers. We knew each other for several years and became very close. But she was in a relationship and soon married, so we were strictly platonic. Unfortunately for her, their marriage wasn’t a healthy one. He was jealous, possessive and insecure, often treating her more like a security blanket than a partner. It was so bad that he forbade her from associating with any other man at all and she suffered greatly trying to hold everything together. At one point, he found out about me and sent a plethora of threatening messages before removing her phone privileges. But in the beginning of this year (2020), after a couple years apart, she found me on a social media I didn’t even remember making and got in touch. Shortly thereafter, we rendezvoused by her favorite body of water one evening and spent hours catching up as I held her as close as possible.

Then things really sped up – we messaged each other all day, every day and met up as often as we could. As our affair progressed, she expressed a desire to get back into modeling, which I encouraged. I soon became her personal security during the photo shoots and we’d go on little road trips on those rare occasions she could get away from her husband.

After several months, we reached a point where she needed to make a decision. After the last photo shoot I attended, she expressed how she’d feel a certain guilt for the rest of her life if she didn’t give him one last chance to change. As a loving wife, she felt that it was her duty to try marriage counseling. I didn’t believe he was capable of being who she wanted him to be, but I understood her motivation and respected her decision. All I asked of her was to be strong enough to accept the truth if he didn’t show improvement and one last kiss.
We didn’t speak much over the next couple months. But I was confident that at some point in the future, we’d be together again. I was wrong.

One evening, she told me she was pregnant. It wasn’t mine. And it wasn’t her husband’s.

Apparently, she’d been in contact with the photographer we met on our last trip while I had been waiting for her. I was shocked and quite upset by this, naturally. But I was still dedicated to finding a solution that would satisfy as many of us as possible. Which became very difficult once she informed me that her husband was aware of her state. I worked out all the options available to her, but only found one that didn’t put everyone at risk – she needed to get an abortion. Telling her to go through with it was the single hardest thing I’ve ever done. Made all the worse because I couldn’t do anything to help her during that time. At least the photographer was there for her, which I’m grateful for.

She told her husband that she’d had a miscarriage and I gave her time to get herself through it. It was all she was willing to accept from me. Shortly afterwards, they were divorced. It was then that she called me for the last time, crying because after signing the papers, after all she’d been through trying to hold everything together for years, he said he was glad to finally be rid of her.

Words cannot express how badly I wanted to hold her. To assure her that no matter what, I’ll always be there for her. Even if that meant stepping aside and giving her a chance at happiness with another man. I just didn’t want to lose her. She was my best friend.

But she became distant, reading my messages but not responding. And I was scared by what that could mean for our future. Life didn’t feel like it would be worth living without her in it.

In our last conversation, she opened up about the details of her life at the time. Her husband was begging for her to come back. But while she was tempted to do so, she was more dedicated to the photographer. So dedicated, in fact, that she felt that associating with me at all would be unfair to him. And so my best friend, the one person I was completely open with, the only person I contacted when I was afraid I had cancer threw me away for a man she’d known for less than two months. A man she didn’t even know and who didn’t really know her. A man who hadn’t even known she was married for most of their relationship.

It felt as though I’d been struck in the chest by a cannon.

I’ve been trying to move on ever since.

Jacobsen: What are the individual considerations in this regard?

Sepulveda (Brown): First and foremost, the safety of her and her child. Her husband had always been irrational and nothing was worth putting either of them at risk.

Jacobsen: What is the interpersonal psychological dynamics at play between the parties?

Sepulveda (Brown): She needed a healthy, supportive relationship that fulfilled her and helped her achieve her goals. As for me, I got my best friend back and felt like I finally had a chance at being happy.

Jacobsen: What are the ethical considerations too?

Sepulveda (Brown): The only factors we needed to consider were personal and spiritual. These were easy enough for me to accept because I wasn’t the married or religious one. She was initially hesitant, but agreed that she deserves better than what she had.

Jacobsen: Why be so open to discuss this particular subject matter?

Sepulveda (Brown): Several reasons. Firstly, at the beginning of this interview you asked me to share any important or impactful stories from my life. This one definitely qualifies and I’m not ashamed of my actions and see no reason to hide them. I also believe that this could lead to some important discussion on morality, relationships, mental health and recovery that could potentially be of service to anyone reading.

And sharing the story with the world feels like a way to let it go and get some sense of closure.

Jacobsen: What ethical system makes most sense of this formulation of (common) human affairs?

Sepulveda (Brown): Moral relativism.

Appendix I: Footnotes


8; Full Issue Publication Date: January 1, 2021: https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/.

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Conversation with Associate Professor Svein Olav Glesaaen Nyberg on Early Life, Intelligence, Genius, the Titan Test, Science, and Max Stirner: Associate Professor, Engineering Sciences, University of Agder (1)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen


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Abstract

Svein Olav Glesaaen Nyberg is a Member of the World Genius Directory. He discusses: growing up; an extended self; the family background; experience with peers and schoolmates; the purpose of intelligence tests; high intelligence; the geniuses of the past; the greatest geniuses in history; a genius from a profoundly intelligent person; some work experiences and educational certifications; the more important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses; some social and political views; the God concept or gods idea; science; some of the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations); and ethical philosophy.

Keywords: genius, intelligence, Max Stirner, Svein Olav Glaessen Nyberg, Titan Test, University of Alger.

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*
Scott Douglas Jacobsen: When you were growing up, what were some of the prominent family stories being told over time?

Svein Olav Glesaaen Nyberg[1,2]: The storyteller in my family was my maternal grandfather. He came from a humble background, the son of a country tailor. He couldn’t afford an education, but one of the rich farmers in the area had faith in him and extended him a loan. I think it was 500 Norwegian kroner per year. He trusted him to do well and pay him back, which he did. One of his often told stories was that he travelled to agricultural college by bike, roughly 300 km on dirt roads. One of his often told stories was about how he had once lost his wallet with 500 kroner in Oslo, and an honest soul had found it and returned it to him. A story about how honesty matters to someone. He did of course complete his degree, and with the second best grades ever given there. After that, he had a very successful career as a forester, and managed to extend the area he controlled 10-fold during his reign. From humble beginnings to the mightiest man in the area. But I never got the impression that the power went to his head, though he really appreciated the recognition of what he had achieved. His other very often told story was when he was once in the woods with the lumberjacks. They had made coffee, and one of them poured him a cup, and some sugar. Lacking a spoon, the lumberjack promptly put his thumb in and started stirring. (Rough and tough crowd!) But as he stirred, he grew thoughtful, so my grandfather said it was probably well stirred by now. The lumberjack was quick-witted and replied that “Oh no, I am just trying to enlarge the cup for the forester!” What I read into this story is both how he despite his position still viewed himself as “one of the guys”, but yet could not help taking pride in how others recognized him as someone deserving of a bigger cup. A bit of sadness and pride at the same time. That it meant a lot to him, was also shown in that he repeatedly tried to get this story published in the readers’ section of Norwegian Readers’ Digest. Well, granddad, if you are still watching over us, now it’s published!

Jacobsen: Have these stories helped provide a sense of an extended self or a sense of the family legacy?

Nyberg: Both yes and no. There are of course other stories, but growing up, my grandfather was who I was most like. He was amazingly bright, and people often said that we looked very much alike. And yes, of course I took the comparison as a compliment! My paternal grandfather was also a bright guy, and wanted an education. But he had no sponsor, and became a carpenter and farmer. He was the sweetest guy! And then there’s of course my father, who went on his adventures, and actually ended up studying at the same college as my maternal grandfather. So for a while, I really thought it was my destiny after I had finished my degree to start teaching at that college. But what it has shown me in any case, is the value of education. It is free in Norway now, but my grandparents’ example tells me not to take it for granted. And also that the academic snobbishness against “lower” professions that you sometimes see is about as much worth as the fart wind it’s travelling on. I hold people who do their profession well in high regard, and “high” and “low” is just a pissing game.

Jacobsen: What was the family background, e.g., geography, culture, language, and religion or lack thereof?

Nyberg: Norwegians are generally laid back when it comes to religion, and the areas where my parents come from (Hedmark and Trøndelag) perhaps even more so. These areas were also traditionally known for moonshine liquor. My mother is quite spiritually interested, whereas my father’s interests are more practical. He comes from a long line of hunters, though, and is a hunter himself, so he is a kind of “mystic of the forest” without ever calling himself such. The farm he grew up on is called Kvelloa, a name we are told stems from the epic battle of Stiklestad in 1030, where Saint Olaf, the Christener of Norway was slain; Olaf was said to have slept over at the site of that farm, a place with an excellent view of the next day’s battlefield.

Jacobsen: How was the experience with peers and schoolmates as a child and an adolescent?

Nyberg: My family moved around a lot, so I was “the new guy” for most of my childhood. So I was an outsider who didn’t quite fit in. Plus, I was a bit strange, with my sciencey stuff and strange ideas.

Jacobsen: What is the purpose of intelligence tests to you?

Nyberg: The tests themselves? I think they can be of help for people who need validation. A friend of mine was considered less gifted than average, as he had a string speech impediment. His family took him to be tested, and he got a score of 160. He bloomed after that, with much newly gained self-confidence. That gives purpose to such tests!

Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?

Nyberg: It was, but wasn’t when I was in 4th grade. There was an assessment given to all of us, and I got 94/100. The next down on the list was 80 points, but one guy got 96. He confided that he had cheated and
had his aunt do the test for him so he could get a good score. But the strange thing is that this really didn’t register with me. I thought “oh well, this other guy got a good score too, and none of us got a 100”. But then, whenever there was a challenge, I excelled. Like Rubik’s Cube, which I solved before anyone else I knew. That is, as in understanding the cube well enough to devise an algorithm for solving it. This was in 8th grade, before someone had published “the solution”. Of course, I was a bit of a bastard about it, solving everyone’s cubes for them. After the book came out, many could solve it without understanding it. But that meant some fun … for if you randomly assemble cube pieces, only 1 in 12 cubes are solvable. So I twisted a corner here and there. I know … not very nice! I guess I had a need to prove myself back then. I was the outsider with little self confidence, and I was crafting my niche, and perhaps in not such a nice way in the initial years. But somehow nobody admired me for my arrogance.

Jacobsen: When you think of the ways in which the geniuses of the past have either been mocked, vilified, and condemned if not killed, or praised, flattered, platformed, and revered, what seems like the reason for the extreme reactions to and treatment of geniuses? Many alive today seem camera shy – many, not all.

Nyberg: Good question, and I wish I actually knew. But I notice people are fussy about three things: their intelligence, their singing voice, and their looks. It is tied in with self esteem. The existence of extremes in either of these fields energizes people’s reactions. It is so easy to either try to compete (and lose, and thereby hate), or to try to lean in and try to somehow transfer some of that vitality from the person of the desired characteristic. Well, these are my amateur musings; I am no psychologist.

Jacobsen: Who seem like the greatest geniuses in history to you?

Nyberg: I have always been fascinated by John von Neumann. Most people are satisfied with doing well in a single field. Perhaps some go on to do well in two. A few excel in one field, and the extremes excel in two. Von Neumann didn’t just excel, but founded or was part of founding an entire four different fields. My favourite anecdote about him is when this colleague of his was showing off his bright and promising PhD student, and von Neumann recreates the last two years of said student’s work in his head in a mere 5 minutes.

Jacobsen: What differentiates a genius from a profoundly intelligent person?

Nyberg: Air. I remember reading Antony Flew’s controversial work There is a God, and saw that he had been accused of not authoring the arguments, but leaving it to his co-author, Varese. However, if you actually read the book, and pay attention to Varese’s own sections, you will notice that he is a reasonably bright fellow who would win many arguments online. A decent debater. But he doesn’t fly! His arguments look like something out of Minecraft; square, blocky, inelegant, with no air. Or if he had been playing Go, he’d be the guy obsessed with building long walls all the time. Flew, on the other hand, elegantly places his pieces a good distance apart, not touching. He knows that if it comes to it, he can tighten and ensnare between his pieces, just like a good Go player. Or back to Varese’s architecture, Flew doesn’t build blocky buildings in Minecraft, but elven-like cathedrals with lots of air.

So that is how I see the difference. In aesthetic terms, in terms of how they feel when you listen to them. Those who really stand apart have a lightness and air to their touch that lesser minds don’t. For the mathematically interested, Terence Tao is a great example. The way he explains things, you never would have guessed that he was actually explaining something difficult. From his pen, things flow, with lightness, air, and grace.

Jacobsen: What have been some work experiences and educational certifications for you?

Nyberg: A PhD in math. It was never planned, but just happened. After that, a post-doc at the university of Edinburgh, and then I just went to the dark side for a few years as a software consultant at Computas, the company that sponsored Magnus Carlsen in his childhood years, btw. Now I work at Agder University, a smalltown university at the Norwegian south tip, teaching statistics from my own textbook to engineering students.

Jacobsen: What are some of the more important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses?

Nyberg: The most dangerous myth is that the gifted will always survive. No, they won’t. Gifted people need nurturing just as much as do those who do not. Just because a gifted person often gets by on less, doesn’t mean they thrive on less. Put your prize race horse in closed confines with few challenges or opportunities to move for years, and enter it into a race. A normal horse who has had every opportunity will fare better! Why waste your prize horses like that?
Jacobsen: What are some social and political views for you? Why hold them?

Nyberg: My basic leanings are strongly libertarian. Simply because I believe in responsibility for your own life. But I do also have a strong social democratic core. That is: it seems that many freemarketeers sort of “side” with the employer side in conflicts. And there are conflicts. So I side with the sentiment but perhaps not the strategies of trade unionists. A working-class libertarian, perhaps. But it has all got to do with taking responsibility for you own life and being able to be in charge of it.

From old times, workers might have had the character and inclination to do something with their lives, but scant opportunity. My grandfathers are testament to this. And there is also the story of my great-great-grandfather up my male line: he lived on a rented farm, paying part of his produce to the farmer who owned it, as his rent. However, he wanted independence, and worked hard so he could save up. But when he presented the money to buy his leased land off his landlord, this same landlord responded by evicting him with 24 hrs notice. My great-grandfather was prepared for this, however, and had a contingency plan for buying some other land. So he moved his house there overnight. (?) A small house by today’s standards, perhaps, but a damn feat anyway!

But the point is: that kind of precaution should not be necessary. A society in which economic power gives life power over another person is not a good libertarian society. It’s not a society which encourages taking charge of your own life.

Jacobsen: Any thoughts on the God concept or gods idea and philosophy, theology, and religion?

Nyberg: You could almost make an entire interview just on that topic! I have been all over the place. When I was just a kid, the first book I read on my own was a children’s Bible. So I decided I wanted to be a priest, and wondered about the nature of the soul. (Mine is light green, and resides in my right shoulder, according to 5-year old me, btw.) But then I learned about Hell, and I grew to … well, is hate a string enough word … I grew to hate the entire religious circus. Hell is such an abominable idea! And in my student years, I was the atheistiest atheist you could run into. Any belief was a superstition, and even ethics was just spooks’ play to me. I was a big champion of the Hegelian Max Stirner at that time. An anti-ethicist.

However, I have wrestled with my own demons, so to speak, and have concluded that there is most probably some kind of God. I found some resonance in Flew’s book, mentioned above, for my reason for this. He had two basic arguments, one about the statistics of the origin of life (which I don’t buy), and one about the very concept-like, mathematical nature of the universe.

There is a paper, *The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics in the natural sciences*, which could serve as a starting point. Why should mathematics be able to describe reality so well? Why do so many things act alike, and be alike? We like to think that concepts are abstractions we have made from our observed realities, and there is much truth to that. But what then when reality itself behaves so much as if was printed out of concepts like cookie shapes? What does a concept-like understanding of reality entail?
To me, it points to a view where the concepts (or “concepts”, since they are not our own created concepts) are in some way primary. A sort of Platonism if you wish. But by calling them concepts, I am also pointing to the kind of entity having concepts, a mind. A universal mind.

Now, is this a “proof of God” I just presented? No. And I believe Immanuel Kant (there is another brilliant mind!) showed quite well that such proofs are impossible. But we can make arguments that God is a likely explanation, and then as with many such things, it is up to each person which arguments sway them.

Jacobsen: How much does science play into the worldview for you?

Nyberg: Things have to be what they are, don’t they? Science studies what things are. So how can science not play a major part. That does, however, not mean subscribing to scientism. But I guess my above reply about God already told you that.

Jacobsen: What have been some of the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations) for you?

Nyberg: None. I have never paid anyone to assess me, but I have enjoyed doing a few tests, and have looked at what kind of score I could get. My first massive one was the Titan test, which I did in the 90ies, when it was published in *Omni*. However, grading and paying for grading was a bitch, so I did nothing with it. However, I came across the answers online about … was it 10 years ago. I still had my answers from back then, and got 23/24 on the math-spatial test, which I already knew. But the answer to the last question (that had stumped me) almost got me hitting my own forehead for not seeing it. Duh! Of course. The linguistic part went less well. 12/24. But not too bad in my own eyes, at least.
Well, I actually have paid someone to assess me, some to think of it. I had just done a test in “The IQ book”, and got a near-perfect score (*), earning me an IQ of 155-160. (Perfect score=160). So I mentioned this to a psychologist I was seeing at the time. Could it really be so that I had an IQ as high as 160? I left his office a bit elated, for he responded “Ha ha, no! 160 is my score. From our talks, I would assess your IQ to be at roughly 180!”

But that’s it. Anecdotal scores. I never seem to score below 155 on any test, and people somehow seem to think I’m in a higher range than that, and that is really why I’m being interviewed here, because others believe I have a reasonably high IQ.

**Jacobsen: What ethical philosophy makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?**

**Nyberg:** As I said above, I had my longest period as a Stirnerian anti-ethicist, but though I retain a strong respect and admiration for Stirner, the anti-ethicism has worn off. So what if ethics can’t be built on “reason alone” or on similar crumbly bulwarks? Just be nice to people!

That is, act as if you care about them (and actually do care a little bit about them), and ask what is in their best interests, and act on that. No fixed formula, but the kind of balancing you do between friends. We manage that balance without a formula. A trial and error approach where you check for the results for yourself, for those you care about, and for the entire dynamics of how your kindnesses affect others.

Though… being kind doesn’t mean doing everything for those you love, for that stunts their growth and ability to take charge of their own lives, so by all means, sometimes the kindest gift you can give a friend is a kick in the butt!

Of course, these are all nice words to put up on a wall, so in practice the best thing to do is to look at people who have got their lives and their acts together, and seek their advice. Grandpa ethics, in my case. I have the best grandpas!

**Appendix I: Footnotes**

[1] Associate Professor, Engineering Sciences, University of Agder.


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Conversation with Olav Hoel Dørum on Early Life, Intelligence, Genius, WAIS-III, and Optimistic Nihilism: Former Ombudsman, Mensa Norway (1)

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Abstract
Olav Hoel Dørum was the Ombudsman for Mensa Norway. He discusses: growing up; an extended self; the family background; the purpose of intelligence tests; high intelligence; the geniuses of the past; the greatest geniuses in history; a genius from a profoundly intelligent person; some work experiences and educational certifications; the more important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses; some social and political views; the God concept or gods idea; science; the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations); the range of the scores; ethical philosophy.

Keywords: intelligence, life, Olav Hoel Dørum, Mensa Norway, Norway.

Conversation with Olav Hoel Dørum on Early Life, Intelligence, Genius, WAIS-III, and Optimistic Nihilism: Former Ombudsman, Mensa Norway (1)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: When you were growing up, what were some of the prominent family stories being told over time?

Olav Hoel Dørum [1],[2]*: There have been many highly skilled and intelligent people on my father’s side. My uncle was a widely endorsed expert in cardiology and my grandfather was a highly skilled doctor, but not any prominent figures in the way you probably think of.

Jacobsen: Have these stores helped provide a sense of an extended self or a sense of the family legacy?

Dørum: It was motivating knowing that I came from a resourceful family. I think I projected that into myself since I’ve always had problems concentrating. A warm pat on the back saying “you can do this”.

Jacobsen: What was the family background, e.g., geography, culture, language, and religion or lack thereof?

Dørum: A pretty ordinary country family. Nothing that stands out to me. Not religious in any way. A calm, down to earth and analytical approach to life and the world around.

Jacobsen: How was the experience with peers and schoolmates as a child and an adolescent?

Dørum: It was hard to connect at a deeper level. I wasn’t particularly popular but not unpopular either. I’ve been described as an intelligent and somewhat eccentric person with an absurd sense of humour. My social skills weren’t so good back then, so I was often puzzled by the way things turned out. But nothing bad in any way. I often feel different, but always accepted and well-liked.

Jacobsen: What is the purpose of intelligence tests to you?

Dørum: I’ve always had a traditional view on psychological tests – intelligence tests included. Besides being an invaluable clinical tool, it can start
the process of making yourself more confident and improve your quality of life. If you have skills, you are generally speaking better off cultivating them. If you fall into the normal range, you know that – so if you feel a bit off you can start looking somewhere else for answers instead of falling into arrogance thinking you are better than others. If you score noticeably below average you can work on finding new ways of learning things, ask for help and forgive yourself for failing to reach an ambitious goal. Acceptance and inner peace is a good reason to take an intelligence test. Although most people wouldn’t benefit from taking a psychological test of any sort. It’s too easy to set counterproductive goals and expectations. Most people seem to have a reasonable idea of what they are capable of and are perfectly fine with who they are.

**Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?**

**Dørum:** The confirmation was when I was 20 when I took the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale – III, as a part of a medical screening process. My parents had always thought I was highly intelligent, but ain’t that typical.

**Jacobsen: When you think of the ways in which the geniuses of the past have either been mocked, vilified, and condemned if not killed, or praised, flattered, platformed, and revered, what seems like the reason for the extreme reactions to and treatment of geniuses? Many alive today seem camera shy – many, not all.**

**Dørum:** Lack of cultural sophistication is one reason. Historically speaking, it wasn’t until quite recently, I’d say the last 10–15 years, we developed a healthy tolerance for people with mental handicaps, eccentric personalities, sexual orientation or just about anything that made you different. The other reason is that intelligence is power. You can be poorly equipped in almost any other domain, but you will have a hard time finding someone who without much hesitation or objection says that he or she is less intelligent. It’s as if everybody, at some level – even if it’s purely emotional, knows what modern research uses to validate I.Q. tests – that intelligence correlates highly with social and economic success. Nobody wants to be limited that way, so making fun of someone more intelligent than you could be a way to react. The third reason could be that the heroes of progress, from a common man’s perspective, were more closely linked to military talents, entrepreneurship or political power, so geniuses with little interest in success weren’t acknowledged for their role. A fourth reason is that the personality trait “openness to experience”, intellectual curiosity, has a moderate to high correlation with I.Q. It is not unreasonable to assume geniues held views, moral perspectives or lived a lifestyle not accepted at that time. The story of the lonely and mocked genius sells better than those who were well adapted. Maybe the most intelligent person was a highly decorated and commonly loved general, who knows.

**Jacobsen: Who seems like the greatest geniuses in history to you?**

**Dørum:** Friedrich Nietzsche and Carl Gustav Jung comes to mind. Both had tremendous insight in human nature and were able to condensate that into philosophical and psychological publications. There are so many layers of abstractions such as religion, politics, personal feelings and experiences and historical elements that to get to the core of behavior the way they did is more difficult that most understand. This is a natural segue to your next question.

**Jacobsen: What differentiates a genius from a profoundly intelligent person?**

**Dørum:** A genius discovers, a profoundly intelligent person navigates. Both possess a high level of abstract and analytical skills, but a genius can detach themselves from existing ways of seeing things a profoundly intelligent person cannot. A genius doesn’t need to be the smartest person in the room, far from it. As long as the profoundly intelligent person stays within pre-existing frameworks – that person might never come to the point where he or she is able to introduce a groundbreaking discovery and turn that into an invention. Undoubtful valuable contributions, but it’s also likely to be a continuation rather than a whole new platform in which others can stand on – like Einstein’s introduction of spacetime. If you’re “only” a profoundly intelligent person, you’ll only get so far before a genius has to give you a new ladder to climb on.

**Jacobsen: What have been some work experiences and educational certifications for you?**

**Dørum:** I have many unsuccessful attempts finishing higher education in social science and computer science. For many years I worked as an archivist in various government agencies. I got a job in a small tech firm a few years ago where I’m working on technical projects, custom support and programming.

**Jacobsen: What are some of the more important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses? Those myths that pervade the cultures of the world. What are those myths? What truths dispel them?**
Dørum: Gifted people are not uncommon, they make up between five to around two percent of the population – depending on how pragmatic you approach the question. Typically one or two in every class. Gifted are people with above average resources. They usually do well in a wide range of academic areas, due to the g-factor. Gifted people get better results, but they don’t have a particularly set of skills different from the average person. Geniuses and true creativity is extremely rare. We all know people who did extremely well but are otherwise normal in every way. How many do we know that have produced something revolutionizing? It’s not hard to find highly intelligent people who think in very different ways and come up with new ways of doing things. More is achieved by studying the work that has been done and to familiarize yourself with the current theory and previous research rather than creating something new. Don’t be the fork where the tips point in different directions. Just because you are unique, doesn’t mean you are useful.

The biggest myth is perhaps that achievements are done in a vacuum. We all have a picture of the lonely and misunderstood genius that finally has thought something out. Progress requires extremely high levels of conscientiousness and both technical and financial resources. The achievement is yours, but you depend on a giant apparatus and high level of academic discipline and cooperation.

Jacobsen: What are some social and political views for you? Why hold them?

Dørum: The Scandinavian model, combined with our down to earth culture, seems to produce a society with a reasonable balance between capitalism and social programs. The social mobility in Scandinavia is one of the highest in the world. Meaning that if your income is much less linked to your parents income, in both ways – so it’s easier to climb the socio economic ladder if you are poor and easier to fall if you come from a rich family. The more environmentally equally it gets, a progressively bigger part of what produces indifferences are caused by real world differences between people and proportionally less about your family’s background – while providing basic care for those with limited resources. It seems to me like that is a good way to get a politically stable and socially just society.

Jacobsen: Any thoughts on the God concept or gods idea and philosophy, theology, and religion?

Dørum: Nietzsche said “He who has a why can bear almost any how”, meaning that those who have found a deeper meaning can endure almost any way of living. Religious values are more robust than political ideologies, including nationalism. Religion is the only thought system where the reward is granted after your death. You can of course be praised by having a fountain, road or middle school named after you, but not rewarded in a religious context. It’s easier to come to peace with a difficult life, instead of seeing your life as a one-shot chance that can be mediocre at best – or maybe thoroughly tragic, if this life is a preparation for the afterlife. It’s not until the last century or so that the average life isn’t absolutely brutal.

Jacobsen: How much does science play into the worldview for you?

Dørum: One of my favourite people is the Swedish doctor and statistician Hans Rosling. Rosling passed away in 2017, but provided us with an invaluable understanding of the world by visualization of massive data sets from all over the world. He was the founder of the Gapminder Foundation. His user-friendly presentation of data shows us a world in progress and continuous improvement. Science, through systematic information gathering, testing and confirmation, can blatantly destroy your political, religious and philosophical beliefs. But it also sets you free. Maybe you’re not worse off than most people, maybe you’re not oppressed or suffer from lack of what you think is privileges, maybe you have about as much chance of being happy and fulfilled as those you compare yourself to.

Jacobsen: What have been some of the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations) for you?

Dørum: Due to Tourettes Syndrome and what they now call developmental disorder within the Autism spectrum, previously referred to as Asperger’s syndrome, professional test scores are much more unreliable due to variations in executive functions and working memory. I am perfectly comfortable being open about it. The first time I took an I.Q. test I got 128 on WAIS-III. 131 on FRT-A when I joined Mensa back in 2006. Ten years later I hit the ceiling on Ravens Standard Progressive Matrices Plus with 145 >, 99.9 percentile mark. I got 140 on WASI-II in 2016 as a part of medical screening.

Jacobsen: What is the range of the scores for you? The scores earned on alternative intelligence tests tend to produce a wide smattering of data points rather than clusters, typically.

Dørum: I haven’t taken many high-range tests, but I’ve taken a few with a word for being reliable and valid. This includes those developed by universities but do not have status of being official I.Q.-tests. I
typically fall between 131 and 145+. Not much different from the supervised ones.

Jacobsen: What ethical philosophy makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?

Dørum: Since I don’t hold any religious views, I believe that the only principles and meaning that matters are the ones we decide on – which is close to optimistic nihilism. But people also need a clear direction, so more traditional conservative values such as a strive to find a deeper meaning in life combined with dedication through grinding and goal-oriented behaviour, seems to produce healthier individuals than those who go through their life in a whimsical way. I’m a deep fan of Immanuel Kant’s Formulation of Universal Law: “requires that the maxims be chosen as though they should hold as universal laws of nature”. Each snowflake would not plead guilty of causing the avalanche. The only reasonable responsibility we can demand from others is to act in such a way that the world becomes just incrementally better.

Appendix I: Footnotes


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Conversation with Charles Peden on the Glia Society, Scott Adams, Rick Rosner, Jamie Loftus, James Woods, The Amazing Randi, and Paul Cooijmans: Member, Glia Society (3)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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Abstract

Charles Peden is a Member of the Glia Society. He discusses: high-IQ societies have a religious feel; other forms of periodic reinforcement for the Glia Society; the interests in the high-IQ; Scott Adams; Rick Rosner; Jamie Loftus; James Woods; The Amazing Randi; contemporary measurements of intelligence; the original pursuit in some of the non-mainstream tests; Paul Cooijmans; the specific contributions to Thoth; intelligence; high-range; and some of the ‘demons’ of this ostracism in life.

Keywords: Charles Peden, Glia Society, intelligence, IQ, James Randi, James Woods, Jamie Loftus, Paul Cooijmans, Rick Rosner, Scott Adams.

Conversation with Charles Peden on the Glia Society, Scott Adams, Rick Rosner, Jamie Loftus, James Woods, The Amazing Randi, and Paul Cooijmans: Member, Glia Society (3)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Do you think high-IQ societies have a religious feel to them, a sensibility?

Charles Peden[1],[2]*: There is a line from the song “Strange Phenomena” by Kate Bush that goes: ‘G’ arrives, funny, had a feeling He was on His way.

The idea and the hope of ‘G’ can seem ambiguous between the religious idea of ‘G’ (God) and general intelligence. Both ideas of ‘G’ seem ethereal and wise. So, in a way, high I.Q. societies can readily be thought of as having a potential parallel focus to religions.

High I.Q. societies are composed of acolytes of intelligence. Intelligence may just be something that exists because we want it to exist. We each play a tiny part in creating it, but it emerges as a discrete phenomena. In this way high I.Q. societies have a religious feel to them. Think what you want about God, but a religion with many followers gives their God an actual emergent agency in the universe.

Jacobsen: What are other forms of periodic reinforcement for the Glia Society?

Peden: There is the GliaWebNews, the Journal Thoth, and topical interactions between members. There is also the discovery of what other members are doing. I sometimes discover members answering questions on Quora.com or doing things on YouTube. There is this serendipity of “Look, it’s one of us!” That is a form of tribal reinforcement.

Jacobsen: Why are the interests in the high-IQ part interspersed throughout the world and seemingly random?

Peden: I believe there is a lot of controversy surrounding I.Q. so it does not surprise me to see pockets of interest. I think the greatest controversy about I.Q. tests has to do with homicidal eugenics and the fear of ostracism for the ones we love and
ourselves if they don’t meet the criteria. So I think the interests in the high I.Q. part depends on the cultural acceptance and understanding of the meaning of scores.

Jacobsen: Any thoughts on Scott Adams?

Peden: I think Scott Adams is the creator of the Dilbert cartoon, a member of Mensa, and has a degree in engineering. I believe that he is a Trump supporter and the most recent notorious thing I’ve seen about him is that he married a hot, younger wife.

Jacobsen: Any thoughts on Rick Rosner?

Peden: I found Rick fascinating because his high school experience was so different from mine. He wanted to stay, and I wanted to get out. He enjoyed high school and I hated it. He was good at high school, and I was terrible at it. I could not comprehend that someone loved high school as much as Rick Rosner.

Lately, Rick has a show on YouTube with Lance Richlin. Rick and Lance are respectively liberal and conservative frenemies that exasperate each other by talking about politics. The thing I find interesting about the show is that even though Rick has an I.Q. that is extraordinary, he comes across as a bit nerdy but not particularly alien. I notice that when he is in an extemporaneous conversation his extreme I.Q. is not obvious. However, he really shines when he gets on a topic in which he has thought deeply about. So one has to be careful about writing someone’s intelligence off wholesale. There can be islands of deep thought and insight that are beyond one’s comprehension.

Jacobsen: Any thoughts on Jamie Loftus?

Peden: I first saw Jamie Loftus on a now-defunct YouTube channel called Super Deluxe. She and another character named Jeffery did a hilarious exploration of fringe health treatments. Their show was called Upgraded and was done with some great jump-cut editing. She is a comedian in the early stages of her career and does lots of experimental stuff. It’s hit and miss, but so was Monty Python’s Flying Circus and Saturday Night Live. She is politically very liberal and I find that to be a bit off-putting. There is a comedian named Ryan Long who does political humour which I find more enjoyable because it is ambiguous and pokes fun at both sides. But Jamie Loftus is brilliant and daring. She also likes to flash her Mensa membership, but does it in an endearing, ironic way.

Jacobsen: Any thoughts on James Woods?

Peden: James Woods claims to have a very high I.Q. and I believe it. He seems very sharp to me. I don’t know if he is in a high I.Q. society, but I have no doubt that he could be. James Woods is also very vocal politically. Normally I find most entertainers who focus on politics to be out of their element. Politics is a playground for the Dunning Kruger effect. But James Woods is an exception because he has a background in politics. His political opinion carries the cachet of actual schooling in the subject. James Woods leans heavily (but not entirely) to the right politically.

Jacobsen: Any thoughts on The Amazing Randi?

Peden: I saw a documentary on The Amazing Randi a while back. I’ve found him interesting for decades. I think I even have a book written by him. He was not impressed when he went to a Mensa gathering some time ago. He has become wise, wizardly character that seems to defy death (he was diagnosed with cancer quite a long time ago).

Jacobsen: How accurate are contemporary measurements of intelligence? What is intelligence? What would measure intelligence most realistically and accurately?

Peden: I am more of a supporter of this subject than an expert. But it’s fun to give opinions, so I will. Intelligence is the name for the property of a constellation of abilities, SOME of which are measured by an I.Q. test. I believe contemporary I.Q. tests are accurate enough to be useful in the low range. But the usefulness of I.Q. testing for the high range is still being investigated. Intelligence is such a complex property that it is ideally suited for measurement by artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence should be able to assess a variety of abilities in real-time and passively so there would be no need for an I.Q. test. As far as I know, this has not yet been developed.

Jacobsen: Why the original pursuit in some of the non-mainstream tests?

Peden: I think artificial intelligence will play a far more significant role in our lives. I’ve thought that for many years. I ran across Paul Cooijmans’s tests when researching the singularity on the internet.

Jacobsen: Why come to Paul Cooijmans test in particular, the “Cartoons of Shock I.Q. Test”?

Peden: Paul Cooijmans used to have his tests for free online. Anyone could take any of his tests and submit the answers when they felt moved to do so. There was much about Paul Cooijmans that I found credible and his test questions clearly had gradations of
difficulty. The Cartoons of Shock just sounds like a fun test to me.

Jacobsen: **What were the specific contributions to Thoth from you?**

Peden: I think my first contribution to the Journal Thoth was about a bizarre guy named Mirin Dajo. I was also interested in psychopathy for a while and had a brief series called “Uncharming”. I find plain facts to be credible. But growing up in the United States, I’ve become accustomed to framing things in a promotional way and appealing to emotions. So the idea of an unappealing name for the series was something I found…appealing.

Jacobsen: **How does intelligence become “most pronounced in the context of novel situations”? What does this state about intuitive understandings of intelligence?**

Peden: When a novel problem can be solved with logic and nobody in the group has an advantageous experience for solving it, then one can bet probabilistically that the solution will come from the most intelligent among them. When dealing with problems that are not novel, then a person with experience is sufficient. The advantage of intelligence is mostly treated as marginal these days. It is discouraging.

Jacobsen: **How can high-range “I.Q. results... play havoc with one’s ego,” in precise terms?**

Peden: Having a high score has caused me to have this ego narrative that I’m smarter than most people. This may be true, but it does not mean I am smarter than someone else at all times and in all circumstances. I often have my narcissism checked by the brilliance of others who may not score so high on an I.Q. test. I’ve had to learn that I.Q. is not a substitute for experience and it is not a guarantee that I have the best answers.

Jacobsen: **What are some of the ‘demons’ of this ostracism in life for you? How do they manifest?**

Peden: The demons of ostracism are the ideas that creep into one’s head that one isn’t good enough for others. At jobs I would see people promoted above me simply because they had some minor college degree. I would see girlfriends dump me for a guy who makes them miserable. Any circumstance where I am excluded for an arbitrary reason, like not being cool enough or hot enough, could trigger a demon of ostracism.

**Appendix I: Footnotes**


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.*
Conversation with Tim Roberts on James Randi, Daniel Dennett, Martin Gardner, Penn & Teller, and Richard Dawkins: Founder/Administrator, Unsolved Problems (6)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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Abstract

Tim Roberts is the Founder/Administrator of Unsolved Problems. He self-describes in “A Brief and Almost True Biography” as follows: I was definitely born lower-middle class. Britain was (and probably still is) so stratified that one’s status could be easily classified. You were only working class if you lived in Scotland or Wales, or in the north of England, or had a really physical job like dustbin-man. You were only middle class if you lived in the south, had a decent-sized house, probably with a mortgage, and at work you had to use your brain, at least a little. My mother was at the upper end of lower-middle class, my father at the lower. After suffering through the first twenty years of my life because of various deleterious genetically-acquired traits, which resulted in my being very small and very sickly, and a regular visitor to hospitals, I became almost normal in my 20s, and found work in the computer industry. I was never very good, but demand in those days was so high for anyone who knew what a computer was that I turned freelance, specializing in large IBM mainframe operating systems, and could often choose from a range of job opportunities. As far away as possible sounded good, so I went to Australia, where I met my wife, and have lived all the latter half of my life. Being inherently lazy, I discovered academia, and spent 30 years as a lecturer, at three different universities. Whether I actually managed to teach anyone anything is a matter of some debate. The maxim “publish or perish” ruled, so I spent an inordinate amount of time writing crap papers on online education, which required almost no effort. My thoughts, however, were always centred on such pretentious topics as quantum theory and consciousness and the nature of reality. These remain my over-riding interest today, some five years after retirement. I have a reliance on steroids and Shiraz, and possess an IQ the size of a small planet, because I am quite good at solving puzzles of no importance, but I have no useful real-world skills whatsoever. I used to know a few things, but I have forgotten most of them.” He discusses: the quintessential skeptic James Randi; Daniel Dennett; Martin Gardner; Penn & Teller; and Richard Dawkins.

Keywords: Daniel Dennett, James Randi, Martin Gardner, Penn & Teller, Richard Dawkins, science, scientific skepticism, skepticism.
Conversation with Tim Roberts on James Randi, Daniel Dennett, Martin Gardner, Penn & Teller, and Richard Dawkins: Founder/Administrator, Unsolved Problems (6)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

*I assumed “Professor” based on an article. I was wrong. I decided to keep the mistake because the responses and the continual mistake, for the purposes of this interview, adds some personality to the interview, so the humour in a personal error.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: With the passing of James Randi, a luminary of the skeptical community. I want to touch on some of the names to finalize this series of sessions with you. So, the quintessential skeptic James Randi, what stood out about him?

Tim Roberts[1],[2]: One of the advantages of being 65 (and there are very few, I assure you), is that one can do and say as one feels, without any fear that it will harm one’s future career prospects….

So, Scott (whom I love dearly) has sent me a series of questions on Martin Gardner, and Daniel Dennett, and Penn and Teller, and James Randi, and Richard Dawkins, presumably because in previous interviews I have mentioned their names as prominent skeptics. So, I hope to answer all of the questions posed, but in a slightly roundabout way.

I have met none personally. But I have been in the audience for two.

Randi first. At the end of the show, which consisted of a film about his life (An Honest Liar (2014), highly recommended) , and an on-stage interview, there was a Q&A session from the audience.

And two things from the Q&A session remain in my memory. First, how many audience members started with “I’m a member of the Skeptics Society, and I’d like to ask….”

And this confused me. Why would anyone belong to a society for skeptics? It would be like belonging to a society for people with two legs. Not that it’s bad, but what’s the point? If I said I have a box of paperclips which I would sell you for $1,000, because it was actually worth $20,000, would you buy it from me? No, because you are a skeptic. If I agreed that Mars and Venus were roughly spherical, but the Earth was flat, would you believe me? No, because you are a skeptic. If I told you my broken down Toyota Corolla was actually a Mercedes, would you believe me? No, because you are a skeptic.

So I find it confusing as to why anyone would join such a society.

Second, that one questioner asked how many contenders had come close to his one million dollar prize for any demonstration whatsoever of extra-sensory perception. None whatsoever, he declared most emphatically. And by way of explanation, he said that all of those who tried for the prize were either very clearly self-delusional, or resorted to obvious trickery. In short, there had been no demonstrations whatsoever that Randi himself could not replicate easily by normal means.

Jacobsen: Any recommended books by him? Why those books?

Roberts: Amongst the books by Randi that I would most recommend are Flim-Flam!: Psychics, ESP, Unicorns, and Other Delusions (1982), The Faith Healers (1987), and An Encyclopedia of Claims, Frauds, and Hoaxes of the Occult and Supernatural (1995).

Jacobsen: How is Daniel Dennett important for analytical philosophy and scientific thinking applied to traditional ideas of religion and the evolution of religion as a “natural phenomenon”? Any recommended books by him? Why those books?

Roberts: I saw Daniel Dennett at a conference in Tucson. The philosopher David Chalmers was another speaker, and pointed at various members of the audience with his newly-invented consciousness-detection machine. In fact, it was a hairdryer he had taken from his hotel room that morning. “Positive”, he said. Then “positive” again. Then “positive” a third time. Then he pointed it at Dennett. “No signal recorded”, he said.

This was at least in part in response to Dennett’s recent book Consciousness Explained (1991). Which, in my humble opinion, is an excellent book in almost all respects, but, contrary to the title, does not explain consciousness. Far better in this regard is Chalmers’ own book The Conscious Mind (1996).

Jacobsen: What made Martin Gardner important? Any recommended books by him? Why those books?

Roberts: Martin Gardner was one of my childhood heroes, who introduced me to the delights of recreational mathematics. He had hundreds of publications. Amongst the best, in my opinion is My Best Mathematical and Logic Puzzles (1964). And amongst his work on skepticism and uncovering

**Jacobsen:** Why are Penn & Teller crucial for entertain-based skepticism? Any recommended books by him? Why those books?

**Roberts:** Penn and Teller are remarkable, and may well take over the mantle of chief skeptic from Randi. Just as a public service, let me just say that their explanation of the sawing-a-lady-in-half trick, is something everyone should watch before they die. It is available at the back end of the very first episode of the very first season of *Penn & Teller: Fool Us* (2011).

**Jacobsen:** Why is Richard Dawkins an important and direct exponent of science, or scientific skepticism, as well as an educator on the foundations of biology, evolution via natural selection?

**Roberts:** I have nothing to say about Richard Dawkins, except that he is one of the bravest and most honest people on the planet. Use Wikipedia to find all of his published works.

Some years ago, a good friend, who happens to be very religious, knowing that I did not believe in religious things, asked me what I DID believe in. She used upper case in her question, I swear!

I mumbled something about believing in truth and logic. Although I worried about this response at the time, I grow more and more proud of it as the days pass.

As for truth, I believe that water is composed of hydrogen and oxygen. Carbon is not involved, nor nickel, nor einsteinium. This is an absolute truth. As for logic, I believe that if George is a crow, and all crows are black, then George is black.

But how does one know that water is composed of hydrogen and oxygen, or that George really is a crow, or that all crows are really black? And this is why skepticism is essential. One should not believe anything without evidence. And the more evidence, the better.

**Jacobsen:** Mr. Roberts, thank you so much for your time over the last few months.

Appendix I: Footnotes


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Conversation with Shalom Dickson on Goethe, Leonardo da Vinci, Cooijmans’ Tripartite Theory of Genius/Creativity, Transgressive Equilibrium, the Curse of Nonrecognition: Member, Glia Society (2)

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Abstract
Shalom Dickson is a Member of the Glia Society. His biography on his website states, “Shalom Dickson is a fundamental thinker with interests in cognition, philosophy, sociology, innovation-powered entrepreneurship, and ethical science. His friends regard him as a visionary with a knack for purpose-driven leadership. He is the founder of internovent, Nigeria's first social innovation company designing solutions for developing nations to attain a balanced global socioeconomic advancement. One of these is Paperloops, Nigeria’s first FinTech company offering holistic financial management and literacy for teens. He is also the founding president of Novus Mentis, Nigeria's first high-intelligence network with a mission to Map-out Nigeria’s Brain for optimized creative output. Novus Mentis has launched the Sound Mind Project to optimize cognitive ability and stimulate intellectual interest in Africa. Shalom is Nigeria’s first member of the exclusive Glia Society and an alumnus of Nigeria’s first cohort of the Founder Institute.” You can see more here. He discusses: spirituality; a sense of an extended self; “expand the perspective on what is possible” for the young; some of the scientific and technological possibilities of Nigeria; some sociopolitical internal issues within the country preventing this; the experience in Cameroon; the primary theological and social-communal manifestations of Pentecostal Christianity in Nigeria and Cameroon; an independent construction of a spiritual identity; to reform; the “unconventional spiritual inclination”; the primitive interpretation of written symbols earlier in life; the feeling in seeing a “logical error”; prevent disastrous experiences for the highly gifted students; bad advice for the young and gifted; bad career advice for the young and gifted; crack the black box; the relationship of IQ to intelligence; the “fundamental principles” of a field; real genius; “universal thinker”; da Vinci; the gifted individual from the profoundly gifted person; Cooijmans’s tripartite theory of genius and/or creativity; conscientiousness; associative horizon; a lack of balance between the three elements; key insights; the qualitative metrics; Lagos chapter of the Founder Institute; employers; mortality in the supersociety; Transgressive Equilibrium; the Curse of Nonrecognition; the tests of Jason Betts; the tests by Cooijmans; the range of time one should take on the high-range tests to perform optimally; Kantian ethics; a more accurate ethic; ultimate ethical framework; a better sub-ultimate ethic; “right”; “wrong”; consciousness”; “truth”; Homo epistemicus; and the idea of “humanness.”

Keywords: Curse of Nonrecognition, Genius, Goethe, Leonardo da Vinci, Paul Cooijmans, Shalom Dickson, spirituality, Transgressive Equilibrium.

Conversation with Shalom Dickson on Goethe, Leonardo da Vinci, Cooijmans’ Tripartite Theory of Genius/Creativity, Transgressive Equilibrium, the Curse of Nonrecognition: Member, Glia Society (2)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*
Scott Douglas Jacobsen: What is spirituality to you?

Shalom Dickson[1],[2]*: Spirituality can be broadly denoted as spirit-sense. This treatment may not readily seem to be of much use, but it serves two primary purposes: it points the attention to the word “spirit”—which, although easily lost in the original term, lies at the heart of our query, and it introduces the qualifier, “sense”, which implies perpectivity, in contrast to a notion of activity. We should appoint to all activity-related suggestions of spirituality, the category of “religion”, and since actions can be copied, religion may exist largely inconsistent of spirituality. We must now address the concept of ‘spirit’.

A spirit is an identity of interconnectedness. Thus, a spirit may exist for any system. The interconnectedness of humanity, the unity of nature, the persistence of individual experience, and even the interactive principles of man-made (technological) devices are examples of spirits in different categories. Spirituality, hence, entails the tendency to sense the connective identity of systems. Not all spirits exist at the same level of reality, and one of the sources of spiritual delusion is the attribution of a false reality to a spirit.

Jacobsen: How has this spirituality infused a sense of an extended self into a past of “royalty, excellence, and influence”?

Dickson: It is useful to define one’s existence in terms of some history, even if it is to deviate from it, without which it appears one is placeless in the world. These narratives can be crafted around more things than lineage, including intellectual nature.

Jacobsen: How can we “expand the perspective on what is possible” for the young?

Dickson: We do this with a balance of both fact and fiction.

Useful facts for expanded possibility perspectives include histories of great societies, corporations, and those of accomplished individuals. Biographies are powerful because they walk one through the many realities of an individual’s journey, and as they show us on one hand, the seemingness of a persistence of purpose over the course of one’s life, on the other hand, they reveal the constant collision between possibility and impossibility, and demonstrate that tomorrow is never clearly promised. In generally, young people should be exposed to the processes behind great accomplishment.

The role of fiction is to inspire new ideas, without placing priority on what is possible in reality. This is useful, in the manner intended here, in as much as it ignites the drive to employ the principles derived from the knowledge of possibility facts.

Jacobsen: What are some of the scientific and technological possibilities of Nigeria?

Dickson: Nigeria has a very young population, with individuals who are often driven and ambitious. The various subcultures are better suited for varying areas of scientific and technological exploration. But in general, there are clear opportunities in software engineering, which is currently being exploited by skilled individuals and new institutions, and agriculture technology, which has not been approached appropriately. There are peculiar opportunities in historical sciences (e.g. geology and anthropology), in the physical sciences and so on etc., and I stress the need for the adoption of a lofty ambition like an establishment of mega experimental facility or a space program.

Lots of talented individuals are doing interesting things without the support of strong institutions, and much will be benefitted from the facilitation of collaboration.

Jacobsen: What are some sociopolitical internal issues within the country preventing this?

Dickson: Political leadership, compared to Nigeria’s scientific needs, are driven by incompatible, irreconcilable motivations. But the problematic political or educational systems persist due to an underlying initiative problem, which undermines the capacity for social action in certain critical areas and at certain scales. The socioeconomic realities, from the perspective of the individual, create a pressure to make choices based on financial security rather than, say, ability or interest, regardless of the economic class. Beyond these common experiences, it is difficult to treat Nigeria as a single entity in a practical sense. This is partly responsible for the initiative problem.

There are many surface, quite often serious issues, but these can actually coexist with scientific progress.

Jacobsen: What was the experience in Cameroon like for you?

Dickson: Cameroon was such a beautiful place to grow up in. Everyone was generally respectful and the neighbors were typically friendly. Children could go about playing in the neighborhoods without concern. I lived in the Anglophone region and so only got to be influenced by French secondarily. I did not hear any of the indigenous languages spoken enough to speak them myself, but one naturally knew about several of them. While I mostly enjoyed the
rural allure of my small town (I particularly loved those cottage quarters and the riverine areas), even in the active cities, things were reasonably calm and organized. In all the beauty of its society, it was obviously a dictatorship: people in a particular region could be asked, as I recall on at least one occasion, to paint their houses a certain color. In all, it was a place where whatever existed.

Jacobsen: What are the primary theological and social-communal manifestations of Pentecostal Christianity in Nigeria and Cameroon?

Dickson: In general, Pentecostal Christianity allows for, and sometimes promotes, a highly energetic and demonstrative form of religiosity. Indeed, one may categorize the Pentecostal churches in Nigeria and Cameroon by the degree of aggressiveness in their spirituality. In the religious reality, there is an unending supernatural battle between good and evil, and much of “evil” is now ascribed to the practitioners of traditional spirituality. This contract is unfortunate because most of what is known of traditional cultures such as medicine, art, and philosophy, are interlocked with the native spiritual practice.

Jacobsen: How does an independent construction of a spiritual identity from a religious organization help develop critical thinking capacities of a young person?

Dickson: I think it is a highly defining experience. The process is characterized by a beehive of continuous internal conflicts, constant self-confrontation, and rational reconciliations. It is of the form of a coin of audacity, having on one face—skepticism, and on the other—confidence. One is set up with the readiness to identify incoherencies in beliefs, fish out unfounded claims, while retaining an appreciation of the humanistic significance of things.

Jacobsen: As a “reformer,” what were you trying to reform?

Dickson: My personal reading of the scriptures led me to conclusions often different than those espoused in the church’s doctrines. It seemed so clear to me that the Bible is only superficially the basis for modern Christian belief. I took issue with things like the personality and metaphysical qualities of God, the significance of the gospel and the basis of belief, the role of believers on earth, and some common church practices.

As I learned more about the world, it turned out that many of my points of objection had been explored extensively by old-time thinkers; any additions of mine were not predestined to fare better than the existing expositions. A key takeaway from my experiences was that religion is not optimized for truth, but for influence and control.

Jacobsen: How would you define the “unconventional spiritual inclination”?

Dickson: To put it squarely, I am neither welcome in the circle of atheists nor in that of the religious. In a sense, I think the time arrow of my spirit-sense is reversed, in that its truth is rooted in the promise of what will be known, rather than what was known and possibly lost. I find that this has consequences in my expectations of the explainable and the possible.

There are elements of my spiritual intuition in the works of Spinoza and Jung. For instance, what I considered the “sea of souls” is quite similar to Jung’s collective unconscious, and my notions of the interconnectedness, awareness, and self-containment of nature share strikingly similar implications with Spinoza’s pantheism.

Jacobsen: What was the primitive interpretation of written symbols earlier in life for you?

Dickson: Possibly some form of dyslexia, while I was not diagnosed.

Jacobsen: What was the feeling in seeing a “logical error” other than seeing this as “highly troubling” with the school teacher?

Dickson: I must have felt misunderstood, which was a staple unhappiness for me, but I was not surprised at the event itself. Finding an adult on the wrong side of logic was not new to me, and so being “wrongly corrected” could only be so disappointing, however unpleasant.

Jacobsen: What can prevent disastrous experiences for the highly gifted students?

Dickson: Our ways of dealing with children are informed by the expectations we hold about what a child should understand. This is particularly true for educational interactions. As much as possible, it should be ensured that a teacher has realistic expectations about the abilities of a student. This requires that the teachers are themselves of similar ability levels or have experience with such students. A gifted program ensures that the average is closer to the ideal, and the shortcomings of the teacher is less likely to be misread as the peculiarities of an unusual student.

Jacobsen: What is bad advice for the young and gifted?

Dickson: Anything based on an overdue correction of one’s own misdeeds which may no(t) longer(-)
apply, or anything based on safe rules and standard practice, neglecting to consider that people tend to be unfulfilled when they do not realize their full potential.

Jacobsen: What is bad career advice for the young and gifted?
Dickson: Advice designed to maximize financial gain without consideration for the need to exercise one’s skills or that their odd interests are a lifelong accompaniment, rather than temporary childish preoccupations.

Jacobsen: How would we crack the black box and development measurements, in fact, incorporative of the “thinking processes” and the facts used?
Dickson: The unfactored processes I refer to are those that can be represented with language; those that can either be reported by the test taker or observed. Imagine the testing procedure as a person having to build some structure with provided materials while in a closed white room. Now, we can develop a more predictive model of performance if we have data on their approach at selected levels, what materials are used, and how much learning was involved. With the difficulties in processing these, artificial intelligence—the ones we have achieved so far—can play a great role in monitoring and managing the interactions of the test taker, and to compare results over a wide range of candidates (i.e. including comparing candidates’ answers against one another) and against a host of simulations modeling real-life scenarios. These data can contribute to quantitative information, and can include qualitative ones, as well. Perhaps many do not find it important to measure human intelligence with such accuracy and precision. There would be more incentives to do this if cyborgs were involved. Some Paul Cooijmans’ online tests, where the candidate progresses through levels when they arrive at a correct answer, are more interactive. I am considering a dynamic logical system that could allow for a high degree of freedom, while being rigid enough to generate statistically relevant results.

Jacobsen: What is the relationship of IQ to intelligence to you?
Dickson: High intelligence is (also) a tendency to score highly in IQ tests.

In reality, IQ is a measure of conventional thinking or reasoning. This includes both facts and the ways in which we valuate meaning. It is expected that a highly intelligent person can learn these conventions better, and if we can test one’s understanding of them, we can infer the individual’s intelligence level. Thus, IQ, for an individual, is relevant to any degree that their ‘internal models’ are commensurable with the ideal model of the test.

An IQ score is a function of [the product of the availability of a valid cognitive model (provided by intelligence), motivation (as supplied by conscientiousness), & time], divided by [the counter-normal features of personality & the square of the difference between the candidate’s current age and their peak intellectual age].

Jacobsen: What are ways in which to dig to the “fundamental principles” of a field?
Dickson: At the foundation of any knowledge system are the core principles, which are related to that of other forms of knowledge also present in a fundamental knowledge system. Apprehending these principles, hence, is to identify their place in the fundamental system, understanding them in terms of their implications on other fundamental principles. Great thinkers, I have noticed, all have robust forms of such systems built, and it is upon these that they construct their framework of understanding. The framework of understanding is a structure containing 3 core theories, namely, of cognition, of knowledge, and of reality. I have resigned that many of the conflicts of interpretation among capable philosophers is due to discrepancies in the forms and formulations of these core theories.

Jacobsen: What separates real genius from its mere mimic, parrot?
Dickson: The mark of genius is not the absence of wrong ideas, but the presence of wonder and originality in all. Originality is extremely difficult to fake, although such fakery is made possible by the ignorance of the audience. There are magicians, whose wonder rely on the incapacity of the audience to know how the trick is done, and then there are wizards, of whose processes the more one knows, the more amazing the demonstration becomes.

Jacobsen: Aside from general traits, i.e., “universal thinker” or “polymath,” why Goethe?
Dickson: Among the thinkers I admire, Goethe is likely the one whose original works I have read the least (partly because I would rather read them in the original German, which I have not gotten to learn). Yet, the beauty in the nature of his works, as I could derive from what I read ‘about’ them, impressed me greatly. Ideas such as his chemodynamic theory of social interaction and his theory of color, all with a seeming apathy towards mathematics, are some examples of his qualitative models that I find appealing. I hold the opinion that the genius of art is
superior to the genius of science, since science has more reality, whereas art has more personality; science is an exploration, whereas art is an expression. The threshold for the manifestation of genius in the art is possibly further from the mean than in science. The so-called “artistic genius” incorporates principles relevant to all knowledge, including science.

Jacobsen: Why da Vinci?

Dickson: Similar reasons as Goethe; boundless curiosity and mental applicability. Leonardo da Vinci would function highly in any era.

Jacobsen: What demarcates the gifted individual from the profoundly gifted person? Those qualitative proxies seen pervasively in their lives.

Dickson: The following features are characteristic of the profoundly gifted: They are capable of appreciating the significance of knowledge, with the maturity of a wise adult, from a young age. They are highly sensitive to nuance, obsessed with trueness, and well-versed in the absurd. They have excellent command of language, and are capable of conjuring entire realities with words. When recognized as child prodigies, they stand out for the pervasive nature of their abilities. They are highly sensitive and develop a sophisticated mental model of the world.

Jacobsen: Regarding Cooijmans’ tripartite theory of genius and/or creativity, what is intelligence, in relation to previous responses?

Dickson: Paul Cooijmans’ intelligence is the generalization of the abilities. It, in isolation, does not contain the qualitative properties that may accidentally accompany a high intelligence, as those are contributed by personality.

Jacobsen: What is conscientiousness?

Dickson: Paul Cooijmans’ conscientiousness is also a compound of traits including factors such as motivation, drive, resourcefulness, audacity, ethics, and so on.

Jacobsen: What is associative horizon?

Dickson: Associative horizon is the span of one’s interpretation and interrelation of meaning; the subjective perception and ranking of patterns. This represents the engine of idea synthesis, and is responsible for the unpredictable deviation in creativity.

Jacobsen: What happens if these elements become ‘maximized’ in one and not another, as in a lack of balance between the three elements?

Dickson: A disproportionately high level of associative horizon disposes one to psychosis, as does conscientiousness to neurosis. High intelligence alone is typically uncreative, and thus does not qualify as genius.

Jacobsen: What were some key insights gained through work in “teaching (physics and English), marketing, research, product design, content development, academic consulting, and management”?

Dickson: Some are principles of design, team and social dynamics, confrontation and negotiation, and the ability to convince people that some idea is important.

Jacobsen: How were the high-range cognitive ability tests utilized for the screening of applicants?

Dickson: A selection of difficult problems were administered to the current trainees, and from their performance, it was noted what kinds of problems were representative of their skills. From this, a shorter test was derived and administered to online applicants, while a list of questions designed to investigate the candidates’ grounding in various areas of knowledge was developed for an in-person oral interactive session. The digit span test, even when administered orally, turned out to be such a great predictor of general problem-solving ability.

Jacobsen: How were these combined with the qualitative metrics if at all?

Dickson: Those interactive questions also measure qualitatively. It was noted how the candidates addressed problems in public; whether they volunteer to answer, if they were confident in their solutions, and how they debated conflicting views. They were required to answer unusual questions on subjects they reported to know about, and offer interpretations to metaphors.

Jacobsen: Can you expand on some of the work through the Lagos chapter of the Founder Institute?

Dickson: The FI program was an intensive 6-month startup accelerator. Startup founders, singly or multiply represented, underwent a company-building process towards a launching event. Some of the milestones include, team building, product development, market research, financial modeling, fundraising and partnerships, and sales. The procedure involved weekly deliverables on a number of practical questions and pitching sessions, on these milestones, during which decisions were made over the eviction of the entrepreneur. The application
process did involve a fluid intelligence test, although the acceptance cutoff apparently was not very high (since there is no significant correlation between intelligence and entrepreneurial success in general), and a personality test, as I later learned from him on a YouTube video, that was developed by Jordan B. Peterson.

Jacobsen: How do these employers approach you? How do the talent scouts find you?

Dickson: The employers themselves (often the top decision-maker) and not talent scouts (who are not to be blamed, for they largely do not exist), usually catch me doing something interesting. In one case, I developed a novel on-the-spot solution to a basic open problem, and gave an interesting presentation about their program. In another, I had just returned from a national television interview when I received a call to meet. In general, though, I find solutions to their problems.

Jacobsen: Does this sense of mortality in the supersociety reflect the spiritual sensibilities for you?

Dickson: It’s a little funny, but I probably do not understand this question. It seems to require a general “yes”, but a specific “no”.

Jacobsen: Can you expound some more on Transgressive Equilibrium?

Dickson: The Transgressive Equilibrium is a theoretical stage of balance—an inevitable stage in our civilization as a consequence of continued progress should humanity not go extinct—of which there are two conceptions: the economic state and the epistemic state. First, I suggest that such a stage must exist in a given world, and then that we should assume that it is ours. Speculative features of the states considered so far are:

In the economic state, resources are optimized to whatever degree that that is possible, and waste is eliminated. Since the most valuable resources are ideas, such an optimization is achieved by an advanced idea processing system. Now, the thought of an economic system wherein the use of resources are maximized sounds quite usual. However, it is not so that current systems can, even if they wanted to, maximize resources for the common cause, because they are inherently designed to maximize political power for non-cooperative governments; thus, such a state must be preceded by a sociocultural evolution of common consciousness. A Transgressive Equilibrium is distributed and decentralized, and yet maintains better oversight and is on the whole more integrated with the help of technology.

In the epistemic state, whatever can be known will be known, and whatever has been known is accessible. Matter manipulation is mastered, time is tamed, and the physical cost of experimentation is infinitesimal, as all possible events can be simulated. Even the most trivial things are considered important and expected to be understood perfectly, and all positions of knowledge exploration are considered useful roles. People recognize themselves as experimenters in a common research adventure, and there is perfect transmission of and access to information.

Jacobsen: With the Curse of Nonrecognition, what about ‘insights’ spread out into ‘experts’ who produce ‘knowledge,’ i.e., in a false manner? What about the cognitive limitations of individuals of different mental abilities? Do these impede the progress and reduce the number of possible items capable of acceptance as “common knowledge”? As many exist, and more will exist, even so, human nature seems, more or less, stable in spite of this bubbling brew of growing common knowledge in addition to misinformation, disinformation, and ‘knowledge’ alongside it. It seems akin to the internet. Some aspects facilitate more spreading of knowledge. Others encourage the spreading of lies, falsehoods, junk science, and conspiracy theories.

Dickson: Cognitive ability limitations do minimize the sophistication of common knowledge. But while this barrier is pronounced per generation, on one hand, the human capacity for learning compounds over time, and on the other hand, knowledge is being broken down and synthesized so that it becomes more accessible especially to members of a future generation whose understanding of the world are based on more advanced (and more relevant) premises. Furthermore, humanity invests in improving and augmenting the intelligence of humans while developing more intelligent artificial systems. Consequently, generational instances of common knowledge show a trend of increasingly advanced concepts over time.

Since society adopts knowledge when they are useful, it is natural that malformed knowledge would be adopted. As long as malformed knowledge volumes do not drown well-formed ones, positive growth is inevitable. It takes less than 1% to drive progress in any domain. The internet keeps a lot of people busy, which is a brilliant way for humanity to manage its population during their less productive hours.

Jacobsen: Why take the tests of Jason Betts?
Dickson: Jason Betts’ tests are fun and yet serious, very accurate for whatever it is they really measure, and one gets a very good return on time investment. But “why” for me would be because I learned about him at the time I did.

Jacobsen: What were some of the or have been some of the tests by Cooljans taken by you?

Dickson: The Nemesis Test, Test of the Beheaded Man, and GRIT and The Piper’s Test, with others. I consider my submission of the first two, which were the earliest I took (I submitted all this year – 2020) to be a waste, although I enjoyed the problem-solving experience.

Jacobsen: What is the range of time one should take on the high-range tests to perform optimally?

Dickson: The tests come in a fairly broad range of difficulty. One can achieve scores up to 160 in 2 weeks, as my experience shows. But those who have had the highest scores on the tests report spending months on and off. Some things simply take time to accomplish, but this does not to say that everyone would accomplish them if they spent the time. Some tests are tricky in that one thinks they are done when they aren’t, and test-taken experience may help mitigate such an effect.

Jacobsen: Why is Kantian ethics intuitive for you?

Dickson: I think the intuitiveness of Kantian ethics lies in its appeal to rationality. It has a natural design, whose necessity emerges as a consequence of social interaction.

Jacobsen: What title might capture a more accurate ethic in this broader framework than “Kantian”?

Dickson: Against forming a compound eponymous title, I would say, since Kant has already done the dirty work, let’s call it ultra-Kantian.

Jacobsen: If an “ultimate ethical framework must contain a solution to the question, what is the purpose of humanity?” what would be it?

Dickson: Developing this is clearly a difficult task, and so even a coherent summary is not available, but I can speak sparingly on certain features of such a system.

The ultimate ethical framework must be primarily descriptive, revealing things as they are, and then contain in itself parameters for deriving prescriptive rules. It must entail universal laws and universally acceptable principles, while containing conditions for non-compliance. It would point to an Ultimate Will, one which all must adhere to whether they realize it or not, and it is within this that the purpose of humanity is derived.

Jacobsen: Or if a better sub-ultimate ethic compared to those on offer, what would comprise an ethic in its contents and derivatives the answer to the question about the “purpose of humanity”? One sub-ultimate ethic still within the ultimate ethical framework.

Dickson: We must be able to discern the teleological properties of reality and then of humanity (both of which are practically inseparable), and note the ways in which we contribute to these. Also, a notable general feature of what I consider a practical ethical system is that it is designed for optimization and not discrimination. Taking these together, we can sense the ethical structure around breaking the Curse of Nonrecognition, with the prescriptions including gaining knowledge, enhancing one’s abilities, solving problems, being loyal only to truth, and recording one’s findings. Curiosity is the principal currency.

Jacobsen: How do you define “right”?

Dickson: Right is the adequate treatment of situations; that is, correct judgment. This is achieved by a successful resolution of conflicting selfish and selfless goals. In a sense, it is a perfect balance between proper treatment of oneself and others. The selfish goals include: maximizing health (against death), pleasure (against pain), and capacity (against incapacity). The selfless goals include: construction (against destruction), rational action (against irrational action), and lawful action (against lawless action).

Jacobsen: How do you define “wrong”?

Dickson: As above, wrong is a poor treatment of self or others, or an imbalance between selfish and selfless goals.

I have only began to develop this theory, but it looks promising.

Jacobsen: How do you define “consciousness”?

Dickson: The fundamental principle of coexistence is interaction. Things that interact with each other in some way more than they interact with others in the same way form objects of some type. An object that interacts with some things by processing them, that is, changing their form without itself being changed on the whole, is intelligent. An object that interacts with its interaction of other objects is aware. This is a type-two intelligence, while that lacking awareness is a type-one intelligence. Consciousness is high awareness; awareness not just of the physical but of the mental; of identity and self, and of a ‘theory of
others’; sustaining and remembering a history of this awareness over time.

This is only half the story. There is nothing about purely physical interaction necessitating that it corresponds to some mental phenomena. That is, if the physical processes are thought to occur first, they cannot in themselves manufacture mental processes, which do not already exist. That would be magical, and it would be difficult to point out when it happens. Rather, the mental possibilities already exist in a mental world and accompany physical processes according to how they function. I think of brains as ‘loopholes’ in reality; portals through which the very source of reality generation takes a peek into its own universe.

**Jacobsen: How do you define “truth”?**

**Dickson:** In a ‘placement theory of truth’, where facts are like blocks that can be arranged in a ‘narrative’, we can think of truth as a fact being in the right place at the right time. These are atomic facts which are in themselves always true at the level of consideration. Untruth are false arrangements of such facts.

In a ‘perspective theory of truth’, the truth is like the sizeless central point of a sphere, and facts are radial lines pointing outwards, and statements are the inwardly directed interpretation of facts. Untrue statements are constructed such that they miss the center by any margin of falsehood.

In all, truth is the accurate alignment of facts.

**Jacobsen: What is Homo epistemicus?**

**Dickson:** Homo epistemicus is the knowledge man; Man stripped of the shackles of ignorance and irrationality. It lives to know and loves to know, and would not be were it not to be that its being is of and for knowledge. Its existence would be a torturous one had it not, in worthy measure, been endowed with the capacity to attain and retain this knowledge. Homo epistemicus tends towards Unity.

**Jacobsen: What comprises human nature so as to encapsulate the idea of “humaness”?**

**Dickson:** Human nature is a product of common condition, and humanness is an acceptance or a perpetuation of features and consequences of human nature. These conditions are:

– Biological: We are not just trapped in a body, but defined by it. Our senses, and chiefly the sense of touch, mediate so many human necessities. From concrete feelings, we derive feelings in the abstract, and from the awareness of our mortality and of pain, we develop a sense of danger and evil. From physical contact, we acquire a sense of force, of power, and of control.

– Social: These are the constrained opportunities that arise from interactions with each other under the circumstances of our terrestrial environment. It is through this that we gain, share, and preserve knowledge of our common experiences, such as our suffering, our sense of hope, and so on, which are translated into language, preserved as cultures, and passed down as traditions. We, thus, embody a nature far more sophisticated than that which is afforded by our immediate experience.

**Appendix 1: Footnotes**


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.*
Conversation with Lisa Vincent on Background, Genius, Theories of Intelligence, Psychometrics, and Worldview-Encompassing Philosophical System: Member, Glia Society (1)

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Abstract

Lisa Vincent is a Member of the Glia Society. She discusses: growing up; a sense of the family legacy; the family background; the experience with peers and schoolmates; some professional certifications, qualifications, and trainings; the purpose of intelligence tests; high intelligence; the extreme reactions to and treatment of geniuses; the greatest geniuses in history; a genius from a profoundly intelligent person; profound intelligence necessary for genius; some work experiences and jobs; particular job path; important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses; the God concept or gods idea; science; the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations); the range of the scores; ethical philosophy; social philosophy; economic philosophy; political philosophy; worldview-encompassing philosophical system; meaning in life; comprises intelligence; and the mainstream and fringe theories of human intelligence.

Keywords: g, genius, IQ, Lisa Vincent, philosophy, psychometrics, theories of intelligence, United States.

Conversation with Lisa Vincent on Background, Genius, Theories of Intelligence, Psychometrics, and Worldview-Encompassing Philosophical System: Member, Glia Society (1)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: When you were growing up, what were some of the prominent family stories being told over time?

Lisa Vincent[1],[2]*: My parents both loved telling stories about their families and childhoods. My mother (Winona) was one of seven children, two boys and five girls. Her mother (Bridget) had emigrated from Ireland as a teenage with her older sister, Nora. They had left their parents and siblings behind to start their life in the US and my mother clearly had great respect for that. She also enjoyed telling stories of her own childhood which was profoundly different than mine. She had an outhouse and had to bathe in a portable tub with boiled water. She was hit with a switch when she misbehaved and had to participate in preparing home-grown chickens for dinner. She also spoke a lot about sibling rivalries and some school-yard difficulties that she had encountered. As for my father, he spoke of his service in the Navy during the Korean War era. Mostly he shared his love of all things relating to nature and the outdoors, as well as his love of carpentry and construction.

Jacobsen: Have these stories helped provide a sense of an extended self or a sense of the family legacy?

Vincent: Certainly my Irish heritage informs my understanding of who I am and where I came from. I feel very fortunate to have known both of my parents and the love that they each had for me. Their shared stories and my memories of them serve to keep me grounded and connected to what sometimes seems like a very disconnected meaningless world. I didn’t just appear out of nowhere!
Jacobsen: What was the family background, e.g., geography, culture, language, and religion or lack thereof?

Vincent: I grew up and have lived for all of my adult life in the state of Connecticut in the United States. For the most part, I was raised as an Irish Catholic. However, my father and his family could be more accurately described as WASP. I enjoyed attending church with my father at his Protestant church, which I found to be more comfortable. The music and hymns were also better in my childhood opinion. We were a family of average means prior to my parent’s divorce, and of limited means thereafter. Both of my parents worked full time, my mother in a factory and my father as a carpenter. That meant I spent a lot of time on my own, known at the time as being a latch key kid. We spent extensive time with aunts, uncles and cousins, but we really did not venture outside of Connecticut at all, so I was quite sheltered overall.

Jacobsen: How was the experience with peers and schoolmates as a child and an adolescent?

Vincent: Well, in my early childhood everything was good. I attended preschool and through the second grade at a very small elementary school and I loved every minute of it. I had friends, I enjoyed learning, and I thought school was fun. I also had friends to my home and was invited to the homes of others. From third grade on things deteriorated quickly. I did get through school, graduating high school at age 17. But I hated most of the children and they hated me. We had nothing in common and no real friendships to speak of. I was mocked and teased for all kinds of reasons, and I had no understanding of why that was or what I had done to deserve it. It was a very difficult time for me. The worst of it was during the middle school years, when I began to skip school to avoid the other children. By high school, I had a couple of friends to socialize with and a group of teens who knew me and did not torture me. But it was never pleasant.

Jacobsen: What have been some professional certifications, qualifications, and trainings, earned by you?

Vincent: So I avoided school for a long time after high school. I did get an associate’s degree in human services a few years later. I worked as a certified nurses’ aide for a long time. I spent many years working with people with intellectual disabilities and mental illness and got some certifications related to administering medications and managing problem behaviour. I attended many conferences relating to intellectual disabilities. Then, I began to work with people with acquired (traumatic) brain injury. I became certified as an Independent Life Skills Trainer, assisting people with brain injuries to regain their independence and learn how to navigate with their disability. I still do some work with brain injury to this day, but it is no longer my primary job. For many years, I viewed my primary job as being a parent to my children. I loved being their mother and still love that. During that time, I ran a home daycare and got licensed to do that. Later, I became licensed as a therapeutic foster parent in Connecticut and provided foster care to a few children, but one child in particular whom I later adopted. That is where life got very interesting. While raising my adopted child and being a foster parent, I came to understand that children in our world face big problems. Foster care and adoption may be a good thing to do, but children suffer when they are in that situation and they do not get the type of help they need. It is a big problem. So that led me to decide to go to law school, to try to help other children. I couldn’t go to law school without a bachelor’s degree, so I went back to school, got my BA in July 2008 and started law school in August 2008. I graduated from law school in 2011 and got my law license in November of that year. In December I opened my law practice, focusing almost entirely on child protection and disability-related matters.

Jacobsen: What is the purpose of intelligence tests to you?

Vincent: Well, when I start to feel like I am crazy because the way I view the world does not align with most, I start to think that I am weird. And I start to wonder if really, I am just a fool. So I take a test and remind myself that really, I am a very bright person and I am just suffering with the natural consequences that go with that. Frankly, I view intelligence mostly as a curse, but taking a test on occasion does validate my feelings of “weirdness” and help me stay mentally sane. Associating with others like me, even from a distance, is very comforting.

Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?

Vincent: That is a mixed answer. I did not fully understand the intelligence factor until I was about 30. It was at that time that I joined MENSA in the US. In school, I had a very clear sense that I was able to take tests well and very fast. I knew that was different. I knew that I was in the “smart” group at school. I knew that I was in “advanced” classes. But I had no idea of just how much of a problem I had on my hands. I honestly thought I was stupid, certainly weird, and definitely not liked. I also thought school was stupid. But I did not fully understand that I was smart to any unusual degree. I was in my twenties.
when I started to put it together, mostly by doing research on my own social and emotional problems and recognizing that many of my unique attributes and sensitivities are connected to intelligence. It all came together for me around that time, and when I decided to join MENSA I already knew I would qualify. I did. I have been interested in extremes of intelligence ever since, fooling around with some tests online, but not actually taking any formal test until I found Paul Cooijmans webpage. I appreciate the research he is doing.

Jacobsen: When you think of the ways in which the geniuses of the past have either been mocked, vilified, and condemned if not killed, or praised, flattered, platformed, and revered, what seems like the reason for the extreme reactions to and treatment of geniuses? Many alive today seem camera shy – many, not all.

Vincent: Well, I am weird. Socially inept, not always very nice, and often, misunderstood. This is the reality of my life. I have gotten better at navigating it over time. But I still understand that most people either do not know me or do not like me. There are only a limited number of people who actually appreciate me for who I am. I do not think like most other people, and I often fail to recognize that in time to salvage the situation. In my day to day life, I am quiet in my own way. I live a humble, private life. Intelligence is not valued. Camera shy is an understatement. I think that most geniuses are like that – living in your midst, unbeknown to you. Only those who achieve great things are recognized, and many who achieve great things are not actually geniuses. It is dangerous on some level to claim intelligence, unless you are in a group where that is valued. So it is hidden, at least in my world. Our society does not value intelligence, or at least that is my experience of it. I could speak out on many things, or put myself into the public sphere for some purpose, but it would be done at a high cost to myself. So for the most part, I refrain. I think it is this way for many people with high IQ. But I am not certain. That is why I think research and discussion are helpful. I do suspect that this might be different for others who work in different fields or who come from different backgrounds or live in different places. I will say this – when I am in the company of another high IQ person, I recognize it and value it and appreciate it. There is a comfort level there, of being part of a group.

Jacobsen: Who seem like the greatest geniuses in history to you?

Vincent: Donald Trump! There is no doubt that Donald Trump is a genius. Historically, Albert Einstein. Isaac Newton. Johann Sebastian Bach, Edgar Allen Poe, Ted Kaczynski (the Unabomber), Mother Theresa, maybe Princess Diana. There are many.

Jacobsen: What differentiates a genius from a profoundly intelligent person?

Vincent: I believe it is an achievement. Most profoundly intelligent people never reach a level of achievement that would earn the title of genius. I do think there are many unknown geniuses – people who have achieved really great and important things but within fields or communities where the greatness is not recognized by the broader masses. But I don’t think a person can be properly classified as a genius based merely on a number that they manage to score on a standardized test. To achieve genius, a person needs to have the time and sufficient resources to take on a certain level of single-mindedness.

Jacobsen: Is profound intelligence necessary for genius?

Vincent: I believe it is. But it is not necessary to be a genius in order to achieve greatness or great things.

Jacobsen: What have been some work experiences and jobs held by you?


Jacobsen: Why pursue this particular job path?

Vincent: I follow my passion. I love people. I want to serve the world while I am here by contributing to the welfare of people. I have tried to do that.

Jacobsen: What are some of the more important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses? Those myths that pervade the cultures of the world. What are those myths? What truths dispel them?

Vincent: People think that geniuses or gifted people are freaks of nature. They are not. They are actually a very normal and expected percentage of the population, much as it is normal for a certain percentage of people to fall at the opposite end of the spectrum. People associate high intelligence with mental illness, with social awkwardness, and with introversion. I don’t know if those correlations are real. For me, they are true. I do not presume to know that others experience the same. I do think that all myths are grounded in some historical truth. The whole experience is personal to me so I am not the best person to ask.
Jacobsen: Any thoughts on the God concept or gods idea and philosophy, theology, and religion?

Vincent: I have some strongly held spiritual beliefs but I am not a believer in religious dogma. I think it is human nature to contemplate the meaning of life and the afterlife and to seek meaning from our existence on this planet. Religion serves this purpose for many people in the world. Many people who study theology or religion are able to deliver peace and comfort to many people in need of that and it has tremendous value. Unfortunately, some religions only have room for those people who are willing to subscribe to their version of “the God concept.” This leads to war and controversy in the name of religion, which has done great harm to people over time. I have respect for all people of all faiths and see no need to decide that the beliefs of one group are superior to those of another. I do consider myself to be a Christian, with a belief in God and in the spiritual afterlife, but those spiritual beliefs are intricately connected with and subservient to my philosophical beliefs.

Jacobsen: How much does science play into the worldview for you?

Vincent: Science is truth at its core. I believe in science and in the scientific process. That said, science can be applied for good or for ill. I do not believe that scientists should be elevated in position over others, and I do not believe in blindly following science. Decisions relating to the scientific manipulation of nature should be subjected to ethical analysis by people who are disinterested in the underlying science, in my opinion. Just because something is scientifically possible to do does not mean that it should be done.

Jacobsen: What have been some of the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations) for you?

Vincent: I have not taken many scored IQ tests. I had a test at some point during my schooling and understood for a long time that I had an IQ score of around 132, which I assume was based on the WISC but not with certainty. I don’t really remember where I heard that number but I was quite young. During my early adulthood, I played around with several tests, including Raven’s Progressive Matrices and a bunch of different online tests. Somewhere along the way, I came to believe that my IQ was around 146. I don’t really remember where that number came from. More recently, I discovered Paul Cooijmans and became very interested in the tests he was offering and the work he was doing. So far, I have only taken one of his tests – the Sargasso Test. On that test, I scored an IQ of 150. I ordered another of his tests, but I have honestly not even begun to complete it. It sits waiting for the day I have time to work with it. I have also studied Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences and spent substantial time studying personality and the heightened sensitivities often associated with higher intellectual capacity.

Jacobsen: What is the range of the scores for you?
The scores earned on alternative intelligence tests tend to produce a wide smattering of data points rather than clusters, typically.

Vincent: Range 130-150 in scores I would say. I look forward to taking more tests now that I understand the research value in doing that.

Jacobsen: What ethical philosophy makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?

Vincent: I am an individualist to the core and respect the rights of all other people to live by their internal compass. It is essentially a duty-based philosophy. I personally feel a duty to the greater good and thereby make decisions in the manner that I perceive or believe will either cause the greatest good or impose the least harm to others. I also respect that others have different values and capacities. I believe that all people have a duty to act with good intent, but recognize that not all actions are done with good intent lead to an ultimate good. Thus, it is necessary to accept that not all ethical acts are good, and that not all ethical people have the actual ability to do good. Such is human nature.

Jacobsen: What social philosophy makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?

Vincent: I consider myself to be a humanist. The emphasis on nature and science, individualism, duty to the greater good, and an emphasis on living the life we are given to live on this planet makes sense to me.

Jacobsen: What economic philosophy makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?

Vincent: Free market. laissez-faire capitalism makes the most sense to me.

Jacobsen: What political philosophy makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?

Vincent: Again, I am an individualist to the core. I believe in both individual freedom and individual responsibility, which I believe makes me a liberalist. Within my liberalistic views, I consider myself to be on the conservative side of things, believing in a very limited government.
Jacobsen: What worldview-encompassing philosophical system makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?

Vincent: I believe in both the natural and the spiritual world and understand that all people function based on their own beliefs and experiences. There is no purpose or benefit to disrespecting the worldview of others. Thus, we are all just individuals doing our best to get by in the times and circumstances in which we are living and that is as it should be.

Jacobsen: What provides meaning in life for you?

Vincent: I get the most meaning in life from the experiences that I have day to day and from the people who share those experiences with me. I love all of nature and all of human life. I value serving others and contributing to my society in a meaningful way. I value beauty and art and music and the glory of nature in all its forms. I value learning and all new experiences. I truly do love my life and value every moment of it.

Jacobsen: To set the stage for the further conversation, what comprises intelligence in the abstract?

Vincent: Beauty is intelligence in the abstract. Art, language, music, every architectural and engineering marvel, medicine. Wherever there is manmade beauty, intelligence is behind it. Not sure if that is what you meant, but that is how I interpreted your question.

Jacobsen: What are the mainstream and fringe theories of human intelligence on offer over time?

Vincent: The G theory of general intelligence rings truest to me. I don’t disagree that there are different “primary mental abilities” and that each person may have strengths or weaknesses in these various mental tasks. I think Gardner’s theory, while more inclusive, does not adequately acknowledge the substantive reality of the G factor in certain individuals. Beyond this, I have not dedicated much time to learning about the different theories of intelligence.

Appendix I: Footnotes


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Conversation with Bob Williams on Public and Professional Definitions of Intelligence, General Intelligence, National Intelligence, Age 16, and Validity and Reliability of Alternative Tests: Retired Nuclear Physicist (2)

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Abstract

Bob Williams is a Member of the Triple Nine Society, Mensa International, and the International Society for Philosophical Enquiry. He discusses: intelligence in the public consciousness; consciousness within those who spend more time thinking about it, in professional circles; the scientific constructs; the majority opinion definition of general intelligence; other peripheral, though respected, definitions of general intelligence; most noteworthy and prominent names in psychometrics history; arguments for national intelligences; the form of data gathering on the national intelligences; age 16 as a capstone; tests measure g; scores extrapolated beyond their highest range; and the range of validity and reliability of these alternative tests.

Keywords: Bob Williams, chronometrics, g, general intelligence, intelligence, IQ, psychometrics.

Conversation with Bob Williams on Public and Professional Definitions of Intelligence, General Intelligence, National Intelligence, Age 16, and Validity and Reliability of Alternative Tests: Retired Nuclear Physicist (2)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Let’s talk about the abstraction of concept “Intelligence” first, what, fundamentally, is meant by intelligence in the public consciousness?

Bob Williams[1],[2]*: People inherently understand that some people who are able to do complicated tasks that are beyond the abilities of average people and they are certainly aware of dullness. While the benefits of intelligence are strong as it increases, the consequences of low intelligence are much more serious. Most states have legal definitions of the threshold of retardation—usually IQ 70. Each 5 points or so in the down direction adds limitations to learning ability, learning speed, and the ability to manage personal affairs. One of the most convincing sources of information about what can and cannot be done by the population as a whole, is the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS). The test is done for the federal government by Educational Testing Service. About 92 million adults (out of 191 million) were functioning in levels 1 or 2, meaning that they could perform only basic and elementary tasks. Most of this reflects low intellectual ability or age related decline.

I think the public understands that bright people do better in school and that they are needed in cognitively demanding careers. The thing they don’t seem to get is that intelligence is not evenly distributed between groups nor within groups. They also grossly overestimate the role of the environment in determining intelligence.

Jacobsen: What is meant by consciousness within those who spend more time thinking about it, in professional circles?
Williams: Intelligence researchers do not study consciousness. I have not encountered any casual discussions of it. Scientists (including social sciences) like to measure things, analyze measurements, and construct models that are able to predict other things. Consciousness doesn’t ‘lend itself to such treatment, so it falls into the abstract world of philosophy. Most people seem to regard consciousness as sentence or as self-awareness. A few animal studies have reported various experiments that may test some aspects of self-awareness, such as the mirror test. So far, such tests are yes/no outcomes with little that can be modeled or analyzed.

Jacobsen: Now, to the scientific constructs, e.g., general intelligence, what is meant by general intelligence?

Williams: General intelligence, g, is the common resource that is involved in all cognitive tasks. Jensen described g as a distillate, in the sense that it is the thing that remains when the less essential factors are eliminated. At the psychometric level, g is unitary; at the neurological level, it is not. Charles Spearman found that when he tested people on unrelated tasks, the people who did well on one task were likely to do well on all tasks and vice versa. He called this finding the positive manifold. In the process of devising ways to analyze data, he invented factor analysis and from that, he was able to discover g in 1904.

The public is generally unaware of g and its central importance to the understanding of intelligence. Unfortunately, g is not the kind of thing that people study. It, as with everything we know about intelligence, is a statistical parameter and is a latent trait. We can determine g for a group of people by using a hierarchical factor analysis or other methods (bifactor analysis or principal components analysis). Each method has its advantages in certain applications, but the differences in results are insignificant.

Jacobsen: What is the majority opinion definition of general intelligence?

Williams: Within cognitive science, I think virtually everyone has accepted that intelligence is well represented by g. Today essentially all intelligence research is related to g. The easy way out of definitions is to skip “intelligence” entirely and simply discuss g. If we get into the definition of intelligence, we have many definitions from psychologists over the past century. I will give you two of them. My favorite is from Carl Bereiter: “Intelligence is what you use when you don’t know what to do.” This is a surprisingly accurate, concise, and elegant definition. The second definition is the one used by Linda Gottfredson: “Intelligence is a very general mental capability that, among other things, involves the ability to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend complex ideas, learn quickly and learn from experience. It is not merely book learning, a narrow academic skill, or test-taking smarts. Rather, it reflects a broader and deeper capability for comprehending our surroundings—‘catching on,’ ‘making sense’ of things, or ‘figuring out’ what to do.” [Linda Gottfredson – Mainstream Science on Intelligence; The Wall Street Journal; December 13, 1994] This definition is the one most often cited since 1994.

{My answer (above) is based on what I think you were asking. It turns out that “general intelligence” is commonly used in reference to g, which we have discussed in various ways.}

Jacobsen: What are some other peripheral, though respected, definitions of general intelligence?

Williams: Most of the definitions that are credible are similar, as one would expect. If they are respected by cognitive scientists, they must address the things we all see and understand in connection with the word. Here are a few, that are worthwhile:

“Individuals differ from one another in their ability to understand complex ideas, to adapt effectively to the environment, to learn from experience, to engage in various forms of reasoning, to overcome obstacles by taking thought,” American Psychological Association

“... that facet of mind underlying our capacity to think, to solve novel problems, to reason and to have knowledge of the world.” M. Anderson

“... the resultant of the process of acquiring, storing in memory, retrieving, combining, comparing, and using in new contexts information and conceptual skills.” Humphreys

“The ability to carry on abstract thinking.” L. M. Terman

Jacobsen: Who are the most noteworthy and prominent names in psychometrics history who studied general intelligence as a career?

Williams: Given the long history of the study of intelligence, we could name many people who have contributed to our present day understanding. Progress and activity level in cognitive science has followed a curve that increased slowly at first, then turned upward as rapid advances came from brain imaging and genetics (all made possible by advanced computer technology). I will list a few of the early
names, then those whom I know personally who have made major contributions.

The first person who studied intelligence, made measurements, and wrote about his findings was Sir Francis Galton. He is clearly the father of cognitive science. People naturally think of Alfred Binet and Lewis Terman as important figures because of their contributions to the development of testing. Terman also famously conducted a longitudinal study of high IQ cohorts (called Termites).

Charles Spearman was one of the most important and possibly THE most important of all intelligence researchers. He invented statistical methods that were needed to study intelligence (now used widely in other fields), discovered g, invented the first matrix test (developed and carried to the market by his student John C. Raven), and produced a range of insightful observations which remain accurate today.

William Stern deserves mention because he was the originator of the ratio method of determining IQ. The method left us with a test name (IQ) and showed that intelligence could be graded as a function of age and performance.

David Wechsler rescued us from the limited usefulness of the ratio method by introducing the deviation quotient that is now the standard for IQ measurement. He is also known for the Wechsler set of IQ tests, which remain as the most important of all cognitive tests.

Arthur Jensen was clearly the most important researcher in the second half of the 20th century. He convinced his peers that g theory was the only correct basis for understanding intelligence; today that reality permeates intelligence research. Jensen was centrally involved in the study of chronometrics for measuring and studying intelligence. He was a prolific writer of books and papers (totaling approximately 400), many of them remaining as the standards of understanding specific topics today. Two were of particular importance: *Bias in mental testing* (1980) and *The g Factor* (1998). I am grateful that I had the opportunity to meet him and have numerous conversations with him at ISIR conferences. The first time I met him was in 2004. He asked me about my interests and I told him that I was particularly interested in the biological foundations of intelligence. He said he had some papers that would interest me and asked that I write my address. Within a week, I received a large envelope stuffed with these papers.

Thomas Bouchard was the founder of the Minnesota Twins Study, which was a huge breakthrough in the understanding of the high heritability of intelligence. He was particularly patient with me when I asked endless questions at the conferences. His graduate students are central figures in cognitive science today.

Richard Lynn led the way in understanding the evolution of intelligence and (later) its slow decline. He displayed the strength of Jensen and a handful of others who dared to study race differences and sex differences. He was the first to study national level intelligence and demonstrated that it was responsible for the wealth of nations (except where there is natural resource wealth, such as oil). This work led to many researchers vastly expanding the amount of national level data collected and who showed the extensive number of parameters that are influenced by it.

Brain imaging was started by Richard Haier, when he first applied positron emission tomography to study glucose uptake rates as a function of intelligence. This led to the brain efficiency hypothesis which has been repeatedly confirmed by various other forms of measurement. Haier and Rex Jung simultaneously discovered the intelligence centers of the brain, then joined forces to produce the P-FIT model that is the standard (so far) neurological model. Jung also investigated creativity with brain imaging and revealed important brain characteristics that relate to it.

**Jacobsen: How does this construct g, more precisely, map onto arguments for national intelligences?**

**Williams:** As mentioned above, Richard Lynn opened the door to national intelligence studies. His book IQ and the Wealth of Nations showed a strong correlation between mean national IQ and national wealth and productivity. In this case, the difference between IQ and g doesn’t really matter because only the most powerful predictor (g) is active, even when the discussions use IQ, because the non-g factors are lost via cancellation when very large populations are studied. Now that we have national and regional level data pouring in from all over the world, we can see that the geographic effects exist within nations. McDaniel an others have shown that US states show the same relationships between IQ and wealth as do nations. Today we have detailed IQ data on a regional basis for many nations, including the US, China, Japan, Italy, India, Vietnam, etc. With the exception of India, IQ generally increases from south to north within nations in the northern hemisphere. These nations also show the regional relation to IQ and per capita income.
The g construct is usually thought of as the three stratum model with g at stratum III, broad abilities at stratum II, and narrow abilities at stratum I. If you look at stratum II, you can divide the broad abilities into g and non-g parts. The g parts define stratum I and the non-g parts are residuals that have little predictive validity (except possibly in the right tail). In national level studies the residuals are lost or minimized due to their randomness. We can, however, see high spatial abilities in East Asians, accompanied by low verbal abilities. These differences are large enough to have consequences.

**Jacobsen:** What is the form of data gathering on the national intelligences to make them more legitimate or less legitimate depending on the form of interpretation of the analysis?

**Williams:** It is important to convert all test data to a single standard before attempting to compare them. Richard Lynn developed the means to do this with the Greenwich IQ Standard. It basically uses white British as the standard, so all tests scores are compared as if they were normed against the same group.

One of the early criticisms of Lynn’s work was that (at that time) there were relatively few studies and many of them were convenience studies that were random and were reported by many researchers. The criticisms may have seemed sound to those making them, but now that we have a large amount of data, the results have not changed much, other than to show strong consistency. Another criticism was that Lynn estimated the IQs of some nations by using measured IQs of neighboring nations. Some critics were very critical of this estimation. After data was collected, the estimates turned out to be surprisingly accurate.

**Jacobsen:** With age 16 as a capstone, what is the degree of difference in the variability between males and females at that age? Is this played out differentially in terms of self-identification in sociocultural constructs of the self seen in gender, often confused with biological and genetic sex differentiation?

**Williams:** I haven’t seen data showing differences in variability as a function of age, but with respect to intelligence, males appear to reach their advantage at the mean (4-6 points) around age 16. The difference in standard deviation between the sexes is 5 to 15% (males higher). In real world outcomes (the things we use as measures of external validity) males dominate a grossly disproportionate number of cognitive arenas. In Charles Murray’s book *Human Accomplishment: The Pursuit of Excellence in the Arts and Sciences 800 B.C. to 1950,* he was largely measuring eminence. Of the 4,002 people he reported over that time frame, only 2% were women. Of course, much of that can be attributed to limited opportunity for women, so resolution of the cause is difficult. Side story… At the ISIR conference in 2006, we discussed sex differences in intelligence in an open session. Jensen believed that there was no difference, but his friend Helmuth Nyborg had been trying to show him the reality of it for some time. Anyway, Jensen made the observation that on any credible list of the top 100 composers, there would not be a single woman listed. He often commented on music in relation to various topics, as he considered becoming a professional musician (clarinet).

Unfortunately, I cannot comment on self-identification, as it is something that is studied and debated in different circles. There has, however, been excellent work on outlooks and preferences as a function of sex. The best of this is from the Longitudinal Study of Mathematically Precocious Youth. The limitation of this study is that it applies to very bright cohorts in the 99th percentile, although some of the findings have been reported for less restricted range data sets. Among the things they found were that women showed a marked preference for jobs involving fewer hours of work per week; and they placed a significantly higher value on family, social involvement, community service, friendships, and giving back to the community.

Besides life preferences, there are differences in brain structures, brain activity, and connectivity that differ by sex to such an extent that when correlations are computed for activity involving specific volumes of the brain, the correlation coefficients sometimes have opposite signs for male and female. One interesting comparison that was made involved male and female subjects solving the same math problem. The male and female participants were matched for IQ. Males used the frontal and parietal lobes for solving the problem and females used only the frontal lobe.

These are just examples of the rather large number of sex differences that brain imaging has shown.

**Jacobsen:** What tests measure g the best? What are the ranges of those tests with standard deviations?

**Williams:** The most heavily g loaded tests are clearly the best, since the whole reason we can use IQ tests is that they are sufficiently g saturated that they can be used as proxies for g. In recent years, researchers have been urging the use of comprehensive tests, such as the WAIS or Woodcock-Johnson, because
they do a better job. It also happens that these two tests can report $g$ at the individual level.

Gilles Gignac and Timothy Bates did a study on the correlation between brain volume and test quality. They showed that the correlation increases as test quality increases. [see Intelligence 64 (2017) 18–29] This is expected because $g$ reflects the biology (structure and global properties) of the brain. From their paper, here are the things they identified as determining test quality (examples of “excellent” given on the right):

- number of subtests 9+
- dimensions 3+ (e.g., fluid intelligence, crystallised intelligence, processing speed)
- testing time 40+ minutes
- correlation with $g$ $0.95$

In the past, researchers were often inclined to accept Spearman’s indifference of the indicator in situations that would draw criticism today. Spearman was (as usual) right, but only in a general sense. It is certainly true that a single dimension test, such as the Raven’s Progressive Matrices can give a good measure of intelligence, but even that popular test has received some criticism for having a lower $g$ loading than the comprehensive tests (and lower than some prior claims) and for the presence of factors (as can be found in a factor analysis) that are not reported. At one time, researchers sometimes took the RPM score as a $g$ score.

[The indifference of the indicator] is based on the fact that every correlation with $g$ is with the same $g$. So a vocabulary test can be used to estimate (quite well) $g$ as can a test of analogies. Both of these give us a good estimate of the same $g$. There is, however, a greater fidelity when multiple measures are used, particularly in an omnibus test.

The reason for emphasis on comprehensive tests is that they examine more of the relatively few stratum II factors. Examining more broad abilities gives a more complete picture. You can imagine trying to make out the image in a puzzle; it is better defined when more pieces are in place than with fewer.

**Jacobsen: How are these scores extrapolated beyond their highest range for some individuals who claim more than 4-sigma scores on these mainstream intelligence tests?**

**Williams:** Of professional IQ tests, I don’t know the procedures used, but I can tell you the claimed ceilings of a few. The WISC-V added extended range in 2019 and claims a ceiling of 210. The DAS claims 175. I assume that the extrapolations are simply extensions of the norming data above the range where there are no data points. Naturally, this means an increased measurement error and requires an assumption that the distribution remains Gaussian in that range (I think that an argument can be made that this is has not been demonstrated).

Hobby tests have claimed very high ceilings, but they have not established a valid support for the claimed ranges. I have read a few of the arguments used to explain their norming and have not seen anything I believe would withstand close scrutiny. There are so many deficiencies associated with hobby test designs, in addition to norming, that I think they should be considered as for entertainment only. I know there are some people who will disagree, but they have not come forth with sound support for the tests. If the tests are not used by clinical psychologists or intelligence researchers (as shown by their use in scholarly journal papers) I fail to see how they can be considered as meaningful measurement instruments.

**Jacobsen: What is the range of validity and reliability of these alternative tests compared to the aforementioned mainstream intelligence tests?**

**Williams:** For alternate tests, the disclosures vary from no mention to numbers that reflect an attempt to make some measurements, but which do not result in a full presentation of the things a real test must demonstrate: a high reliability coefficient; norming data (including group size and selection criteria) and method that is appropriate to the claimed ceiling; a predictive validity that is supported by meaningful external measurements; a demonstration of construct validity; a clear standard deviation of 15, or a proper conversion to 15 in the reporting of the score; measurement of at least three broad abilities; identification of a properly determined $g$ loading for the test, where that loading is near or above 0.80; demonstrated invariance by population group, age, and sex (or exclusion of groups where invariance has not been shown); age corrected scoring; citations in the peer reviewed scholarly literature; and demonstrated use by professionals.

Of these, the demonstration of external (predictive) validity is the most important. If the scores do not predict differences in real life outcomes, they are meaningless. Take a hypothetical score of 160 and one of 190 by the same test. This huge, 2 standard deviation difference should produce large differences in external measures, such as the probability of earning a PhD, income, wealth, number of scholarly papers published, number of books published, probabilities of receiving world class honors (for example, those received by Richard Feynman: Putnam Fellow · Nobel Prize in a science · Albert
Einstein Award · Oersted Medal · National Medal of Science for Physical Science · Foreign Member of the Royal Society), patents awarded, corporations founded, major accomplishments (think of Musk, Gates, and Zuckerberg), etc. If there is not a difference in such external measures, there is no reason to believe that the test scores have meaning.

Appendix 1: Footnotes


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*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Conversation with Richard May ("May-Tzu"/
"MayTzu"/

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Abstract

Richard May ("May-Tzu"/
"MayTzu"/
"Mayzi") is a Member of the Mega Society based on a qualifying score on the Mega Test (before 1995) prior to the compromise of the Mega Test and Co-Editor of Noesis: The Journal of the Mega Society. In self-description, May states: “Not even forgotten in the cosmic microwave background (CMB), I’m an Amish yuppie, born near the rarified regions of Laputa, then and often, above suburban Boston. I’ve done occasional consulting and frequent Sisyphean shlepping, Kafka and Munch have been my therapists and allies. Occasionally I’ve strived to descend from the mists to attain the mythic orientation known as having one’s feet upon the Earth. An ailurophile and a cerebrotonic ectomorph, I write for beings which do not, and never will, exist — writings for no one. I’ve been awarded an M.A. degree,
mirabile dictu, in the humanities/philosophy, and U.S. patent for a board game of possible interest to extraterrestrials. I’m a member of the Mega Society, the Omega Society and formerly of Mensa. I’m the founder of the Exa Society, the transfinite Aleph-3 Society and of the renowned Laputans Manqué. I’m a biographer in Who’s Who in the Brane World. My interests include the realization of the idea of humans as incomplete beings with the capacity to complete their own evolution by effecting a change in their being and consciousness. In a moment of presence to myself in inner silence, when I see Richard May’s non-being, ‘I’ am. You can meet me if you go to an empty room.” Some other resources include Stains Upon the Silence: something for no one, McGinnis Genealogy of Crown Point, New York: Hiram Porter McGinnis, Swines List, Solipsist Soliloquies, Board Game, Lulu blog, Memoir of a Non-Irish Non-Jew, and May-Tzu’s posterous. He discusses: Physics as Erotica: Objective Lust”; “The Laputans”; the space program of the Laputans; a reasonable place for the Laputans to have gathered, after the exploratory missions, the “somewhere”; ‘What is satire? What is not?’; the Laputan Olympics; other oddities of Laputan memory; “Security Check”; ontological password; “The Colonies”; “Delay in publication of Journal of Uncompleted Projects”; OCPD; “May’s Paradox”; “May’s Wager”; and “The Silicon Scream.”

Keywords: digital computers, erotica, May’s Paradox, May’s Wager, OCPD, Physics, Richard May.


*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: “Physics as Erotica: Objective Lust,” one can find a number of great plays on terms with “Omni Amorist,” “Poly Amor,” “orthodox Bi Poly Amorists,” “Multi Omni,” “Bi Poly Amorists,” and, simply, “Poly.” It’s a delightful play on sexual orientation, sexuality, physics, and cosmology. It’s not merely a rhyming scheme, as in some formal poetry, or straightforward writing. It feels as if more developing a sensibility of conceptual rhythm to read it. Something like this. How do you take disparate ideas, including the sexual and physics, and unite them in a common weave, as in this piece?

Richard May[1],[2]*: This was inspired by a woman, or at least “she” seemed to identify as a woman, back in the ancient world, before the time when the only important thing is how a person identifies, who was an advocate of bipolyamory. But maybe ‘she’ was cat-fishing the cosmos. I thought that this was quite quaint, because she also claimed to be an Orthodox member of one of the world’s great religions. This is how bipolyamory came to my attention. I wanted to outdo her through satire.

As to how I take disparate ideas, including the sexual and physics, and unite them in a common weave, as in this piece, I suppose most of my pieces come from my subconsciousness, not thinking. — Gurdjieff said that “Subconsciousness is the real consciousness of man.” — Sexuality and physics are held to be in an analogical relationship.

I once read that William James wrote that the ability to see analogies is the surest indication of genius. I particularly liked this quote because I was the 2nd person to get a perfect score on the verbal half of the Mega Test, eons ago when there was no internet to allow cheating. But now the only relevant quote I can find by Googling is Emerson’s that science was ‘nothing but the finding of an analogy’.

Sexuality and physics can also be unified by May-Tzu’s Theory of Nothing (TON). Most Theories of Everything (TOEs) predict nothing and explain nothing. May-Tzu’s Theory of Nothing also predicts nothing and explains nothing, but does so with far more parsimony and hence is to be preferred by Ockham’s razor.

Jacobsen: We’re back to the Laputans, in “The Laputans.” I love this paragraph:

Among the Laputans it was not considered true that a house built of metaphors was not as strong as a house built of straw. It had been said since time immemorial that a house built of metaphors was stronger than a house built of bricks and mortar. It’s not known if they meant this metaphorically or literally.

It’s clever, witty, and entertaining. Also, why would the lack of the existence of the monuments of the Laputans speak to the enduring legacy of the Laputans?

May: The Laputans may represent the more practical side of my nature. — The Laputans have no legacy whatsoever, as they have no monuments.
I’m not even forgotten in the cosmic microwave background (CMB).

Jacobsen: What comprised the space program of the Laputans?

May: The Laputans are Luftmenschen or air people from German/Yiddish, so they don’t have quite as far to travel to find non-terrestrial space. The most practical and grounded Laputans would probably attempt to launch into interstellar space on a flight of ideas or abstract free associations.

Jacobsen: What might be a reasonable place for the Laputans to have gathered, after the exploratory missions, the “somewhere”?

May: Since the Laputan spacecraft were mutually incommunicado and did not agree prior to their dispersal to a specific meeting place, it is not inconceivable that they could encounter problems attempting to reunite. Perhaps they could attempt to land at a high-IQ society gathering, e.g., a ggg999 gathering *somewhere* in the cosmos.

Jacobsen: I like how you take the ordinary and make them seem like the exceptional in some of the writing. In fact, in some manner, you show the reverse is the case, as in the satire. It raises fresh questions, ‘What is satire? What is not?’

So, as a reader, you’re left with more question marks leaving than coming in – and more exclamation marks. Are you, more or less, playing around with ideas, putting them into text, and basing them off observations to both make satire and make a point, sometimes no point whatsoever?

May: On the Myers-Briggs Type Index I’m an INTP, described as an “architect of ideas.” So, yes, I’m more or less, playing around with ideas. As to what is satire and what is not, I’ve thought that maybe the laws of physics of our universe represent a mathematical satire at some higher level of dimensions/being/intelligence.

Jacobsen: “Among the Laputans endurance breathing was considered a lifetime sport and one that they were truly motivated to play, usually on highly competitive endurance breathing teams, but sometimes in solitude among the clouds. The games were, of course, televised 24 -7. But often the uninitiated had difficulty differentiating sportsmen from spectators,” as some version of you wrote. This seems a case in point of making the ordinary, breathing, extraordinary, something other. Any updates on the Laputan Olympics? Any other sports as part of the Laputan Olympics?

May: Yes, as you know the Laputans are quite libertarian, they oppose the use of force of any kind, and have for centuries attempted to repeal the laws of gravitation and of electromagnetism, seeking to replace them with a susurrations of tautologies. The Laputan Olympics have now instituted direct competitions between Olympic Doping Teams, rather than attempting to enforce the prohibition of certain performance enhancing drugs among the athletes.

Jacobsen: Any other oddities of Laputan memory needing mentioning here?

May: It is suspected by some that certain notable individuals in the higher-IQ community may be Laputans. Because even the most substantial Laputans are said to have no shadows, these individuals may only appear in public undetected at noon or on sunless days. But this has never been proven beyond the shadow of a doubt.

Jacobsen: As noted elsewhere, and as mentioned in “Security Check,” obviously, this is a satire on the ways in which modern technology requires a constant certification of a human operator rather than a computer. Are our thoughts our own in any manner, sensei?

May: Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote that we are asleep and sometimes we awaken just enough to realize that we are dreaming. Maybe “our” ‘thoughts’ are just echos of echos reverberating in the Buddhistic void, Shunyata. “We are the space between our thoughts,” — Jean Klein. But in the near future after brain implants, our brains and thoughts will be hackable.

Jacobsen: What’s your ontological password?

May: Oy vey! You expect me to know what I’m talking about? Me of all people?

Maybe my “ontological password” is actually my attention and the sensation/feeling of “I am.”

Jacobsen: “The Colonies” existing as a colony of moles of sorts. The recording of yourself spying on your self, a hall of mirrors. Did you manage to escape complete ontological detection?

May: I’m not a conscious unified being most of the time. So the question is who is spying on whom?

“The possibility of my existence is too private for me to share with myself

— May-Tzu”

Jacobsen: “Delay in publication of Journal of Uncompleted Projects,” sadly, doesn’t seem so much as satire as a reality of most projects for most people, incomplete or partially done, so not
done. Who were some of the hoped-for contributors to the journal?

May: This piece was inspired by certain prominent members of the higher-IQ community, who must, of course, remain nameless.

Jacobsen: What were some of the too-many-interests interests of those with OCPD?

May: The too-many-‘interests’ could be anything, not just objects of intellectual curiosity, but any object that attracts or distracts one’s attention, either internally or externally.

If a person has OCPD (obsessive-compulsive personality disorder) everything under the control of the person has to be absolutely ‘perfect’, e.g., if one is proofreading, the clerical minutia and visual-spatial formatting. Individuals with obsessive-compulsive personality disorder were highly sought after as employees at Zeno Publications.

Jacobsen: “May’s Paradox” asks, “Why, if a multitude of New Yorkers exist in Manhattan, evidence of New Yorkers, such as automobiles or subways, is not seen?” Why?

May: Obviously there is no evidence of New Yorkers existing, such as automobiles or subways, in New York City. That would be a Conspiracy Theory. May’s paradox should have been called the May paradox. The clear absence of evidence for the existence of New Yorkers makes May’s paradox analogous to the Fermi paradox.

In the SETI program we have searched for years for signals in the hydrogen frequency. As was pointed out in a YouTube video by Dr. Michio Kaku, there is no particular reason to assume that advance alien life would use the hydrogen frequency to send signals, even if one assumes that such beings would use radio signals at all. Dr. Kaku also points out that if the extraterrestrial communications used spread-spectrum signals, such as we humans use even now in our cellphone signals, then we would not even recognize the alien spread-spectrum signals as signals.

Given the exponential and unpredictable course of the growth of human technology, it seems entirely possible that a civilization even a few hundred years more advanced scientifically and technologically than our own might accomplish things that in ways that we could not understand at our present level of scientific-technological development.

Do you suppose we would comprehend the technology of a civilization a thousand or more years older than our own? “Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic” — Arthur C Clarke. So where are the smoke signals?

Just for fun let’s take the Roswell, New Mexico UFO crash myth. Of course, it’s just a Conspiracy Theory. The so-called Roswell incident been explained — at least twice. Last time it was sad to be a weather balloon. It might just as well have been a flock of geese or the planet Venus, I suppose.

But let’s be silly and play devil’s advocate. Suppose an unexplained extraterrestrial craft or vehicle had crashed there in 1947 after WWII. Presumably the U.S. military would have little or no interest in such an event. There would have been no suspicion that it might have been a Russian or German device after World War II. There would have been no military interest; There would have been no interest if not duty of the U.S. military to study and reverse engineer the advanced off-world technology for American national security. So a possible crash of some sort would not have been investigated.

But if what was discovered was thought to be an unexplained craft or an “off-world device,” as they are apparently called today, of some sort, then a high-ranking military officer or perhaps the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff or our President would certainly have gone on the radio and told the U.S. public. “Fellow Americans, an unknown craft appearing to be extraterrestrial in origin has crashed in Roswell, New Mexico. We do not know its origin or understand its method of propulsion. The technology is far superior to American technology or that of any other nation on Earth.

A few small gray(?) humanoid bodies have been retrieved from the crash site. They’re not thought to be Americans. We don’t know yet with certainty if these beings are Christian or Jewish. But we can be sure they are Baptists. At this point in time it is apparent that the U.S. military cannot control its own airspace. — But, hey, don’t worry about it! — America is number one, the greatest power! — Have a nice day.”

The Brookings Institution report on the possible consequences of advanced extraterrestrial contact that concluded that when a more primitive civilization encounters an advanced civilization, the more primitive civilization is damaged by the contact would certainly not be considered relevant by those in authority. The conclusion that religious fundamentalists would be highly unreceptive to contact with an advanced extraterrestrial civilization would also certainly be ignored as irrelevant.

Below are a few crackpot books of Conspiracy Theories, perhaps good for a few laughs:
The perceiving subject and the object perceived, ‘internally’ and ‘externally’, are usually separate in our ordinary, biologically useful state of ‘consciousness’. Duality, the subject-object dichotomy, can be abolished, as in cosmic consciousness or ‘objective consciousness’. We are the universe observing itself. But as skin-encapsulated egos, we live the delusion of ‘our’ separateness. There is only the One, the Cosmos, at various levels of scale ‘within’ and ‘without’. But there are an infinite number of points within the hologram, Indra’s net of gems, from which to see and be the totality, depending upon state and station, knowledge and being, “hal” and “makam.”

“The observer is the observed.” — J. Krishnamurti

May-Tzu

Jacobsen: “The Silicon Scream” seems to echo the infinite incompleteness of the digital computers’ minds. Are some of these May-sian paradoxes?

May: “The Silicon Scream

Behold —

Infinite recursive paradoxes

in a cognitive hall of mirrors.”

I imagine that a “silicon scream,” a scream coming from or experienced by the ‘mind’ of an advanced AI-unit would not refer to sensations or emotions as we feel them, not the despair, pain and love we wetware units know, but would be of a purely intellectual-cognitive sort; perhaps occasioned by encountering an infinite series of unresolvable logical paradoxes or by cognizing Gödel’s incompleteness theorems; The absolute terror of seeing an inherent limitation within a logical or a mathematical system.

Wikipedia: “Gödel’s incompleteness theorems are two theorems of mathematical logic that demonstrate the inherent limitations of every formal axiomatic system capable of modelling basic arithmetic. These results, published by Kurt Gödel in 1931, are important both in mathematical logic and in the philosophy of mathematics.”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G%C3%B6del%27s_incompleteness_theorems

Appendix 1: Footnotes


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Ask Two Geniuses with Dr. Christian Sorensen and Erik Haereid on Linguistic Breaks, Mind Maps, Truth, Irrational and Indeterminate, Conflicted and Contradictory Reality, Multinary Forms of Thinking, and “1+1=1”: Independent Philosopher & Metaphysician; Statistician & Actuarial Scientist (3)

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Abstract

Rick Rosner and I conduct a conversational series entitled Ask A Genius on a variety of subjects through In-Sight Publishing on the personal and professional website for Rick. This series with Erik and Christian build on this idea. Erik Haereid earned a score at 185, on the N-VRA80. He is an expert in Actuarial Sciences. Christian Sorensen earned a score at 185+, i.e., at least 186, on the WAIS-R. He is an expert in philosophy. Both scores on a standard deviation of 15. A sigma of ~5.67 for Erik – a general intelligence rarity of 1 in 136,975,305 – and a sigma of ~5.67+ for Christian – a general intelligence rarity of more than 1 in 136,975,305, at least 1 in 202,496,482. Neither splitting hairs nor a competition here; we agreed to a discussion, hopefully, for the edification of the audience here. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population. This amounts to a joint interview or conversation with Christian Sorensen, Erik Haereid, and myself. They discuss: the real world and language; “emotional divine experiences”; our “mind map” implying a ‘projection of sense experience categorized into patterns with reason for thought’; eternality of truth; the power of definition; dis-prove or dis-evidence the assumption; offshoring of previously conscious awareness requiring processing; intuitive grasp of reality; a trialectic and quadralectic, etc. form of thinking about reality; forms of reasoning; reality “intrinsically contradictory and conflicted”; modern rational tools; contact points about reality; thoughts maps grounded in experience; the relationship between the thoughts and experience; the real and unreal;
emotion and thinking as part of thought; the quality of the thoughts or the maps; the “irrational and indeterministic”; statistics; 1) our thoughts and mind structures and 2) the outputs in life and societal organization with new thoughts and new frameworks for individual and collective operation; a capital “T” Truth cannot be reached ever; ‘1 plus 1 sometimes equal 1 if one knows how to count to 3’; the arithmetic principles of annihilation and symmetry; pseudo-indeterminism; “the beginning”; 1 + 1 always equalling 2; comprehension of indeterminism and determinism; a greater understanding of the reality; principles would imply never – not simply “sometimes” – producing 2 with 1 + 1; and predictable and determinate.

Keywords: Christian Sorensen, conflicted, contradictory, Erik Haereid, indeterminate, irrational, linguistic breaks, mind maps, multinary, reality, truth.

Ask Two Geniuses with Dr. Christian Sorensen and Erik Haereid on Linguistic Breaks, Mind Maps, Truth, Irrational and Indeterminate, Conflicted and Contradictory Reality, Multinary Forms of Thinking, and “1+1=1”: Independent Philosopher & Metaphysician; Statistician & Actuarial Scientist (3)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Christian, you spoke about a “linguistic break” and the “purpose of the idea of paradox.” On “the purpose of the idea of paradox,” with “a distinction between logical validity and truth,” the implausibility of logic’s relation to truth, and truth’s relation to logic, in a chain of reasoning from language and linguistic structure and the reality of the world. What is the purpose of the idea of a paradox in this sense to elucidate the apparent of a linguistic disjunction with the truth? How much does language approximate truth – simply sufficiently for good enough evolved organisms such as ourselves to survive in the world? More directly on the “linguistic break,” what does this Grand Canyon between the real world and language mean for the attainment of capital “T” Truth in some form for consciousnesses in the universe – in fact, any iteration of the current dynamics of the universe – including *homo sapiens*?

Dr. Christian Sorensen[1]*: I think that the whole question must be put in negative, and start from its end in order to understand the originative reason. Therefore I will start from reality, which going backwards with the question, is the cause of everything, since what occurs following an evolutionary sense, is that nobody actually has ever wanted to know anything about reality, because in turn there is nothing more terrifying and distressing than reality as such. This conflictual knot, is what paradoxically speaking, has made survival possible, in consequence the truth, which should arises from the relationship between reality and language, is subject to the above, and to what I will denominate as the original mythical repression of the primary symbol, that consequently, is lost and leaves a space of emptiness. The mythical repression of the primary symbol, is what produces the linguistic break, due to the fact that indeed, if a piece is missing, then it is possible that the language circulates through metaphors that lead to significations, that emerge from a particular significant in relation to the rest of the significants within the chain, nevertheless not with a related reality, which ultimately implies in its meaning at the same time, a disconnection with the signified thing, since the effort to squeeze reality through the truth, always shows regardless of the discursive coherence, that something in every linguistic act escapes throughout symbolization.

Jacobsen: Erik, you spoke more to “intuition, feelings, multiple meanings, semantics” regarding paradox, especially the God concept in which something unproven or uneviced becomes proof or evidence of “God.” What did you mean by “emotional divine experiences”?

Erik Haereid[2][3]*: Sometimes our emotions bring us into a profound feeling, a state where we feel that everything is right. It’s like being connected to reality, to the truth. We can, more or less, explain what kind of intrinsic physical phenomena going on, but not what make these processes happen.

I didn’t mean that the unproven is a proof of “God”. We reveal hidden material all the time. But I suppose that we will never be able to reveal everything. There will always be, in every event and entity, a power of definition or free will or creator that is beyond our imagination abilities.

It has nothing to do with God in the common meaning, but with how we bodily involve experiences. Sometimes I can feel “God” when I watch ants building their anthill, or when I drink my coffee and watch the sunrise. And those experiences become more or less a part of me, depending on how my body internalizes it. The unproven becomes evidence of that we do not know everything. The point is to declare scientifically, logically, rationally a respect for what we don’t know. To claim there is a God is not within that respect, because then you define something that we don’t know. The only thing we
know is that we can’t know everything, for how do we prove that?

Jacobsen: If a “continuous search for truth,” as the benchmark, and the “search for a logical reality” in our “mind map” implying a ‘projection of sense experience categorized into patterns with reason for thought,’ why is this an “eternal and continuous” process?

Haereid: I don’t know if it’s literally eternal. Truth is reality. We want to see, understand, reality; confined and imprisoned into our bodily and mental construction. Since this is impossible, we search for the optimal approximation. By optimizing our thoughts, or map of reality if you want, we get closer to reality; our interaction with reality will increase, there will be more inputs and outputs. We read the constantly improving inner map while walking in the real or true environment. Our search for truth is actually a search for a better projection of truth. One of our goals is to move or interact as best as possible in the real world, and one of our tools is our cognition and world of thoughts. This mental construction’s content is rational per se. Our mind fillers or choose the parts of reality that fits into our rational construction, through a translation.

I guess that by evolving increasingly larger mental space of rational connections to reality, we become better and wider in our contact with reality, and this is a goal. It enhances us. As entities we drive for, want and need this improving connection. Maybe or maybe not forever. But it’s something divine with the contact between us as entities and the rest of reality, and our brain is a tool to improve the contact points. It’s about feeling safe and in charge, having control. We create illusions, maps, over a reality that make us feel in charge. And we live from there. The problem is that we are continuously awakened by irrationality and in conflicts with the parts of reality that is not rational and under our control. Until we can rest in a sort of total rational existence, we will fight and struggle with irrationality. If we one day in evolution reach the point of total rationality, it’s an illusion that we rest in. It’s not that we have understood or seen reality, that’s impossible, but that we have ended our journey of gaining more wisdom and insight. Then we have understood that the aim is not infinite amounts of knowledge, but an optimization of knowledge adapted to the human creature. Then we could say that the struggle or conflict between Apollo and Dionysus, between the super-ego and id, between control and libido, is ended.

Jacobsen: Why can eternality of truth, the “Truth” mentioned in the question to Christian, never be ascertained by a human “mind map”?

Haereid: Because we, humans, will never know if what we see as a complete understanding and insight to the Truth contains everything. It’s because of our limitations as creatures. To know that, we have to be the power of definition ourselves. And if we one day think we are, how can we know that there is nothing more, that this idea is just only that; a narcissistic idea? If everything is like we think it is because we experience it (it’s no surprises anymore), it does not prove that it is like this, because we can’t prove that we really have experienced everything. A proved TOE (theory of everything) doesn’t prove that this proves everything, just that there is a perfect rational internal map connected to parts of reality.

Reality has unlimited content. Humans task is to combine as much of this content with our body structure as possible; within our limitations. One way of doing this is to limit our interactions with reality (experiences, sense perceptions), like we do in the virtual reality where we are more in charge of creation. And like psychopaths, fundamentalists and racists do by manipulating others into their limited views. Another way is to open up for whatever content reality shows us, and treat it inside a system like science, to evolve understanding.

Jacobsen: Why is the power of definition the point of the ‘beginning of it all’?

Haereid: Since there is something, and this has a beginning or a point of creation. But this is an idea confined in the logic of the human brain. It’s reasonable. It’s difficult to think of something as infinite. So, when we talk about infinite, we talk about something that we don’t understand. It’s irrational. Beginnings, endings and infinity demand something beyond rational thoughts. We will never capture it with our mind.

There is no explanation that fulfills what we can’t imagine or think of. How can we know that we have explained everything when we prove that we have? How can we establish such a proof? I don’t know what is outside my limits of imagination, and that’s what I call free will or power of definition. It’s a label of what I don’t know and never can know. If I said that one day I maybe will know, I would lie, like people who say that God exists. We don’t know that. It’s impossible to establish knowledge about what we never are able to internalize or capture with our mind.

Jacobsen: ‘What would dis-prove or dis-evidence the assumption (“my assumption”)?

Haereid: To make everyone accept that “my assumption” is false.
Jacobsen: Does this automaticity, offshoring of previously conscious awareness requiring processing to the non-conscious ‘mind,’ help adaptability in new and old environments, i.e., as new problems are dealt with using fresh mental resources and old problems can be automated to previous cognition?

Haereid: When we deal with new problems, we think about that problem in ways that make us aware; we use our conscious mind to solve novel problems. Like learning to drive a car. When you have learned it, you don’t think about every move you take driving it. In this process we use every stored knowledge, every inherited wisdom, any available information learned, inherited or transferred in ways we yet don’t know about or understand, to solve that problem as best as we can to fulfill what we need and wish.

Jacobsen: Erik, following from the previous question (and Part Two), when we take the “conscious rational methods” as a formulation of the ‘intuitive’ “multinary form of thinking,”, why is this intuitive grasp of reality adaptable into formalizations at all?

Our way of thinking, rationality, time-space projection, is a language constructed for humans to “see” or comprehend reality; make us interact better with reality. Parts of reality are interpreted into this human language. The power of definition, nature, god, creator or whatever has created this feature, use this either as a goal in itself or as a tool to achieve some kind of inner or unconscious wisdom. Why our thoughts and consciousness are like it is, is impossible to say. And human will always try to find answers to this, and through this process converging towards a larger consciousness, either as a tool or goal.

Another comment: I said that one possibility is that our consciousness is a tool to achieve a higher degree of truth, and when we do, our consciousness vanishes. Then it has done its job for us. Another view is to think of our consciousness as a goal in itself, not as reality, still as a map of reality, but as a map that optimizes reality for human. Our mind is the reality’s way of giving humans a best way of being aware of reality, sense it, experience it and live it in expansions of here and now; in time and space. It’s a communication tool. When we reach as close as we can, when our mind pictures reality as best as possible confined into what a human brain is, we have reached our potential as humans, and can optimize our lives. If so, the goal could be seen as a complete consciousness, and not as in my other assumption where I pictured a path where the mind map converged into reality, and then disappeared; that humans aim was to discover and develop a complete or perfect map related to reality, and then disappear. Move into the next level of beings or entities, where we are unconscious or conscious on another level than we are as humans. It’s easier to think of consciousness as a goal in itself, because that’s what we can relate to. That’s how we see it now. We learn, develop, in an accumulation of wisdom through generations and history. Why I suggest the other option is that I see life or entities as part of a process, and not as a finite ruler. We will die, extinct, go into other forms, sooner or later. I think it’s convenient to see us as tools for something going on. And as a tool we have our mind. What’s the point with that? Where does consciousness go after human extinction? Why this kind of evolution; what is it good for? Why consciousness at all?

Maybe we need to evolve our consciousness to the mentioned high or perfect level where the mind map fits reality as far as possible, and exactly then we transform into a new form that need that insight to evolve further. That’s a thought.

Jacobsen: Christian, in a dialectic, what points of reference become implied in the analysis of the dialectic for coming at a representation of the real and the unreal? In a prior interview, we talked about trialetics, quadralectic, as an advancement in complexity of the formal or more traditional dialectic. What would be implied by a trialectic and quadralectic, etc., form of thinking about reality? How would this alter, not fundamentally, the Hegelian idea of thesis and antithesis for a synthesis? Christian, what forms of reasoning seem the hardest for the human brain to compute? Why?

Sorensen: In the dialectic representation of the reality and unreality what is fundamental is the presence of the opposition of symbolic terms, that as such individually are blind, but that when placed in a linguistic chain produce a sense in terms of meaning as a third term, that by itself is also blind, since as such does not means anything, nevertheless allows ideational mobility. Therefore I believe that the dialectic, trialectic and quadralectic, are sort of polygons, where the points are the opposing terms, and the edges are the opposing relationships between these, which in turn end up converging in what I will denominate as fugue point of meaning, that as intermediate, is the third term of the synthesis within the discursive circulation of the symbolic chain. I think that the cryptic ideal forms, are the most difficult to assimilate, because the brain is used to digital and univocal meanings, and to the sensitive
connection with the world, as a primary source of knowledge.

**Jacobsen: Erik, what forms of reasoning seem the hardest for the human brain to compute? Why?**

**Haereid:** Abductive reasoning is the easiest. We make decisions naturally based on what we think is actual, possible and not, all the time. This is inborn. Deductive reasoning seems to be the hardest. Our brains are quite new, and our cognitive abilities “underdeveloped”; we need more time to catch and develop the mental devices and their possibilities.

We can travel into fictions and experience it as real in one sense, and communicate it, like we do in any virtual reality. If all our movability and empirical senses where shut down, our lives would be limited to a virtual reality. Then this is the reality. But because we experience things with our senses, and also are able to live in fictive sceneries, we have two separate existences. Deduction is therefore linked to empirics. To prove mental images and logical theories, we have to experience empirically, because this is also a crucial part of humanity; our lives are not only in our thoughts, in a book or a computer game.

The more we exclude our contact with reality, by e.g. solely live in computer games, in movies, books and so on, in virtual creations of reality, the more we construct our own reality or map if you want. Then it’s easier to think that reality is what we think, because we have constructed what we want the reality to be like. The more we are in contact with reality, the more we collide with it and meet its irrational challenges. It’s easier to live in a virtual “reality” because we can create it ourselves. Then the contradictions are easier to solve.

The beauty about our mental reality separated from empirics is that we can make it as we want. We can agree upon the rules, and in a common virtual mutual existence of social harmony become whole. We can remove irrationality and make everything under control, given that we are passive and not separate into any empirical activity. To exclude discrimination, we would have to make rules and opportunities that everyone could use and benefit on. This is simpler in virtual reality than in real sensed reality. It’s not the symbols, language, mathematics, constructed thoughts that are the problematic part of our lives, but the combination of that and the sensed experiences. If we could rely on reason, life would be easy. I guess that’s one reason why we have developed reason; it lets us control our lives into a larger degree than if we were limited to a face to face reality with the empirical world. I think that’s the reason why computer programs and virtual realities are exploding. It’s controllable. We get closer to a defining power. If we can manage to create a reality that we fully control, we can “prove” (make the illusion that we have proved) that everything is determined or rational. Then we have showed that we, or whatever that drives us, is the defining power of reality. But still we can’t know what this defining power is or where it comes from, only that we have created complete rationality inside our view of reality. Let’s say that we are part of such a process, where complete control and rationality is the goal and final outcome. This makes natural sense. We are the dominating species, and want control, because that gives us more power. Evolving a mental device that gives us the illusion of control, e.g. logics, is a proper instrument to gain more control. In this context we do not profit on an uncontrollable empirical reality. We want control, and therefore we want to prove a TOE. Or we take control over the empirical reality to make us feel more in power, and to make our mental devices fit the empirical ones.

Our aim is to make the mind maps fit the empirical reality, but also to make the empirical reality more like our mind maps, because it’s easier for us to control the latter one. A mental problem appears when we ask why that is, and where does it end. This will forever be a mental problem for us. Why do we want control/power? What’s the point? Maybe it’s life itself. But life, before our complex mental devices, was an empirical journey and not a mental one. OK, so “we” understood that evolving mentality gave us better opportunities to survive as a species. But the dichotomy is that we drive apart from empirical experiences because this take the control and power away from us. Every time we “loose our brain” we get into more risks for damage and death. The solution is obviously to control the empirical world; remove every danger. And we try to do that as well as creating virtual realities, fictions, illusions and logics that make us feel powerful. But still this is only an explanation of how we increase our survival, and not of why we want to survive and live. Life per se is still an enigma. That’s why I conclude with that life as phenomenon is irrational. In general, you could say that at some starting point there are no explanation, no reason beyond. It’s just there. And what is just there, is, when we try to make it reasonable, established by a defining power or on something irrational; that’s only an expression of what we don’t control nor have any power over.

What could happen when we gain complete power? As said, one thought is that we are at The End; we all die, all human consciousness disappears, and we go let’s say into a next and higher level. Another thought is that we go into a circuit of conscious harmony or
eternal lives; a fulfillment of what we now and forever want and strive for.

Jacobson: Christian, why is reality “intrinsically contradictory and conflicted”? What substantiates the claim of the ‘intrinsical’ nature of the (internal) ‘conflict’ and (internal) ‘contradictions’? With this intrinsic nature of a conflicted and contradictory reality, what connects these two sets of two points of ‘intrinsic contradiction & ungraspability’ and ‘intrinsic conflict & unreality’? With nothing to say to no one in particular about the ultimate in specific, an interesting part of this becomes neither the spoken in general nor the universally unspeakable; the junction means something. What does this mean for the meaningful statements at the linguistic breaking point or the “linguistic break” between that which “nothing could be pronounced at all” and many things have been and continue to be said all the time? What is an example of a linguistic border to the breaking point? Something leading to the unspeakable (in definition, not in the sense of a horror film creature). Christian and Erik, with modern rational tools, e.g., statistics, to inform thoughts about the world, insofar as we can know the real world, do these tools provide unprecedented or more precise maps and, therefore, understandings of the world? Even with the same genetic equipment across the species, how does this change 1) our thoughts and mind structures and 2) the outputs in life and societal organization with new thoughts and new frameworks for individual and collective operation? If a capital “I” Truth cannot be reached ever, would this mean a continuous and never-ending change in “1)” and “2)” in proportion to one another?

Sorensen: If it is assumed that the contradiction, is equivalent to the opposition, and that this last is a necessary condition for the conflict, and on the other hand, it is accepted that in reality the opposition of things exists as something evident, then it can be deduced, because contradiction exists, that reality is inherently conflicted. On the other side, ungraspability and unreality, have little to do with the contradictory and conflictive nature of reality, since ungraspability is a cognitive consequence, which does not derive from the nature of reality, but rather does it from the nature of logos. Likewise although unreality is a condition of reality as such, as long as it’s a fact that it is nothing in itself, it is imperatively conclusive that then anything can be caused by such thing. The linguistic break occurs, because there exists, shining by its absence, only one and exclusively one signifier, that I will name as mute signifier, which as such it is unspeakable and unpronounceable, because if it is translated linguistically speaking into a word, it is indeed one but because of its emptiness. An illustrating example of the aforementioned, is what happens with poetry, which tries to explain figuratively, what is inexpressible through everyday’s language. In fact the statistics informs of something, but this is not equivalent to assume that doing so, is an approximation to something in truth terms, since what actually always does, is an approach more to what it is not, than to what it is, not for nothing its effort moves towards the acceptance of the null hypotheses in its empirical verification process. I think that this, though it can be felt as an ungrateful disagreement, is what makes individual and collective developments possible, because in itself, is intrinsically linked to movement, which in my opinion is the most fundamental action of the phenomenon of life. In similar manner, although I think that the most permanent thing is change, I also believe that this factual inertia, has an encoded meaning that despite it may be theoretically infinite, has a decryption limit in reality.

Jacobson: Erik, any other contact points about reality and informed consciousness than ‘sensation, perception, feeling, and thinking’?

Haereid: Expression; output. Input and output, information in and out, is our contact and communication with reality. Physically we choose and amplifies received information, regulates it, making it into mental images, thoughts and projections of reality. We translate something ununderstandable into something else, which we can relate to, which we understand and operate within. We can say something about the translation process, but not about the input to it. We know about the physical entities like the nervous system, hormones, neurotransmitters and so on. We build AI-processors based on knowledge of how we think our brains work.

By choosing and excluding (on/off) we can draw a picture based on what information we choose. But we cannot say much about the information we reject. By amplifying we can make chosen information more or less important to us. But we don’t know much about why we choose what we choose.

Jacobsen: Why are thoughts maps grounded in experience?

Haereid: We are born or created with the ability to see the world or reality in these mental images, in time-space-modus. Some of the content may be inherited, most of it learned and experienced.
Experiences justify and improves these maps. Experiences are our unconscious contact with reality, and experiences as projections into mind is our picture of these experiences. When we see, get distanced to, our experiences, we are obviously better fitted to improve in the real world; make our moves better towards whatever goal we have. But it’s still a projection, it’s not reality per se. When we think our thoughts and mental images is reality, we live in an illusion.

**Jacobson:** While “thoughts are maps,” and to “sense, perceive, feel, [and] think” become the mediums by which the maps (the thoughts) are informed as experienced about reality, what does this state about the relationship between the thoughts and experience?

**Haereid:** Reality is sensed as, let’s call it information. Some sort of input to our body-system occurs, and we adapt it, internalize and process it, store it and combine old (stored in our memory) and new information to make an increasing better image or map, an illusion, of reality. You could say that the human body-system work making mess into order, or an inverse entropy. Our common brain’s mission is to collect all chaos in the Universe created once, into an understandable whole. It’s like we try to force an arbitrary evolution into systems of rationality. But this is us, this is a part of the chaos. So, human have a mission. This is an entity in the Universe. Even though we never will know why and where, we can trust it because it’s actually there. Maybe human consciousness and our strive for logic is a universal appendix, or maybe it’s some higher meaning with it. We don’t know.

Thoughts are translated information, like in computers. The software programs are processes treating some input, information, and translate it into space-time figures; a user interface. Experiences are inputs, coming from reality, a world that we only have illusions about, but something that provide us with impulses. Our senses make these inputs registered before internalized. To maintain, survive and live as organisms or entities we have some needs, and we treat information in coordination with our needs. Our mental images are a product of our needs; we see and think what we want to see and think. What we don’t want or need, we suppress or ignore. It’s like when we have used all our repertoire of methods to rationalize and suppress, and reality becomes to uncomfortable and clammy, we choose to die; lock down the system. We call some of these clammy phenomena for diseases and accidents.

**Jacobson:** What differentiates the real and unreal in this proposed framework of statistical and multi-modal maps of the world?

**Haereid:** Mentally, consciously, we don’t know what is real since we only have the ability to create images and representations or approximations of reality. We are in contact with reality when we experience; all the time. When we sense whatever, we experience, and that is real.

The real is the input, information; signals that we catch, receive and process with our inborn system of senses and other processing tools. Our expressions are real as signals delivered into reality and processed by other entities, like humans who create their images and representations of it. Since we can’t make a true image of the real, we have to trust more or less our images of reality. E.g. through logical systems like mathematics and statistics.

**Jacobson:** With emotion and thinking as part of thoughts, does this make the maps, the thoughts, about reality as inextricably biased in the intra-psychic direction of the emoting, feeling when projected ‘outwards’ and asserted as the real world in which the entity operates?

**Haereid:** Yes.

Emotions are amplifiers of information; it’s an internal weight that make us suppress, ignore or focus. It’s a measure of importance as to our needs. E.g. we need to understand, create a rational picture of reality, and therefore we feel happy when we process information and combinations that enhance this feature, and sad, anxious or disgust when some information make the picture irrational. Emotions help us to choose the parts of reality (input) that help us evolve optimally.

**Jacobson:** Should the quality of the thoughts or the maps continue to deteriorate, in general, with middle and elder age as the sense organs become less sensitive, and so the inputs – ‘sensation, perception, feeling, and thinking’ – lose speed, fidelity, and breadth?

**Haereid:** Age make us generally more indifferent and dependent of habits; more prejudiced. We relate on what we already know and have stored. Our senses are weakened, yes. Mentally we become more confined, pleased, but not necessarily less creative and right. The past becomes more important; with age a thinking human will get the opportunity to see the same information from new angles. Additional information is not necessarily an advantage. With new information and ditto processes we tend to exclude and make shortcuts to get through the aim;
understand, reaching our needs. It’s not always about making the mind map, the space of knowledge and understanding, increasingly bigger. It’s about dealing with the knowledge we have until then. Something is more important than other things. If you believe that the goal is to understand everything, then you will stress gaining as much knowledge as possible and make rational coherence as fast as possible within the systems of brains (collective mind).

Jacobsen: Why equate the “irrational and indeterministic”? Haereid: When something is indeterministic it is a power of definition (my expression), or free will, if you like. It has no rational cause. It’s unpredictable. That makes indeterministic events irrational. If something is seemingly irrational, but after some research not, then it’s not irrational. Rationality and determinism are ways of interpreting and living in an irrational and indeterministic reality. It’s no explanation why it is like this. And this proposition is as said an assumption. We don’t know.

Jacobsen: Erik, with modern rational tools, e.g., statistics, to inform thoughts about the world, insofar as we can know the real world, do these tools provide unprecedented or more precise maps and, therefore, understandings of the world?

Haereid: Yes. Rational tools like statistics is ways of making us see, be aware of more parts (images) of reality. It improves our interactions with reality as real entities. As humans we are restricted to live in rationality, into order. And to do that we need to extract (translate) order from disorder in the chaotic reality. But order is not restricted to some limited amount of information. We evolve by collecting increasingly amounts of information, and make order out of it. This is the main purpose of human lives, seemingly. Evolving rational tools is part of this evolution. But our brains are constructed as though we believe that everything is order; we just have to collect some huge more amounts of information and put it into rationality (We want everything to be orderly; that’s part of our construction). But it’s, in my view, more reasonably that we never will explain the definition of power.

Jacobsen: Even with the same genetic equipment across the species, how does this change 1) our thoughts and mind structures and 2) the outputs in life and societal organization with new thoughts and new frameworks for individual and collective operation?

Haereid: I think individual and group-related narcissism and racism, and the opposite, self-hate, depression and suicide, are interim flaws or failures or appendixes to a better solution for the individuals and collective. The survival of the fittest is natures temporary act to get in power of controlling the evolution. On that road nature provide us with aggression and violence combined with opposing nurturing and compassion. Pure aggression leads us to perfection, which is the same as less variation and finally extinction. Pure compassion leads us to stop in evolution and no development. Then we will not be able to understand what we want to, and to get that control we strive for, whatever reason this is. This is a shuttle between safety and change.

It’s the manifold that define human cognition and mind, the Earth and life/nature. One conclusion could therefore be that the goal is more diversity under the rules of rationality, with the brain and consciousness as basic instruments. This leads to a possible infinite diverse reality, since the mind is an instrument to draw an increasingly more proper map over (parts of) reality. The reason why we restrict ourselves to perfectionism could be that we don’t have (yet) the capacity to embrace and internalize larger parts of reality into our logical structures. We choose what we can overcome at each moment.

We restrict diversity because we can’t understand it yet, and by understanding we create safety. While we are safe, we get energy for more diversity and more wisdom and evolution. Humans can be seen as one of natures instruments to internalize both variety (much information) and control (rationality).

There are species with the same genetic equipment, and the social structures will be a function of how far nature or life has come to reach its final goal. Peace is a function of safety, and safety is a function of feeling satisfied with being where we are. The day we are satisfied we know what we can and will know, we will relax and include everything that we sense and have in mind. Then we are at the point of optimal consciousness; where the mind as best reflects the invisible reality. Then the struggle is over. If we get there, we will live in harmony among species. The rules of nature will change because nature has reached its goal.

Jacobsen: If a capital “F” Truth cannot be reached ever, would this mean a continuous and never-ending change in “1)” and “2)” in proportion to one another?

Haereid: I think I answered this in the last question.

Jacobsen: Christian, why does ‘1 plus 1 sometimes equal 1 if one knows how to count to 3’?
Sorensen: Because 1 + 1 = 1. In any case, I think that jealousy appeared in the evolution of human being when he learned to count to 3.

Jacobsen: Erik, why stick to the arithmetic principles of annihilation and symmetry?

Haereid: Because that’s one language which I am familiar with. I could push the limits and make several other interpretations.

Jacobsen: Christian, what is pseudo-indeterminism?

Sorensen: I think that pseudo indeterminism is equivalent to freedom, which is similar to a stain on clothes, since if a reverse reasoning is followed respect to the stain, it’s deductible that the more it is erased or made disappeared, which is analogous to the case of freedom when it is proclaimed or demanded, then more the underground of determinism and predestination will arise as indelible marks. Therefore I think that liberty in terms of pseudo indeterminism, is nothing else than what I will denominate as vitalist reactive formation, which means that a change of the original negative feeling that’s an expression of despair is done, in order to seek and replace it for another positive one of autonomy and of serenity of conscience.

Jacobsen: Erik, what is “the beginning”?

Haereid: Rationally, it’s chaos. Beyond our understanding, it’s a power of definition. A free will.

Jacobsen: Why is this, in arithmetic, always the case with 1 + 1 always equalling 2?

Haereid: It’s a definition and a logical consequence. It’s communication; an agreement. It doesn’t have to be that way. It’s a part of our common, objective mind map. It’s an example of how we humans squeeze chaotic reality into understandable order. It’s a compass. But it’s also misleading since it’s only a part of and an image of reality.

Jacobsen: Christian, what principles would imply never – not simply “sometimes” – producing 2 with 1 + 1?

Haereid: It’s a definition and a logical consequence. It’s communication; an agreement. It doesn’t have to be that way. It’s a part of our common, objective mind map. It’s an example of how we humans squeeze chaotic reality into understandable order. It’s a compass. But it’s also misleading since it’s only a part of and an image of reality.

Jacobsen: What principles would imply never – not simply “sometimes” – producing 2 with 1 + 1?

Haereid: Because that’s one language which I am familiar with. I could push the limits and make several other interpretations.

Sorensen: I think that 1 + 1 is 1 and not 2 in two phenomena, one that’s plausible and another that’s certain, which are respectively that of ideal love and that of death. Something similar occurs with the mind and the understanding of reality, since in my opinion the unicity, the higher degree of intelligence and understandings are directly proportional, meanwhile a higher degree of intelligence with a predictable and determinable understandings of reality are inversely proportional.

Jacobsen: Erik, what principles would imply never – not simply “sometimes” – producing 2 with 1 + 1?

Haereid: It’s a definition and a logical consequence. It’s communication; an agreement. It doesn’t have to be that way. It’s a part of our common, objective mind map. It’s an example of how we humans squeeze chaotic reality into understandable order. It’s a compass. But it’s also misleading since it’s only a part of and an image of reality.

Jacobsen: Are the degrees of comprehension of indeterminism and determinism, or the appearance of indeterminism and determinism, in the universe bound by the minds considering the two?

Haereid: Yes. As insinuated, humans want the world to be deterministic, because that’s how we are constructed. We force ourselves by extracting the fitting pieces from reality and place it into suitable patterns that we can deal with. We see the world as deterministic, and each time reality shows us something else, we use energy to explain or twist these new inputs into our pleasant system of comprehension. We forget what we do not get.

Jacobsen: In that, some things seem predictable and determinate to some, and unpredictable and indeterminate to others, where this means a greater understanding of the reality – or a greater accuracy in thoughts about the real world – within a bounded situation provides better predictive capacities to some in contrast to others. Does higher relative intelligence function in this manner?

Haereid: The human mind is about processing input or information received from reality (I repeat myself...). Due to several causes, some are better to estimate or predict future events than others; their internal maps and processors are better. But this means that they are better in adapting the mind to the part of reality that fits the mind, and not necessarily better to understand reality. Such people are better to project parts of reality into a human language, and contribute to an evolution of that part. The consequence is that human interaction with reality...
increases (increasing in inputs and outputs); there are more connecting points between humans and reality. In that human view, reality will seem more and more deterministic, because we tend not to think of what we don’t see. We control amounts of thoughts, but not what we do not know or think of. But intelligent people also have a greater fantasy and therefore make more mistakes about reality; creating images that do not fit into reality.

Appendix 1: Footnotes

[1] Dr. Christian Sorensen is a Philosopher that comes from Belgium. What identifies him the most and above all is simplicity, for everything is better with “vanilla flavour.” Perhaps, for this reason, his intellectual passion is criticism and irony, in the sense of trying to reveal what “hides behind the mask,” and give birth to the true. For him, ignorance and knowledge never “cross paths.” What he likes the most in his leisure time, is to go for a walk with his wife.

[2] Erik Haereid has been a member of Mensa since 2013, and is among the top scorers on several of the most credible IQ-tests in the unstandardized HRT-environment. He is listed in the World Genius Directory. He is also a member of several other high IQ Societies.

Erik, born in 1963, grew up in Oslo, Norway, in a middle class home at Grefsen nearby the forest, and started early running and cross country skiing. After finishing schools he studied mathematics, statistics and actuarial science at the University of Oslo. One of his first glimpses of math-skills appeared after he got a perfect score as the only student on a five hour math exam in high school.

He did his military duty in His Majesty The King’s Guard (Drilltuppen)).

Impatient as he is, he couldn’t sit still and only studying, so among many things he worked as a freelance journalist in a small news agency. In that period, he did some environmental volunteerism with Norges Naturvernforbund (Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature), where he was an activist, freelance journalist and arranged ‘Sykkeldagen i Oslo’ twice (1989 and 1990) as well as environmental issues lectures. He also wrote some crime short stories in A-Magasinet (Aftenposten (one of the main newspapers in Norway), the same paper where he earned his runner up (second place) in a nationwide writing contest in 1985. He also wrote several articles in different newspapers, magazines and so on in the 1980s and early 1990s.


In 1989 he worked in a project in Dallas with a Texas computer company for a month incorporating a Norwegian pension product into a data system. Erik is specialized in life insurance and pensions, both private and business insurances. From 1991 to 1995 he was a main part of developing new life insurance saving products adapted to bank business (Sparebanken NOR), and he developed the mathematics behind the premiums and premium reserves.

He has industry experience in accounting, insurance, and insurance as a broker. He writes in his IQ-blog the online newspaper Nettavisen. He has personal interests among other things in history, philosophy and social psychology.

In 1995, he moved to Aalborg in Denmark because of a Danish girl he met. He worked as an insurance broker for one year, and took advantage of this experience later when he developed his own consultant company.

In Aalborg, he taught himself some programming (Visual Basic), and developed an insurance calculation software program which he sold to a Norwegian Insurance Company. After moving to Oslo with his girlfriend, he was hired as consultant by the same company to a project that lasted one year.

After this, he became the Manager of business insurance in the insurance company Norske Liv. At that time he had developed and nurtured his idea of establishing an actuarial consulting company, and he did this after some years on a full-time basis with his actuarial colleague. In the beginning, the company was small. He had to gain money, and worked for almost two years as an Academic Director of insurance at the BI Norwegian Business School.

Then the consultant company started to grow, and he quitted BI and used his full time in NIA (Nordic Insurance Administration). This was in 1998/99, and he has been there since.
NIA provides actuarial consulting services within the pension and life insurance area, especially towards the business market. They were one of the leading actuarial consulting companies in Norway through many years when Defined Benefit Pension Plans were on its peak and companies needed evaluations and calculations concerning their pension schemes and accountings. With the less complex, and cheaper, Defined Contribution Pension Plans entering Norway the last 10-15 years, the need of actuaries is less concerning business pension schemes.

Erik’s book from 2011, Benektelse og Verdighet, contains some thoughts about our superficial, often discriminating societies, where the virtue seems to be egocentrism without thoughts about the whole. Empathy is lacking, and existential division into “us” and “them” is a mental challenge with major consequences. One of the obstacles is when people with power – mind, scientific, money, political, popularity – defend this kind of mind as “necessary” and “survival of the fittest” without understanding that such thoughts make the democracies much more volatile and threatened. When people do not understand the genesis of extreme violence like school killings, suicide or sociopathy, asking “how can this happen?” repeatedly, one can wonder how smart man really is. The responsibility is not limited to let’s say the parents. The responsibility is everyone’s. The day we can survive, mentally, being honest about our lives and existence, we will take huge leaps into the future of mankind.


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Norwegians of the High-Range Discussion with Erik Haereid, Eivind Olsen, and Tor Arne Jørgensen: Statistician & Actuarial Scientist; Chair, Mensa Norway; 2019 Genius of the Year – Europe, World Genius Directory (1)

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Abstract

Erik Haereid is an Actuarial Scientist and Statistician. Eivind Olsen is the Chair of Mensa Norway. Tor Arne Jørgensen is the 2019 Genius of the Year – Europe. They discuss: the high-IQ communities available in Norway; membership in Mensa Norway; the issues perceived in running a high-IQ national group; the qualifications for Mensa Norway; the culture of Norway on mainstream intelligence tests and alternative tests; the considered importance of high-IQ and high-IQ societies; the flavours of the high-IQ societies; some of the unique, or nearly distinct, qualities of Norwegian culture mapped onto the high-IQ communities; and some of the plans and expected developments for Mensa Norway.

Keywords: Erik Haereid, Eivind Olsen, IQ, Mensa, Mensa Norway, Tor Arne Jørgensen.
Norwegians of the High-Range Discussion with Erik Haereid, Eivind Olsen, and Tor Arne Jørgensen: Statistician & Actuarial Scientist; Chair, Mensa Norway; 2019 Genius of the Year – Europe, World Genius Directory (1)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: One of the most respected, for longevity and size, high-IQ organizations in the world is Mensa International. No question about it. Some see Mensa International as nothing more than a gigantic social club. Others see the organization as a means by which to connect and politic with the movers and shakers of some of the high-IQ community globally or within a national context. Nonetheless, its stability belies a particular functionality of aim and purpose, and structure, compared to all other high-IQ societies and, thusly, deserves proper praise and adulation. Another aspect of the global focus of Mensa International is the appropriate functionality in breaking apart the big organization into national sub-organizations with chairs. For example, Mensa Norway is one of the national groups for Mensa International. As it so happens, we have the leader of Mensa Norway here today with Mr. Olsen. Also, we have alternative test very high scorers in the presence of Mr. Haereid and Mr. Jørgensen. All from Norway. With Mensa and with Norway, and based on suggestions from participants, the start with Mensa Norway seems like a functional starting point here. Also, it can provide a basis to get down to brass tax about the fundamentals of Norwegian culture and its high-IQ communities, as such. Let’s begin, as per usual, with some softball questions, what are the high-IQ communities available in Norway, whether formal or informal of which you are aware at this time?

Erik Haereid[1]*: I am only aware of Mensa Norway, and became a member at age 49, in 2013. I have never been involved in that kind of organization earlier.

Tor Arne Jørgensen[2]*: None that I’m aware of today as informal goes, and as formal goes we have only Mensa Norway.

Eivind Olsen[3],[4]: I’ll expose my ignorance even at this first question, and set myself up to receive a proper intellectual beating. I’m not really aware of any other high-IQ society/community in Norway. Sure, there are some international societies that have some Norwegian members, but I don’t have the impression that there’s much activity.

Jacobsen: How much does membership in Mensa Norway cost? Who is a member here? What are some of the demographics of Mensa Norway?

How has Mensa Norway been helpful in connecting to the national high-IQ community for each of you?

Haereid: 500 Norwegian kroner a year.

2% of the 2% smartest in Norway are members of Mensa Norway; about 2,000 members out of theoretically 100,000 members. Who are those 2% of the 2%? A fine mixture. Men, women, quite young, quite old, highly educated, no education, a variety of different works, different political views, different moral views, some nice, some not so nice, and so on. From all over the country.

Anyway, I think the 98% other Norwegians that theoretically qualify for Mensa is, on average, other types than those who are members. I know some people, quite a few actually, who would qualify for Mensa but don’t dare to try the test. That’s one difference; the courage, belief in themselves, bigger ego maybe. And I guess Mensans are more occupied with their and other’s IQ, and not especially more intellectual than the other equal intelligent bunch. It’s obviously about making friendship with someone who thinks like yourself, because “no one else does”.

But it’s also about this identification. Some exaggerating being different from the rest, the normal part of the population, because they want to feel better as to intelligence, and then they can claim that they don’t belong among normal people. In other words: I think Mensans feel more odd than equally intelligent people outside Mensa, in average. The focus is IQ and intelligence, or puzzles and brain games, more than using one’s intelligence to something useful in the general society. Maybe. It’s diverse also inside Mensa. I see people there discuss a variety of themes, most daily problems, in ways that people with more normal intelligence wouldn’t. At least not in such an intellectual language. That’s something. I miss more existential discussions, though.

The egos are generally big, but maybe not more among Mensans than others. It’s difficult to say. In Mensa and in general in high IQ communities it’s more specific focus on IQ-measures, intelligence per se and competition between members.

That said, it’s not easy to be different. Many highly intelligent people are treated bad in a universal harsh environment. It’s about normality everywhere.
The national high IQ community is, to me, Mensa. I don’t feel especially welcomed. I think this varies depending on who you ask. To me it’s more about suspicion and subtle attacks. I guess the reason is mixed; I am not very social and inviting as a person. Stubborn. Demanding, I guess. And I score high on unauthorized IQ-tests. That doesn’t sound well in Mensa. It’s also about personal traits, and what you write and how people interpret that. Mensans and people in the high IQ communities are in that respect not different from others.

Jørgensen: I am not a member of Mensa Norway, but within the near future a Mensa membership could be exciting to explore. So by that I leave the follow-up questions to my peers.

Olsen: The membership fee for a full year is 500 NOK (approximately 57 USD or 48 EUR), if you’re 18+. There’s a 50% discount if you’re under the age of 18, and a 50% discount if you join from 1st of July until 31st of October. Yes, the discounts stack. Our gender distribution is about 77.5% male, 22.5% female, and <1% identifying as other/unknown. Approx. 30% of our members are in the 31-40 age bracket. Our youngest member recently started in their first year at school, and a handful of current members were born before WW2.

Mensa was the first high-IQ society I joined (I was recruited by my fiancée, before we were a couple), and we have several friends here. So far I haven’t really seen the need to pursue more obscure societies. I don’t even know if I would qualify for any of the “higher” societies.

Jacobsen: For the two who aren’t leaders of a national high-IQ group, what seem like some of the issues perceived in running a high-IQ national group? For the one who is a leader of a national group, what are some of the difficulties of bringing together the high-IQ communities under the same umbrella?

Haereid: To unify a lot of un-unifiable single individuals. It’s a lot of different intelligent people with strong individual opinions, and therefore a lot of ME.

To make objective goals with plans that fulfills the original idea of Mensa from the post WW2 when established in 1946; to gather the most intelligent people to create ideas to avoid future wars and holocaust-scenarios. Including racism and social polarization. It seems that this is forgotten or repressed.

Jørgensen: Well it is hard to say as I have no personal experience in leading a high-IQ group, but I would expect from what I have previous seen in the various groups by portraying the role of active leadership, followed by scrutiny with reference to the group-leaders’ personal innovative engagement within the various thematic forums thus creating and securing oversight with reference to group stability.

Olsen: Here in Norway, I guess a big part of the hindrance is that there doesn’t seem to be any other active high-IQ societies here.

Jacobsen: To the qualifications for Mensa Norway, what are the measurement tools demanded for membership? What is the standard deviation? What is available for members of the community? What is the range of scores of the members if this is known and available for public consumption/presentation? Who is the highest scorer on a mainstream intelligence test in Norway?

Haereid: When I got into Mensa, it was the spatial FRT-A test; a timed 20 minutes with 45 items. It’s a generally accepted, proctored test, with the aim of discriminating intelligence between those who are within and outside the top 2% of the population. The scores are treated by a professional psychometrician. The standard deviation used is 15 on that test; IQ>=131.

I think there are many proctored, mainstream tests that can be used, like WAIS. But Eivind knows more about this, I guess.

The scores are not available. The FRT-A and similar tests are built on equality; its purpose is to measure if you have over or under 131 in IQ; if you are among or outside the top 2% of the general population, not to measure your detailed IQ beyond that.

Who is the highest scorer on a mainstream intelligence test in Norway? I would like to hear from Eivind who that is. I don’t know.

Jørgensen: As to the highest scorer on mainstream intelligence tests in Norway I would say Haereid, I would also rank him as the one to beat to reach top spot.

Olsen: We have the same requirements as other Mensa countries. You’ll need to have taken a reputable and recognized test in a supervised / monitored setting. You’ll need a score within the top 2%, but you’re not required to take the test we provide; several other tests are valid. The test we do provide gives a score in SD 15. When people join based on another test, it’s quite often a WISC or WAIS test administered by a psychologist.
We don’t have any easily available, good statistics of the scores our members have received, except that we are fairly confident they are all within the top 2%. Most of them join based on the test we provide, and the highest score accessible there is top 1% (“IQ 135 or higher, at SD 15”). I have taken a non-scientific approach and asked several people I know what their score was, and it seemed to be approximately 50/50 split between 2% and 1%.

I don’t know who the highest scorer on any reputable intelligence in Norway is. I believe the usual reputable tests, such as the Wechsler tests, only go up to 160 @ SD15, and I’m sure there must be multiple people attaining that score.

Don’t get me started on inflated IQ scores where one conveniently lists their SD24-score without mentioning the SD and compares it to someone else’s SD15-score, or where people get described as “having a higher IQ than Einstein!”…

Jacobsen: The World Genius Directory does seem to demand certification of the tests and the test scores from testees. This can be helpful. As far as I am aware, Mensa International and the Triple Nine Society – and some others – are similarly demanding and, in fact, more stringent with the requirement of mainstream intelligence tests only as opposed to mainstream intelligence tests and alternative tests for admissions. Indeed, if one examines the World Genius Directory, they can see the degrees to which the alternative tests far outnumber the mainstream intelligence test. For example, in terms of the test scores earned and submitted, Erik earned 185 S.D. 15 on the N-VRA80, while Tor earned a 172 S.D. 15 on the Lexiq. How is the culture of Norway on mainstream intelligence tests and alternative tests? How seriously is either taken? How are these incorporated into the international, national, or local organizations having various cutoffs and criteria for membership?

Haereid: Mensa is strict. Not only as to admission, but also respect; there is an anti-alternative IQ-test culture. In Mensa, and I may exaggerate, are these untimed tests, many of them beautiful cognitive challenges with proper or at least quite good norms, seen as severe diseases. But I see some Norwegian mensans on the scoreboards on these alternative tests. That pleases me.

I am among the top scorers on several different alternative tests, in all categories (numerical, verbal and spatial) with high credibility in the high-IQ-environment, through many years (since 2013), and I still get critical questions from some; even though I beat most people with IQ-scores from 160 to 175 (S.D. 15) on mainstream, proctored, accepted tests, like WAIS. Some norms are, obviously, not good. Some are quite good, even though they can’t beat norms on tests like WAIS; it’s not enough data.

It seems that some have fastened in the speed-thing; “intelligence has only to do with speed”. Of course, speed is a factor, and important too. But why not include the kind of tests that has to do with solving complex problems and necessarily take some more time than 20 or 120 minutes? I guess this is debated thoroughly in the psychological environments, but anyway. I am not the only one in the high IQ community that asks this. Of course, there is a significant correlation in IQ, between the mainstream and alternative tests mentioned. To me this is obvious.

Jørgensen: As to the how the general culture of the alternative intelligence tests and its acceptance by reference to its streamline counterpart, the supervised intelligence tests. This by ground of unbalanced relationship for the sake of its professional structure and seriousness rating. Further, the incorporation of these tests when based on the grounds of validation by relying on one for its confirmation of its counterpart, thus factualized with the following reference to the incorporation of todays standard deviation is set to the basis of the equalization principle.

Olsen: We (Mensa) can only accept scores from reputable tests that are properly normed, and that are taken in a supervised setting. We need to have confidence that you took your own test without getting any help from friends or family. And I’ll admit that I’m somewhat sceptical of the validity and reliability of any test that’s normed based on response from 10-15 people.

Jacobsen: In America, there has been a long-term decline in the considered importance of high-IQ and high-IQ societies; in fact, there’s a continuous decrease over decades of the perceived import of IQ in general. How is this trend, if any, in Norway?

Haereid: That’s interesting. It’s the opposite in Norway. We have a rise in focus, and with the Mozart of Chess Magnus Carlsen in our backyard, its importance is increasing. I don’t know if this is the case within the educational system. Tor Arne could say more about that. In general, it has gained more respect. That’s my impression.

Why is it a decline in America, do you think?
Jørgensen: The obvious response to the question at hand is to only give my support to the notion of decline, based on my personal opinion to have a high intelligence has never been looked upon as a «big deal» in any form or shape, only physical activity is viewed as any proper degree of importance in Norway.

Olsen: Whether high IQ is of importance depends entirely on who you ask. Of course, having high IQ doesn’t make you a better person, it doesn’t guarantee that you’re don’t have any glaringly negative personality issues, and it doesn’t ensure you’ll have great success in life, but there can’t be any doubt that in general higher IQ gives you access to a somewhat better toolbox. Whether you use the tools for anything worthwhile is a completely different matter.

I’d also like to mention a comic strip; it’s an goldie oldie from Savage Chickens: https://www.savagechickens.com/2008/12 /iq-test.html

Regarding the importance of IQ societies: it is what we make of it. Several of our members consider us to be a social environment for them. And we are that too, but not *only* that. Like pretty much every volunteer organisation, we do what we can with what our volunteers can or will provide. For example, we recently spent some time and effort into writing and sending our answer(s) to an open hearing regarding a new “law of education” here in Norway. The proposed changes to the law would have made it more difficult for gifted children to get an individually adjusted education.

Jacobsen: In terms of the flavours of the high-IQ societies, of which there are many, what seem like some of the overlaps of the styles and contents of Norwegian high-IQ individuals and societies?

Haereid: I think there are many equal traits among high IQ people independent of nation; some general ones, like stubbornness, knowing best, strong opinions, fast (and often wrong) conclusions, feeling alone and isolated, victims of bullying, nerdy, ironic. A winner in one’s own view and a loser in the normal population. This is the same in Norway as anywhere else.

Jørgensen: The general search for innovative commitment within various fields of interest such as politics, technology, and space exploration. Further more, intelligence testing of varying degree of difficulty in the search for what is possible to achieve considering one’s mental qualities.

Olsen: I know there’s some overlap. Some of our members are also members in one or more other high IQ societies, but I don’t have the impression that it’s something many of our members do.

Disclaimer: I don’t have hard facts / numbers to back this up. This is just my gut feeling, after having conversations with several members.

Jacobsen: Following from the previous question, what seem like some of the unique, or nearly distinct, qualities of Norwegian culture mapped onto the high-IQ communities, inasmuch as these exist to various types and degrees?

Haereid: At the moment I can’t come up with any specific.

Generally, Norway is a social democracy, with traditionally a rural population. We are not very social, but kind if people (want to and dare to) learn to know us. We hate small talk, I guess, and fumble when we meet any from abroad that are better than us in being nice to strangers. That’s not one of our strengths. We are not very nice to strangers, who we treat like trespassers; people we don’t know, foreigners, can experience Norwegians as ignorant and rejecting. But often it’s shyness, based on a history under suppression. Norwegians can be quite rude, and seemingly lack empathy. It’s not our best trait. But we can also be the best friend if we feel comfort and learn to trust the people around us. Norwegians are intelligent. But it’s not always that visible because of the shyness and introvert behavior; you have to read between the lines. I think Norwegians are complicated, and that includes the highly intelligent ones.

Jørgensen: With that notion in mind from previous question, there is a clear link in order to not undermine their qualities in order to «fit in» with their own, and not overestimate these qualities solely based on their sociocultural perspective within its contextual contemporary momentum.

Olsen: I guess modesty might be a Scandinavian thing; it does seem like several members are afraid that others will know they’re a member. Not because they’re ashamed of the organization, but because they think it might be considered braging.

Some members are asking if they should put their Mensa membership on their resume / CV, also fearing that it might be seen as bragging.

Personally, I don’t see why it should be a problem that someone finds out you’re a member. For me it boils down to if, how and when I inform people. It’s never the first thing I tell people, unless it’s relevant. If I meet someone in a social setting, I
*never* introduce myself as “Eivind Olsen, chair of Mensa Norway”, but I will do that if it’s relevant, for example if I’m being interviewed by media. I don’t even try to argue that “you should listen to me because my IQ score is probably higher than yours” – that’s the quickest path to losing any discussion, really. I don’t flash my membership card unless I have a good reason. One good reason would be when I buy hamburgers at the regular meeting place of my local Mensa chapter, since I will then get a discount.

Jacobsen: What are some of the plans and expected developments for Mensa Norway in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, whether in 2020, 2021, even potentially beyond?

Olsen: All our physical activities were put on hold for a while but we’re now opening up more and more again. We have our annual “national test day” in 2 weeks, and all our proctors have been informed about the extra precautions we are taking, such as ensuring people keep their distance, and making sure there’s plenty of disinfectant available (for external use only). We are still growing, but somewhat slower than we would have expected had this been a non-coronavirus year. Some of our bigger plans have had to slow down due to the situation but we’re hoping we can pick up the lost speed.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Erik Haereid has been a member of Mensa since 2013, and is among the top scorers on several of the most credible IQ-tests in the unstandardized HRT-environment. He is listed in the World Genius Directory. He is also a member of several other high IQ Societies.

Erik, born in 1963, grew up in Oslo, Norway, in a middle class home at Grefsen nearby the forest, and started early running and cross country skiing. After finishing schools he studied mathematics, statistics and actuarial science at the University of Oslo. One of his first glimpses of math-skills appeared after he got a perfect score as the only student on a five hour math exam in high school.

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[4] Individual Publication Date: September 15, 2020: [http://www.in-sightjournal.com/norway-1](http://www.in-sightjournal.com/norway-1);

Full Issue Publication Date: January 1, 2021: [https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/](https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/).

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Norwegians of the High-Range Discussion with Erik Haereid, Eivind Olsen, and Tor Arne Jørgensen: Statistician & Actuarial Scientist; Chair, Mensa Norway; 2019 Genius of the Year – Europe, World Genius Directory (2)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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Abstract

Erik Haereid is an Actuarial Scientist and Statistician. Eivind Olsen is the Chair of Mensa Norway. Tor Arne Jørgensen is the 2019 Genius of the Year – Europe. They discuss: some common sentiments in Mensa Norway or commentary around Mensa International on the first point of “the positive social club aspects”; the common sentiments about the “harsh social environment”; two divergent trends in Mensa International and in the high-range communities with the high-range communities exhibiting many of the same symptoms; the FB-forum and social media in general for these various communities; edge the trends more towards mutual respect; individuals within the high-IQ and high-range communities; the catastrophes of WWII; motivation for its existence changed over time; more than a social club; and serious and more fun outgrowths of Mensa Norway.

Keywords: Erik Haereid, Eivind Olsen, IQ, Mensa, Mensa Norway, Tor Arne Jørgensen.
Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Some have commented on the positive social club aspects of Mensa International for them. Others have commented on the harsh nature of the social environment for them. What are some common sentiments in Mensa Norway or commentary around Mensa International on the first point of “the positive social club aspects”?

Erik Haereid[1]*: I am not active in Mensa, but my impression is “that very intelligent people meet peers”; meeting people that think and talk like themselves, and that’s rewarding. Some, maybe a lot of people with IQs over 130 feel different compared to the general population. Mensa provides an environment where it’s ok asking odd or complex questions about anything. At least concerning most issues.

Meeting Mensans from abroad enriches Mensans in every country; meeting other cultures and maybe pinpoint some common features independent of nations.

Eivind Olsen[3],[4]: Several members have said it felt like they “found a home.” For some members, the social aspect is important. Others are happy enough just to get the membership magazine.

Jacobsen: What about the common sentiments about the “harsh social environment”?

Haereid: Free speech is not free speech. It’s quite obvious that some are more liked and popular than others. There’s some discrimination and racism inside Mensa. It’s to some degree about likes and who you want to discuss with, and not what is discussed. It’s about how you comment depending on the other person; who is who. That infects the environment, unfortunately. Talking bad about persons behind their backs, building friendship through establishing social hierarchies, defining some as more worth than others. This is, to me surprisingly, a part of Mensa, as in the general population. It should be banned in a community like Mensa. Mensans should solve conflicts, not create them. Mensans should reflect on their emotions and expressions, not only live unconsiously with them.

Olsen: There are several different Facebook groups, each with its own “community standards” and environment. When you have a high number of people interacting, you’re bound to have people with incompatible personalities. There’s always someone going on about their “freedumb of speech” being violated when it’s suggested that perhaps their comments are missing the mark. Most manage to get along just fine.

Jacobsen: What seems to explain these two divergent trends in Mensa International and in the high-range communities with the high-range communities exhibiting many of the same symptoms?

Haereid: Personal or emotional insecurity. Need for power (over oneself) and identification with one’s high IQ. Differences among individuals seem to be a plus in general if you accept yourself as different. People who show others that they are different or unique, and are substantially proud of it, are often charming and accepted as different. We are all different in many ways, and everyone wants to be themselves among others, removing the masks and just be without all the restraints. If people clap and stay when the fat lady sings, without being ironic, she has hit some need in the audience that is important for everyone.

Tor Arne Jørgensen[2]*: As I have given a blank reply on the two previous questions by reasons of not being a former nor a current member of Mensa Norway. I find myself curious about this and the two previous questions, and the respective answers that will then appear in the comments from both Erik and Eivind as this is more their expertise.

Olsen: That’s a good question, which I don’t really have a good answer for. Perhaps Mensa and the other high-IQ communities cater to different needs, for different personality types. As observed from the outside, I get the impression that for at least some of the high-IQ communities it seems to be more about competition and prestige, with the personal goal to become a member of as many communities as possible. “Gotta catch ‘em all!” If it’s more about joining an organization for the social aspect, it often makes more sense to join one with members in your region.

Jacobsen: Is some of this made worse with the FB-forum and social media in general for these various communities?

Haereid: Yes. Social media has the tendency to remove personal responsibility and feelings of empathy and sympathy towards each other; it makes us into hollow objects, and potentially into the worst
part of ourselves. A precondition for a functional society is mutual respect.

Jørgensen: I believe it’s important to embrace the diversity of personalities, opinions, and backgrounds, following the tenet of “live and let live.” See the others as individuals too. They can still be good people even if they’re not your identical twins.

With regards to the FB-forum/social media and the “harsh social environment”, no I have not personally felt this in any way, of course, there is some healthy competition between the members within the high-range community, but not something that can be characterized on the basis on the question topic.

Olsen: Some of the aggressive and nasty behavior comes from people that are really nice persons in real life. Perhaps it’s too easy to dehumanize your “opponent” when you’re in the middle of a “battle of keyboards.” The information flow on Facebook also means that whatever someone posted a few hours ago might be drowning in the feed, which also encourages quick remarks over longer, deeper answers.

Jacobsen: What might edge the trends more towards mutual respect and away from occasional disrespect producing pockets of a “harsh social environment”?

Haereid: Avoid talking behind each other’s backs; avoid building mistrust and planting lies about each other to gain power oneself. To be open-minded. Avoid ignoring those you don’t like; to let everyone get a voice, and respect and listen to it. To discuss topics instead of bragging about oneself.

When you don’t like a person, use your intelligence asking why instead of following your emotions without asking. Every time the answer is replaced by another emotion, continue asking.

Jørgensen: Through cross-disciplinary collaboration, where a unified goal is based on community understanding and respect, will by that enable us all to cement the basis for a strong foundation where bridgebuilding and innovation can take place for the common good.

Olsen: I believe it’s important to embrace the diversity of personalities, opinions, and backgrounds, following the tenet of “live and let live”. See the others as individuals too. They can still be good people even if they’re not your identical twins.

Jacobsen: What inspires individuals within the high-IQ and high-range communities to make full use of talents and temperaments within the general cognitive profile for themselves?

Haereid: By evolving more acceptance, safety, and mutual respect inside the communities. To dare to speak outside these walls, one has to feel certain about one’s abilities. This could be like a family. If this is the case, that the environment confirms you and your abilities, you will dare to express your thoughts and ideas outside this environment.

Jørgensen: I have made my own test site; torigtests.com, this is a test site where individuals can try out my high range tests for no cost. This was an idea I felt I needed to explore by using my inherent creative abilities, and the utilization thereof based on the entertainment value of the principle. I have now made twelve high range test, had between 250-300 attempts on these tests. Also when I won the World Genius award back in 2019, I saw the need to promote the community out to the general public, I have now reached out to 50 000+ readers and listeners with my articles in newspaper and radio features.

The basis for this is due to my natural curiosity and exploratory being. The discovery of my talent as to intellectual abilities, just gave me the boost I needed to pursue my dream of an ever more understanding world where the gifted can have their rightful recognition of the opportunities they have provided the world with.

Olsen: I’d say that varies greatly, probably based on a combination of personality and what your situation is. Some are “nerds” (I use that as a positive word), being able to focus on areas they’re interested in, whereas others need encouragement.

Jacobsen: Mensa International was founded after the catastrophes of WWII. Why?

Haereid: Because of the cruelties; someone wanted to gather the most intelligent minds on the globe to solve war-related problems, included racism, fascism, fundamentalism…

Some thought that solving peace-war-related problems should be addressed to the intellectual, cognitive side of humans and not the emotional one.

Jørgensen: Mensa International was started by the following merits of acting as a conflict prevention measure, with the clear intention of avoiding further worldwide conflict, which had almost managed to overthrow the pillars of the structural world community during the second world war. The idea was that these highly intellectual member staff would then act as advisory reference contacts for the leading authorities of the English state at that time, thus inspired by its own core value with reference to the basis for the foundation of Mensa International.
Olsen: I guess most of you have heard the story about how Roland Berrill and Lancelot Ware met on a train, and during a conversation they decided they should start a “high IQ club”, a think-tank meant to give advice to governments and ensuring that we’ll not have a WWIII. Now, I can’t guarantee that the story is accurate. We do seem to be doing fine at preventing WWIII though, since it hasn’t happened yet.

Jacobsen: How has this motivation for its existence changed over time?

Haereid: It seems that it focuses on the social club aspect, i.e. making very intelligent people feel at home somewhere, and finding the right tools to measure intelligence. MI claims “to identify and foster human intelligence for the benefit of humanity”, as it is written in one of their three stated purposes today. But what, how, when, and where?

I think there is a lot of potential inside Mensa, but that the connection with the general population is slim. You have to be heard. You have to connect to the real world. And you have to understand what is important and possible to do something with, and not. As very intelligent you should know that moving mountains is a question of time and methods, and not if it’s possible or not.

It’s a difficult task, because some parts of science have decided that humans are absolute and unchangeable evil or brutal and that it’s impossible to do something with our aggressive sides. If you choose to believe in that, you are an idiot if you use your time to promote peace. Then you focus on meeting peers in a social environment, drink your coffee and beer, watch the sunrise and sunset and cross your fingers for the best.

It seems that there are some issues that humans won’t touch, and one of them is human aggression. It’s within the “war and love”-realm; outside any law. Maybe this is the case, that even the smartest men and women on the planet can’t deal with these issues. It’s easier to play board games and brag about your IQ.

As long as “being someone” and “creating a safe environment” apparently are opposites, it seems impossible to avoid wars and severe conflicts. The day we internalize that the value of sharing is higher than not sharing, we will evolve beyond the limit of pathologic egosism. To reach this level, we have to experience it as more valuable; we have to trust in it. We can’t remove “What’s in it for me?”, but we can hopefully make “What’s in it for me?” compatible with everyone else’s.

Jorgensen: This question is best answered by Erik and Eivind, who are both active members themselves of Mensa Norway. What I have as a non-member of Mensa Norway is then best replied solely based on what is written on the official Mensa Norway’s homepage, where the following fact is pointed out about the possibility of active gatherings where one can share thoughts and ideas, also where events with subsequent excursions are possible to do as a type of “social happening”.

So to the point of «motivation for its existence», the possibility of an ideological continuation of the lifelong origin, then the undersigned is believed based on the facts that emerge, hereby stated as a clear reply of no for me, by reasons as to the fundamental basic principle of renouncing its ordinary proclamation in its entirety. Transferable into allowed the organization to be guided on a siding by referred social events, thus subsequently not stick to the program’s origins, has by that allowed itself to fallen away as to both origin and credibility.

Olsen: I wasn’t even born in 1946, and I didn’t become a member until almost 70 years later, so my understanding here could be wrong. Due to our apolitical stance, we’re not meddling in politics. I do have the impression that the topic of gifted children has gained more focus in the last few decades.

Jacobsen: Liljeqvist aims to have Mensa International evolve, as he has claimed, into something more than a social club with proclaimed successes in this manner. How has this vision expanded to Mensa Norway? How has this, if at all, expanded into the high-range communities too – or originated independently in the high-range environments too?

Haereid: I like to read that there is a vision, and hope the leaders both in Mensa International and Norway will take their responsibility to the next level. The opportunities are there, for sure. And it’s the leader’s job to motivate, establish goals and find ways to achieve them.

Jorgensen: Based on its most fundamental function regards to evolving intentionality with the desire for optimal growth through the means of uniformity, the implicative has not been optimal within the incorporative societies. Here it has only achieved its validity to influence for the purpose of measuring the basic intentions by and for its inadvertence due to its past to present result only. As to the future, only time
will tell if this will be any successful path or not to follow.

Olsen: For some of our members we’ll always primarily be a social club, but we do remind our members that we also have goals that are for the benefit of society. We have a “gifted children program”, where we try to improve the knowledge about gifted children/youth. We have an annual award where we give acknowledgment to a person or organization that has done something good related to our external goals. And we’re in the process of setting up a research foundation, intended to provide funding for projects related to intelligence.

Jacobsen: Mensa International is enormous comprising more than enough members to perform plural functions based on international status and operational capacities, as well as unprecedented and by far unmatched membership size. What can be these serious and more fun outgrowths of Mensa Norway now, and the high-range communities for that matter?

Haereid: The potential is huge, and people have to be led. Intelligent ones too. If you have an army you have the basics, but an army can make both peace and war. Humans can manage to do the very best and most intelligent kind of good work and can destroy what seems unstoppable. We are strange creatures. We have to understand who we are and how we are built to build the society that we need and want and that is fruitful for everyone.

I think that if you can gather the brightest minds into one task, establishing the optimal motivation, gaining the right harmonic effect from every individual, it’s barely no limit. One way is to view humans as leaders of nature; we can choose if we want to be egocentric leaders amplifying our own value by exploiting nature and see other species as inferior to us, or we can be modern leaders that take responsibility for our “employees”; being aware of that the leaders job is to make the employees do their best and not making them feel like slaves.

Jørgensen: My personal hope for the future is to be able to provoke a possible coexistence of these functional movements towards its current existential uniform outlook. This is understood as a universal common understanding of one’s own future-oriented search for unsolved tasks, which must be met by all the world’s foremost intellectuals in a united front by reasons alone as to preserve the unintended future outcome.

Olsen: That depends largely on our volunteers. Having a higher number of members doesn’t guarantee that you have the volunteers for a project.

An example I’ve used before is related to Mensa Norway’s annual gatherings. They are mainly organized by our regional chapters, and even the smaller chapters can pull that off if they have a handful of people willing to put some time and effort into it.

I believe we can always do more regarding to gifted children/youth. And we have initiated some research-related activities; one which we hope to go public with very soon, and one which is in the earlier stages of planning.

As for the social aspect, we try to increase the membership numbers overall, but also put an effort into having tests done in locations where we want to help build a critical mass. Even though many activities and social interactions can be done online, it’s not a complete substitute for having members nearby. An online dinner or pub crawl just isn’t the same as meeting local members face to face.

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Women of the High-Range Discussion with Anja Jaenicke, Beatrice Rescazzi, Monika Orski, and Dr. Sandra Schlick: Actress & Poet, Germany; President, AtlantIQ Society; Board Member, Mensa International; Thesis Supervisor, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland (1)

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Abstract

Anja Jaenicke is a German Poet and Actor. Beatrice Rescazzi is the President of the AtlantIQ Society. Monika Orski is the former Ordförande/Chairman, Mensa Sverige/Mensa Sweden (2015-2019) and a current Board Member (International) of Mensa International. Sandra Schlick has the expertise and interest in Managing Mathematics, Statistics, and Research Methodology with a focus on online teaching, training and thesis supervision. They discuss: true humanities; a real humanities education; a declining emphasis on humanities educations in academe; reduced import of the humanities; high-IQ societies incorporate achievements in the humanities into their admission criteria; high-IQ societies include a humanities sub-community or community into its operations for the benefit of those so inclined; some personal and professional involvements in the humanities inside of and outside of the high-IQ communities; historical geniuses; writers or poets understood more fully and portrayed more realistically girls, adult women, and elder women; striking or clear examples of the written works or poetry exemplifying this assessment; women, in general, dominate the humanities; how the particular factors play out in different areas of professional and personal life; high-IQ groups harbour more men than women; women dominate in the humanities; and a more well-rounded human being, a cultured person.

Keywords: Anja Jaenicke, Beatrice Rescazzi, education, geniuses, high-IQ, high-IQ societies, history, humanities, Mensa Sweden, Monika Orski, poets, Sandra Schlick, writers.

Women of the High-Range Discussion with Anja Jaenicke, Beatrice Rescazzi, Monika Orski, and Dr. Sandra Schlick: Actress & Poet, Germany; President, AtlantIQ Society; Board Member, Mensa International; Thesis Supervisor, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland (1)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*
Scott Douglas Jacobsen: With some preliminary introductions to one another and proposals of subject matter, we will cover, in this group discussion: the humanities in general, the arts in general, large scale issues, climate change, democratic protections, the furtherance of democracy and human rights, how to work with the gifted and to be a leader, future scenarios for the economy and business regarding the coronavirus pandemic, and then proceed with some open discussion. To the subject of humanities, if we take a look at the vast array of high-IQ societies on offer, only a few truly focus on the humanities as a secondary, even a co-primary, admission criteria to their particularized community. Defining terms, what is true humanities to you?

Anja Jaenicke[1]*: A holistic knowledge of the human capacity.

One of the most frequently asked questions is the general inclusion of theological studies into the humanities. In German the humanities are called “Geisteswissenschaft” meaning spiritual science. As long as theological studies are focused on historical, cultural and archeological evidence there is nothing to say against it. But as soon as it leaves too much room for speculations and superstition it becomes dogmatic and no longer belongs in the academic realm. But that of course can be said for every branch of scientific studies too.

Beatrice Rescazzi[2]*: If I wanted to upset the vocabulary and give my personal definition of human sciences, I imagine that someone would have to complain. Especially those who, unlike me, are experienced graduates in this subject. The human sciences are those disciplines that study the human being and society, by definition. Maybe, as a non-expert on the subject I can criticize here and there how the information is reported in the books, given that there are cultural biases on the origin and development of human societies, institutions, social relationships and the foundations of social life. In general there is a western-centric view, with biases regarding culture, race, sex, religion and language being considered predominant.

Monika Orski[3]*: I would use the rather common definition that humanities are the branches of learning that have a cultural character. Thus humanities include academic topics as diverse as literature, archeology and philosophy, to name only a few, and can be contrasted with natural sciences and social sciences.

Dr. Sandra Schlick[4],[5]*: Thinking apart literature and definitions, in times of Corona, humanity means to help each other, respect the rules from the governments – yes, in terms of taking distance, using masks, not gathering. Also, to help each other in coping with the crisis, to make kind of human information chains by reporting to each other potential risky situations and to discuss these. Thinking in a broader context, being human means to not focus just on oneself but to understand the other the context, being other humans, be it nature and animals. Humanity is driven by respect, despite role models do not suggest it always.

Jacobsen: What would be a real humanities education to you?

Jaenicke: Much of our past history and culture has been documented only by chronicle writers with a theological background. If you think about the Constitutions of Clarendon made by Henry II. Plantagenet and Thomas Becket, they were one of the first official attempts at reforming and separating the clerical and royal authorities and jurisdictions. And that was in the year 1164. Please think about how many religious conflicts and wars we had since that time. Only if we understand the history and the psyche of our ancestors can we gain knowledge about ourselves and the needs to form peaceful and free future societies.

Rescazzi: In my opinion, true social science education should give due weight to all the cultures and people who have contributed to human development, without placing ethnic groups, women or peoples in the background in order to glorify a specific model of person and culture.

Orski: Not being an expert in education, and with only graduate-level education in a small segment of the broad field of humanities myself, I don’t consider myself qualified to really suggest a curriculum. In general terms, I would suggest that it’s always good to set a broad overview to start with, then to let those interested dive into more specialized education on specific topics.

Schlick: In education to have a view on communities and teams, to motivate exchange and to critically evaluate existing role models.

Jacobsen: Why is there a declining emphasis on humanities educations in academe?

Jaenicke: The more knowledge is available to us the more complex it becomes. The trend in education is to higher specialization. But of course, economical reasons play a role too.
Rescazzi: I can’t pretend I know what the statistical trends are on the humanities today at the academy compared to other disciplines, and explain to you the reason why there is a decline or not.

Orski: I wish I knew… I think that in general, academia in many countries has become more of professional training institutes, which in part takes over the more general teaching of knowledge to form a base for further research. Also, a strong emphasis on industry and profits accentuates this tendency.

Schlick: Good question, academia has become more and more business alike and driven by profit. When we speak of humanity it does not exclude economics but it evaluates how far we do not damage others by thinking economically. In this context, academia is at risk to drive economics with too few perspectives on humanities.

Jacobsen: Is this reduced import of the humanities a positive, a negative, or both in different parts depending on the disciplines, in general?

Jaenicke: “Science arose from poetry, when time changes the two can meet again on a higher level as friends.” J.W. Goethe

Rescazzi: If there is a decline in humanitarian discipline students, I can assume that some other disciplines have taken over. Is the decline due to a greater participation of female students in scientific disciplines, is it due to a choice towards studies that guarantee a better salary, or to a growing lack of interest in this subject or to something else? I don’t have enough data to judge.

Orski: In general, I would say it’s a negative. But there are always limits to how much we can learn – or how much we can teach – in a set amount of time. There are sure to be cases where this general negative is less of a negative than the alternatives would be.

Schlick: As said above, a sole focus on economics might provide quick wins, but is at risk to oversee long-term consequences.

Jacobsen: What high-IQ societies incorporate achievements in the humanities into their admission criteria?

Jaenicke: There are quite a lot of IQ societies. If you take a look, you will be surprised.

Rescazzi: AtlantiQ, ISI-S, Chorium and some other societies about writing and poetry, for example, include humanities communities. Thus, the humanities include: literature, philosophy, history, religion, languages, art history, philology, semiotics, visual arts and performing arts. I am interested in all these topics, as I always like reading to learn about everything. Specifically, I am fascinated by Stoic philosophy, by history: especially by deepening the everyday life of people and what is not found in school books (history of food, living conditions, detailed biographies, history of chemistry, history of biology, discoveries, etc.). I have also read a lot about philosophy and religions, in search of what unites and distinguishes them, but also as doors open to the mentality of different peoples. Regarding languages, in addition to English, I speak Italian, the dialect of my area, and Esperanto. Instead, I know very little German and Japanese (Hiragana only), because at times I abandon their study. I paint with various techniques, but more frequently I create computer drawings. 3D drawing is both fun and a means of creating objects which I then 3D print. As for the performing arts, I don’t think anyone wants to see me dance. Anyway, I love to sing. When I was younger, I sang in a local rock band for a little while. Once, talking to friends, I was criticizing disco music. A funny challenge arose that I would have to compose an entire CD in one day and sell at least one copy, proving that I too could write something better than those slavish sounds. That CD is called “Atrhmosfera” and I sold it to a fan who listened to the demos of each song before buying. Take this, bad music!

Orski: The high-IQ societies I know of only use IQ as their admission criteria, which means that no kind of achievement has any impact on the admission decisions.

Schlick: I recall some are explicitly mentioned aspects thereof, but frankly, there are a lot of high-IQ societies out there and I wonder, which ones might set the bar alongside the WIN network.

Jacobsen: What high-IQ societies include a humanities sub-community or community into its operations for the benefit of those so inclined?

Jaenicke: When I have been looking for IQ societies, I found many very appealing approaches.

Rescazzi: See my previous answer.

Orski: Well, I wouldn’t really know about the internal organization of all high-IQ societies, but Mensa, being by far the largest one, lets members create meetings and interest groups for whatever topics they are interested in, and helps promote those within the society. I know of several book clubs, philosophy discussion groups and other groups for different humanities interests. Those are open groups, and any member of Mensa can join them at any time.
Schlick: As above this question is quite specific and asks for detailed knowledge on certain communities.

Jacobsen: What have been some personal and professional involvements in the humanities inside and outside of the high-IQ communities?

Jaenicke: Please take a look at my resume of life achievements.

Rescazzi: In the professional field, having designed some websites and graphics for a period, I could say that I have been involved in the professional field of the visual arts. In the world of high IQ, I am the editor and designer of a magazine, in which I also write articles on the most disparate topics. I am an honorary / distinguished member of some societies that include artistic and musical talents in the admission, such as Chorium and ISI-S.

Orski: I have a BA in literature, but the degree I actually use professionally is an M.Sc. in computer science and engineering, so I wouldn’t really say I have professional involvement in the humanities. However, as a published writer, including works of fiction, I guess I can claim some kind of relation to the humanities. And within Mensa, I write book reviews for the Swedish Mensa magazine and organize book club meetings with my local group in Stockholm.

Schlick: For me this is definitively in adult education where I train students. Training can only be a success when looking at the person as a whole alongside the role of the student. Talking about problems with the curriculum or topic or aims in live (private and professional) can boost motivation and is to the benefit of both, student and docent.

Jacobsen: When I ask about historical geniuses, most reference Goethe, Sidis, da Vinci, Einstein, and a handful of others, in fact, the list is a shortlist. What geniuses in history and at present stand out regarding productivity and works coming out of the humanities?

Jaenicke: Even though the humanities stand in the shadow of our modern education system, the list of great minded people in the humanities would be too long to publish in this context.


Orski: The list might be a shortlist, but as genius is truly rare such a list is bound to be short. Also, I’m rather reluctant to try and make lists of the sort. However, da Vinci will qualify for a humanities focus, and I would say that so will Murasaki, and maybe Austen.

Schlick: Despite probably few like my answer, I like the humanitarian activity of Bill Gates and his wife. Just wonder, how far this question can give us an indication of role models?

Jacobsen: Since this is a discussion of women in the high-range with a male as a moderator or butler of sorts, what writers or poets understood more fully and portrayed more realistically girls, adult women, and elder women than others? Why them?

Jaenicke: Oh, there are quite a few.

Rescazzi: It depends on the historical period. Of course, Jane Austin and Louisa May Alcott painted their female characters with accuracy, although we should keep in mind that they were all women from another era. Jane Eyre, by Charlotte Brontë painted a female character who becomes an independent and spirited survivor after having grown up an orphan in a cruel environment. Unfortunately, courage is a virtue that is rarely recognized in women, but which the author shows us with mastery in the resilience of the protagonist. Another good portrait of a female character is given by Elizabeth Strout, with her Olive Kitteridge. Olive is brought to a deeper understanding of herself and her life, and she also offers profound insights into the human condition: its conflicts, its tragedies and joys, and the endurance it requires, through her own eyes.

Orski: A good literary portrait lets us see the general through the highly specific. Thus, I would be reluctant to point to portraits of women in general, but rather to specific portraits of specific women, that give the opportunity to see the world as they might see it and the limitations of those women’s lives. To mention a few writers: Selma...
Lagerlöf (of course I start with a Swedish classic), Charlotte Brontë, Doris Lessing, Ludmila Ulitskaya, Amelie Nothomb, Olga Tokarczuk. I could go on and on making lists.

Schlick: I confess that I did not read or write poems since my teenage times.

Jacobsen: Following from the previous two questions, any particular striking or clear examples of the written works or poetry exemplifying this assessment?

Jaenicke: One of the oldest examples is a poem in Occitan from the 11th century called “Tomida femina.”

Rescazi: In my opinion, most of all, Emily Dickinson is the writer who, through the themes of nature, love and death, reflects and captures not only the small moments of everyday life, but also the most important themes and battles that involved the rest of the company: it is she herself who, through her great sensitivity, the emphatic digressions and elaborate metaphors of her poems, describes how a woman thinks and perceives the world. Turning to my favourite literary genre, I find that the brilliant Isaac Asimov had thoroughly understood the female soul. His female characters are delicate and profound, they are free from stereotypes and their presence in his novels is balanced, not hidden. The classic schemes in which the male protagonist is the obvious companion of a subordinate female figure, often highly sexualized and lacking in personal aspirations, do not exist in Asimov’s far-sighted novels. Asimov’s female characters are girls and women who, like men in their own way, think, dream, ask questions and seek answers. It is therefore incredible that a science fiction writer is the one who best described reality.

Orski: Aren’t there statistics on this, from many countries? Thus no need to speculate. Low pay in relation to the work expected, cultural standards and norms, etc.

Schlick: It’s the phenomenon that a) no blue-collar, and b) best friends (also girls) who go into certain areas. In fact, my first degree was machine construct engineer. I guess I am the wrong person to ask that. Still, I teach the maths and statistics. I like steel and becoming dirty at work, but also like managing and conceptualizing, that’s why I earned my Ph.D. in the field of strategic management and deal with around 10 DBA and MSc projects in my area of expertise. So, I do not have a much better explanation. I was the sole woman engineer student in my class, there was another one in my year, we became number 3 and 4 in 20 years being engineers.

Jacobsen: How do these particular factors play out in different areas of professional and personal life – either as a set or as individual factors?

Jaenicke: Even those who come from the studies of mathematics and natural science, I do not think it is a gender problem.

Rescazi: There is a great growth of female doctors, who already occupied the more traditional nursing and child care jobs. Even in politics, which is part of the humanities, there is a growth of female elements and so also in the arts. Without the restrictions imposed by inequality, women are generally more likely to communicate, care for others and for society. Hence the growth in their presence in those careers that are aimed at people.

Orski: We are all part of the societies we live in, and the surrounding society is always part of us. You have probably heard the joke that “men tend to choose high paying professions – like a doctor, engineer, CEO, etc, while women naturally go towards lower-paying jobs like female doctor, female engineer, and female CEO.” So those factors will be there, and while we all have to navigate them, we can also work to gradually change them.
Schlick: I have definitively to fight much more and gaining recognition costs me a lot of time. To advance in a career is extremely hard. On the one hand, it might be that I am female, on the other being talented also can be a curse, it’s not easy to think quick and to be forced to talk slow and explain things several times.

Jacobsen: High-IQ groups harbour more men than women, probably at all levels, whether societies, interest groups, or ‘listings/rankings. Why?

Jaenicke: I think that any kind of creative person be it female or male has a tendency to stand apart from society. Good art, philosophy and even law have seldom come from beneficial and friendly spaces. But I think that in our time artists and other people in the humanities are often underestimated because our measurement for value has changed over time. That is nothing to worry about, it is part of history. Every time has its own achievements and greatness.

Rescazzi: There are two main reasons for the low number of women joining high-IQ societies. The first is cultural. Statistically, gifted girls are less recognized than boys. A character factor also intervenes: females tend to doubt their potential more, with a more widespread Impostor Syndrome, while males are generally more inclined to overestimate themselves and flaunt their skills. Furthermore, the traditional division of duties prevents women from having free time to devote to themselves, due to occupations at home: it is worrying to note that there are no adhesions by women from the more traditionalist countries at all. The other reason is that there is indeed a difference in the brains of men and women: the distribution of IQ in the male and female populations is different, with a greater variation in the male than in the female with the latter more concentrated in the average values. It means that among males there are both more subnormal and gifted individuals, while in females both the subnormal and the gifted are rarer (some links grouped in this article: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Variability_hypothesis#Modern_studies).

Orski: That is another “I wish I knew”. However, I can say that for the high-IQ group I really know, Mensa Sweden, the gender distribution among members simply reflects the gender distribution among candidates. However, the success rate of candidates who take the admission test administered by Mensa Sweden is slightly higher for women than for men. Not a large difference, but visible. If we could only persuade as many women as men to take the admission test, the gender balance for this particular society might even out with time.

Schlick: Women have to work very hard, it’s time-consuming to go for “clubs”, also high-IQ ones.

Jacobsen: If women dominate in the humanities, and if a society wishes to include more women into their membership, how would incorporation of more humanities orientations and foci make these, potentially, more individually beneficial and friendly spaces for women based on statistical tendencies of interest and talent?

Rescazzi: In my opinion, it would be enough for women to choose their preferred careers without obstacles. Politics, medicine, music and others are still often considered the prerogative of men while women have shown that they can equal and in some cases surpass men in these fields, who are sometimes attracted simply by the position of power rather than by the discipline itself.

Orski: Depends on the society, of course. Some might achieve this through more diversified activities. Others might look more to a broader benefit to the surrounding community or to human society as a whole.

Schlick: I feel very comfortable that you – Scott – bring us together and manage the discussion round. This could bring new motivation to high IQ societies. Moderated thematic discussion clusters might be a potential way.

Jacobsen: How do the humanities make a more well-rounded human being, a cultured person, and give insight into human nature inasmuch as we understand it?

Jaenicke: I want to answer the left out question of how the humanities make a more rounded and cultivated human being, here at the end because it is quintessential. Humans have produced art from the beginning of time. Art was the engine of self-awareness and science but also a channel to other realities that we can not explain until today. Who are we? Why are we here? Where did we come from and where do we go?

Science which evolved from the greater arts could only give little explanation about the phenomena of altered consciousness and after death. But art can! Often without the direct communication of man-made words. Listen to Bach for half an hour and you will understand much more of your questions than we all together can give to you. Look at the wonderful pyramids, cathedrals and castles men have built and understand the holism of art, mathematics, astrology, physics and music. Look at paintings of renaissance...
artists and Cromagnon cave man and understand the human soul. Do not wait for our stuttering and overly intellectual tries to explain something that is not explainable in words alone.

Go and find out yourself.

**Rescazzi:** Kant said: “Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the more often and steadily we reflect upon them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me.” These two elements of our existence – what is outside of us, that is the universe and all that it contains; and what is within ourselves, with our mind and thoughts – are the observed and the observer, and the one influences the other. If we limit ourselves to looking at what is outside of us, without looking within ourselves, we do not have a yardstick to understand the universe. We must first understand how we think and reason, what we are influenced and limited by. On the other hand, it is by observing what is outside of us that we obtain information about our existence, that we understand our place and size compared to everything else around us. So to increase our knowledge, we cannot exclude the humanistic side, we cannot overlook the observer, that is the imperfect instrument that attempts to measure the universe. It is therefore not possible to open the door of knowledge without the key of the human element.

**Orski:** Well, yes. To mention only a few things: A basic knowledge of history and that societies and cultures change over time is essential to understanding the world around us. To learn about other people’s thoughts is essential to be able to expand your own thinking. And while no one can really get to know and talk to hundreds of people in-depth, we can all read novels that let us understand how others might function and react to different situations.

**Schlick:** Very shortly, we are humans and we do live in networks, otherwise, we would not survive. The “homo economicus” is proven not to be as efficient as humans caring for each other.

### Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Anja Jaenicke is a German actor, director, screenwriter, poet, artist and Thinker cum Arte. She has contributed to over one hundred TV and film productions and won several film awards. Anja has published nine poetry volumes in the English language and is a regular author for city connect magazine, Cambridge. She loves drawing and painting and recently published a book with drawings about an insane penguin named Werner.

[2] Beatrice Rescazzi is the President of the AtlantIQ Society. She has been an optician, orthoptist, eye surgery assistant for years, and teaches computer science in adult courses. She is an autodidact regarding 3D printing construction, 3D printing, electronics, robotics, and more. She has an abiding interest in inventions to help vulnerable people and the environment, astronomy, general science, informatics, space missions, 2D and 3D drawing and design, as well as languages and arts. She has taken part in competitions for design, inventions, and space projects. She is an Esperantist.

[3] Monika Orski is the former Ordförande/Chairman, Mensa Sverige/Mensa Sweden (2015-2019) and a current Board Member.
(International) of Mensa International. She earned an M.Sc. in Computer Science and Engineering, and a B.A. in Literature. She has been volunteering for Mensa at different organizational levels. She is a Jill of all trades with a core line of professional work devoted to IT emphasizing solutions architecture for large systems. She is a public speaker, lecturer, and published author. Two, recently, published books are a collection of short stories and a non-fiction book on leading intelligent people. The texts have been published in Swedish.

[4]Dr. Sandra Schlick has the expertise and interest in Managing Mathematics, Statistics, and Methodology for Business Engineers while having a focus on online training. She supervises M.Sc. theses in Business Information and D.B.A. theses in Business Management. Managing Mathematics, Statistics, Methodology for Business Engineers with a focus on online training. Her areas of competence can be seen in the “Competency Map.” That is to say, her areas of expertise and experience mapped in a visualization presentation. Schlick’s affiliations are the Fernfachhochschule Schweiz: University of Applied Sciences, the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland, the Kalaidos University of Applied Sciences, and AKAD.


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Ask Two Geniuses with Dr. Christian Sorensen and Kirk Kirkpatrick on Science’s Earliest Manifestations, the Modern Sciences, Human Nature, and a Unifying Framework: Independent Metaphysician & Philosopher; Businessman (1)

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Abstract
Rick Rosner and I conduct a conversational series entitled Ask A Genius on a variety of subjects through In-Sight Publishing on the personal and professional website for Rick. This series with Christian and Kirk build on this idea. Kirk Kirkpatrick earned a score at 185, on the Stanford-Binet. He is an expert in Business. Dr. Christian Sorensen earned a score at 185+, i.e., at least 186, on the WAIS-R. He is an expert in Metaphysics and Philosophy. Both scores on a standard deviation of 15. A sigma of ~5.67 for Kirk – a general intelligence rarity of 1 in 136,975,305 – and a sigma of ~5.67+ for Christian – a general intelligence rarity of more than 1 in 136,975,305, at least 1 in 202,496,482. Neither splitting hairs nor a competition here; we agreed to a discussion, hopefully, for the edification of the audience here. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population. This amounts to a joint interview or conversation with Dr. Christian Sorensen, Kirk Kirkpatrick, and myself. They discuss: its earliest procedural manifestations; the modern sciences; a unifying framework for knowledge; a lack of a unifying framework about human nature; and the sciences converging and providing some deep insights.

Keywords: Christian Sorensen, genius, human nature, Kirk Kirkpatrick, science, scientific methodology, unifying framework.

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Scott Douglas Jacobsen: The sciences seem like the name of the game of the 20th century and potentially the 21st century with the 21st century probably more as an era of engineering and technological application than discovery, necessarily, because most of the unifying principles and theoretical foundations for fields have been discovered. The eras of broad strokes have been done in most of the major fields of inquiry, except ToEs, GUTs, and psychology, maybe some others. To start off, when you think of more ancient notions of “science,” as such, what were its earliest procedural manifestations?

Dr. Christian Sorensen[1]: I think that believing that this is an era that is more of technological application than of theoretical discoveries, is an irrational and illusory belief, because as such, has frequently been expressed since science decided to turn into a science, which in my opinion has to do metaphorically speaking, with what occurs with the
digestive phenomenon of post-prandial depression, where it is erroneously believed, that because it’s felt the sensation of complete satiety with a hint of dysthymic humour, that then the sensation of hunger will never be felt again, in other words in some fictitious way, it is thought with regret, due to a vagal compression of the heart with a full stomach, that the appetite might have disappeared forever. In this sense, I think that in science, theory and technique, are inseparable momentum of a same cycle, due to the fact, that there exist what I will name a contingent positive feedback, therefore as themselves, necessarily they cannot act deferred, which means that the application of the current technique, at a certain moment, immediately remits to a model or theoretical system, which is updated, and at the same time forces an updating of the first technique that is applied again but modified. From my point of view, in strict semantic rigor, the earliest technical procedural applications of science, coincided with Descartes’s Discourse of the Method and with the development of the scientific or empirical experimental method, that gave rise to physics, biology and chemistry as classical basic sciences.

Kirk Kirkpatrick[2],[3]*: Science is a system of organized knowledge derived from observation, deduction, experimentation, and induction which is used to make predictions about the laws and structure of reality. Science predates writing systems which means the earliest procedural manifestations are not available to the modern man. We can deduce what the earliest types of science were. They were most certainly agricultural techniques that were passed along orally.

“The eras of broad strokes have been done in most of the major fields of inquiry, except ToEs, GUTs, and psychology, maybe some others” is not accurate. We have not come close to a systematic understanding of reality. In fact, we are scratching the surface. When we can explain the two-slit experiment or quantum entanglement, perhaps we will be close but I doubt it. “The universe is not only queerer than we suppose, but queerer than we can suppose.” J.B.S. Haldane. The more we know, the more we learn we do not know.

One of the problems with the quoted statement is that it presupposes that everything “CAN BE” known. I would maintain it is not at all clear that the sum total of the Universe can be known. Einstein certainly believed that it could and this belief was perhaps his biggest stumbling block.

“The advancement of the arts, from year to year, taxes our credulity and seems to presage the arrival of that period when human improvement must end.” Patent Office Commissioner, Henry Ellsworth in a report to Congress in 1843.

Jacobsen: How does this differ from the modern sciences inasmuch as changes happened to the epistemologies and practical applications of the sciences, including fine points of crucial detail such as peer review?

Sorensen: It differs, that in their origins, it was inconceivable that something different from the natural sciences would be considered as science, therefore the technical applications derived contextually from these, and especially the epistemology deduced from them, had a systemic consistency which allowed their progress, both from a theoretical and technological point of view. Nevertheless, as modernity progressed, the path went through post-modernity, and entered into an era that I will denominate post-paradigmatic era, which as such among other things has just begun, and has demonstrated as a matter of fact, that science by itself, has evolved paradoxically and dissociatively, since on the one hand, it is possible to verify a coherent and forceful theoretical and technical development, in relation to the classical sciences, which to a certain extent, reached a limit that forces a questioning and redefinition of their object as observable phenomena of study, and consequently to a rethinking of the scientific method in itself, and on the other hand, what is verified is a scientific setback, when it’s examined over time, what has happened with the development of pseudosciences, and with their pretension of being or of becoming science, which although regarding that status they demonstrate the contrary, they continue to consider themselves as science and to seek scientific reputability. I think that the last, is what has occurred fundamentally with the so-called social sciences, which as other pseudoscientific disciplines, they have productively developed numerous theoretical models, that lack a methodological correlation, able to support them with their apparent ground-breaking discoveries and with their truly useless contributions. The lasting, has resulted in technical applications, that operate practically almost exclusively by trial and error, and that have derived nominalistically speaking, in hollow epistemologies, which when analyzed as a whole, I consider that determine scientific failures. If the aforementioned is visualized in perspective, and a conclusion by synthesis is extracted from it, then I think, that it may be possible to propose, that science, in terms of what would be a truly qualitative leap, what it currently needs, is a scientific revolution, not from the point of view of the search for new paradigms, but instead through the...
The exploration of other dimensions of consciousness, which in a functional sense, means to enrich the digital thought, though they might be intellectually intuitive, through what I will name the analogical perceptions.

Kirkpatrick: The organization and systematization of the sciences have advanced precipitously. The methods not so much so. Aristotle delineated the lines of reasoning and most of the advancement since then have been footnotes. The biggest changes from ancient science are that there should be no more references to the supernatural in the study of science. No one sees an effect and yells, “The Hand of GOD!” For the earliest users of science, magic and science were the same things. Even today, sufficiently advanced science seems like magic to the person who does not understand it.

Jacobsen: To a field without a unifying framework for knowledge, psychology is and is not a science by all appearances. Yet, it’s one of the big ways to study human nature, outside of, maybe, incisive literature or something like this. What is human nature as defined by you?

Sorensen: I think that if what is intended to be studied is human nature, but in a more encompassing and comprehensive sense, rather than in a reductive manner, then it is more appropriate to do so from what would be for me a sort of philosophical anthropology, than from what would be a psychological field, since I will define human nature, as a material body endowed with a rational substance, where its intelligents acts as mind and soul simultaneously, while its eternality, leads it to transcend to what I will denominate as a spirit in being.

Kirkpatrick: The question might be better formulated from “To a field without a unifying framework for knowledge, psychology is and is not a science by all appearances,” should be, “To a field without an UNDERSTOOD unifying framework for knowledge, psychology is and is not a science by all appearances.” Human nature has many meanings. Plato thought that humans were rational animals, and he felt our nature was defined by our souls and the ability to reason rather than physical effects from our bodies. Aristotle disagreed and thought that both body and soul contributed to our human nature. Trying to differentiate our nature from some type of science is a mistake. Science is the sum total of all reality and nothing exists outside of it. Psychology and human nature (why one acts) is simply one of the most complex sciences since the subject of its study, the practical applications of the processing of the human brain, is one of the most complex areas of science due to our almost total lack of understanding of Consciousness.

Human nature is that attribute which differentiates humans from other things. Most likely, it is sentience. And I firmly believe that as we build Artificial Intelligence which comes closer and closer to humans, one will see this AI taken on elements of “Human Nature.”

Jacobsen: Why is there a lack of a unifying framework about human nature, about the entire makeup of a human being?

Sorensen: There is a lack of a unifying framework, because the operational aspects of human nature are evident, and therefore there is a general consensus regarding those properties, nevertheless due to the fact that the origin of these aspects is not evident, then there exists a discrepancy with respect to them. In consequence if it is not factible, due to etiological reasons, to combine the operational factors with their causes or principles as a unique definition, neither is then possible to arrive to what I will name a noetic consensus of human nature.

Kirkpatrick: Because there is a lack of a unifying framework about everything we know; in the same way there is a lack of unifying framework in the understanding of the nature of energy and matter. No single branch of science has a truly unifying framework; just a framework more unifying than the framework that come before.

Jacobsen: How might, or are, the sciences converging and providing some deep insights into this?

Sorensen: I think this would be possible, as long as sciences without feeling threatened, are capable of questioning themselves, about the possibility of studying phenomena that are not observable through any medium, which are additionally not experimentally replicable, and that can be of a single occurrence, thus opening up to the study of other realities, that although are not empirical, and may require a methodological readjustment, can nevertheless allow sciences to arrive at valid knowledge, which at least they can approximate asymptotically, that is to say ideally towards the truth.

Kirkpatrick: This question shows us it is appropriate to remember that science is the study of reality. Differing fields of science study different aspects of reality. In this way sciences must converge since all science is the study one thing. A good example is illustrated by the scientific fields of
chemistry and physics. The earliest chemists were alchemists, which tried to understand the different constituents of matter and how these interacted. Likewise, builders and soothsayers became early physicists as astrology morphed into Astronomy and construction needed engineering principles. As the chemists learned more about their field, they notice that much of the fine details are solidly in the realm of physics and vice versa. It is not that sciences are converging, it is that our understanding of the compartments of reality lead us to door that open into other compartments of reality as we try and get the big picture.

Appendix 1: Footnotes

[1] Christian is a Philosopher that comes from Belgium. What identifies him the most and above all is simplicity, for everything is better with “vanilla flavour.” Perhaps, for this reason, his intellectual passion is criticism and irony, in the sense of trying to reveal what “hides behind the mask,” and give birth to the true. For him, ignorance and knowledge never “cross paths.” What he likes the most in his leisure time, is to go for a walk with his wife.


*High range testing (HRT) should be taken with honest skepticism grounded in the limited empirical development of the field at present, even in spite of honest and sincere efforts. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population.
Free of Charge 3 – “Humanist Manifesto I” and the Path of Freethought

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen


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Abstract


Keywords: freedom of expression, freedom of speech, Herb Silverman, Humanism, Humanist Manifesto I.

Free of Charge 3 – “Humanist Manifesto I” and the Path of Freethought

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: The original documentation of the humanist movements began with the Humanist Manifesto I from 1933 with an opening descriptive quotation by Raymond B. Bragg:

The Manifesto is a product of many minds. It was designed to represent a developing point of view, not a new creed. The individuals whose signatures appear would, had they been writing individual statements, have stated the propositions in differing terms. The importance of the document is that more than thirty men have come to general agreement on matters of final concern and that these men are undoubtedly representative of a large number who are forging a new philosophy out of the materials of the modern world. (American Humanist Association, 1933)
The obvious values delineated within an evolutionary perspective on a worldview, a collective effort for this worldview as presented, the bias of the times inherent in the language of "men," while working against or in contradistinction to the views of the past or old philosophies with its replacement in this "new philosophy out of the materials of the modern world." In much of the old world, religion reigned supreme; critics, doubters, unbelievers, and dissenters were shunned, banished, and killed. In this "new philosophy," these "critics, doubters, unbelievers, and dissenters" came together as "men" to "forge a new philosophy." In review of the fundamental tenets proposed in the outdated and historical document, the formal foundations of modern or American Humanism, i.e., "religious humanism," none of the speak to freedom of speech, free speech, free expression, or freedom of expression. In turn, they focus more on the proposition of a paradigm shift into a continual evolution paradigm in which change becomes inevitable without dogma and an emphasis on Humanism as a religious philosophy bound to a natural self-existent armature entitled "the Universe." First question, why was freedom of expression in general not emphasized at the time?

Dr. Herb Silverman[1][2]: To me, freedom of expression must include freedom of speech, as well as freedom of the press and the right to peacefully assemble. So my answer to this question will include my answer to your second question about freedom of speech.

Perhaps freedom of expression was assumed because it is included in the First Amendment to the U. S. Constitution. Humanist Manifesto I (1933) is so-called because it was the first attempt to describe a formal humanist philosophy without any gods. The writers knew there would be additional manifestos as we increased our knowledge and cultural attitudes changed. The document speaks of social justice and scientific optimism. It refers to "socialized and cooperative economic order" and "equitable distribution of the means of life." Though it wasn’t explicit, it seemed to favor socialism. There was no mention of racism, sexism, minority rights, or environmentalism.

Humanist Manifesto II (1973) promotes democracy, civil liberties, human freedoms, separation of church and state, and elimination of discrimination based on race, religion, sex, age, or national origin. It also refers to ecological damage and overpopulation.

I was on the American Humanist Association Board in 2003 when we approved Humanist Manifesto III. We defined Humanism as a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity. (I hoped to get "atheism" into the definition, but had to be satisfied by "without supernaturalism.") This document also says that humanists are guided by reason and inspired by compassion. It adds that humans are an integral part of nature, the result of unguided evolutionary change and that ethical values are derived from human need and interest as tested by experience.

Jacobsen: Second question, why was freedom of speech[4], in particular, excluded, too?

Silverman: See answer above.

Jacobsen: What did this document provide for the foundations of modern Humanism through its "religious humanism"?

Silverman: "Religious Humanism" was an integral part of Humanist Manifesto I. The phrase is still used today by some freethinkers, though it is not without controversy. Ethical Culture societies as well as many Unitarian Universalist congregations describe themselves as religious humanists. There seems to be no difference in worldviews between secular humanists and religious humanists. Secular humanists see their worldview as a philosophy, while religious humanists see it as a religion.

But that depends on your definition of religion. Secular humanists think of religion as theistic. Religious humanists say that religion is which serves the personal and social needs of a group of people sharing the same philosophical worldview. They say religious humanism offers a basis for moral values, an inspiring set of ideals, methods for dealing with life’s harsher realities, a rationale for living life joyously, and an overall sense of purpose.

When I first became a board member of the American Humanist Association, I discovered it called itself religious, for tax advantages, I argued for abandoning its religious designation, and it eventually did. One of its affiliates to which I belong, Humanist Society, is religious, because that helps
members in some states be allowed to perform weddings. I am a humanist celebrant who, in South Carolina, has performed several weddings, none of which were religious.

**Jacobsen: What parts have the humanist movements kept as consistent parts over time because of the value of the principles?**

**Silverman:** The movements have always had an evolutionary, atheistic worldview, though often with different terminology. What I said about *Humanist Manifesto III* in my first answer is a summary of what I think has always been the essence of humanism. We defined Humanism as a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity.

**Jacobsen: Do freedom of speech or freedom of expression seem like fundamentally humanist values?**

**Silverman:** They are fundamental humanist values, as well as fundamental values in any democratic society.

**Jacobsen: Thank you for the opportunity and your time, Dr. Silverman.**

**Silverman:** Thank you.

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**References**


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**Appendix I: Footnotes**


[3] In this context, a “Member State” refers to a nation, country, or state with approved and formal status within the United Nations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The signatories to the <em>Humanist Manifesto I</em> (1933) as follows:</th>
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<tr>
<td>J.A.C. Fagginger Auer—Parkman Professor of Church History and Theology, Harvard University; Professor of Church History, Tufts College.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Burdette Backus—Unitarian Minister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry Elmer Barnes—General Editorial Department, ScrippsHoward Newspapers.</td>
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<td>L.M. Birkhead—The Liberal Center, Kansas City, Missouri.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raymond B. Bragg—Secretary, Western Unitarian Conference.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edwin Arthur Burtt—Professor of Philosophy, Sage School of Philosophy, Cornell University.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ernest Caldecott—Minister, First Unitarian Church, Los Angeles, California.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A.J. Carlson—Professor of Physiology, University of Chicago.</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Dewey—Columbia University.</td>
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<td>Albert C. Dieffenbach—Formerly Editor of The Christian Register.</td>
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<td>John H. Dietrich—Minister, First Unitarian Society, Minneapolis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bernard Fantus—Professor of Therapeutics, College of Medicine, University of Illinois.</td>
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<tr>
<td>William Floyd—Editor of The Arbitrator, New York City.</td>
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<tr>
<td>F.H. Hankins—Professor of Economics and Sociology, Smith College.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. Eustace Haydon—Professor of History of Religions, University of Chicago.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Llewellyn Jones—Literary critic and author.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Morss Lovett—Editor, The New Republic; Professor of English, University of Chicago.</td>
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<tr>
<td>R. Lester Mondale—Minister, Unitarian Church, Evanston, Illinois.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles Francis Potter—Leader and Founder, the First Humanist Society of New York, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Herman Randall, Jr.—Department of Philosophy, Columbia University.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curtis W. Reese—Dean, Abraham Lincoln Center, Chicago.</td>
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<td>Oliver L. Reiser—Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Pittsburgh.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roy Wood Sellars—Professor of Philosophy, University of Michigan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton Lee Scott—Minister, Universalist Church, Peoria, Illinois.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
W. Frank Swift—Director, Boston Ethical Society.
V. T. Thayer—Educational Director, Ethical Culture Schools.
Eldred C. Vanderlaan—Leader of the Free Fellowship, Berkeley, California.
Joseph Walker—Attorney, Boston, Massachusetts.
Jacob J. Weinstein—Rabbi; Advisor to Jewish Students, Columbia University.
Frank S.C. Wicks—All Souls Unitarian Church, Indianapolis.
David Rhys Williams—Minister, Unitarian Church, Rochester, New York.

See American Humanist Association (1933).

Ibid.

In international rights, in Canadian law and the constitution, in regional rights stipulations, in the European Union, in the U.K., and in many other nation-states, the rights stipulations continually reference the right to “freedom of expression” as opposed to the more particular “freedom of speech.” The Americans emphasize “freedom of speech”; whereas, most others place more import on the generic and general “freedom of expression.”

See Cornell Law School (n.d.).
Free of Charge 4 – “Humanist Manifesto II,” Kurtz and Wilson, Moral Devotion, Creative Imagination, and Free Speech

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Abstract


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Free of Charge 4 – “Humanist Manifesto II,” Kurtz and Wilson, Moral Devotion, Creative Imagination, and Free Speech

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Humanist Manifesto II (1973) provided a much bleaker reflection, at its outset, on human nature than Humanist Manifesto I (1933). Humanist Manifesto II started with a joint statement by Paul Kurtz and Edwin H. Wilson:

It is forty years since Humanist Manifesto I (1933) appeared. Events since then make that earlier statement seem far too optimistic. Nazism has shown the depths of brutality of which humanity is capable. Other totalitarian regimes have suppressed human rights without ending poverty. Science has sometimes brought evil as well as good. Recent decades have shown that inhuman wars can be made in the name of peace. The beginnings of police states, even in democratic societies, widespread government espionage, and other abuses of power by military, political, and industrial elites, and the continuance of unyielding racism, all present a different and difficult social outlook. In various societies, the demands of women and minority groups for equal rights effectively challenge our generation.

As we approach the twenty-first century, however, an affirmative and hopeful vision is needed. Faith, commensurate with advancing knowledge, is also necessary. In the choice between despair and hope, humanists respond in this Humanist Manifesto II with a positive declaration for times of uncertainty.

As in 1933, humanists still believe that traditional theism, especially faith in the prayer-hearing God, assumed to live and care for persons, to hear and
understand their prayers, and to be able to do something about them, is an unproved and outmoded faith. Salvationism, based on mere affirmation, still appears as harmful, diverting people with false hopes of heaven hereafter. Reasonable minds look to other means for survival.

Those who sign Humanist Manifesto II disclaim that they are setting forth a binding credo; their individual views would be stated in widely varying ways. This statement is, however, reaching for vision in a time that needs direction. It is social analysis in an effort at consensus. New statements should be developed to supersede this, but for today it is our conviction that humanism offers an alternative that can serve present-day needs and guide humankind toward the future. (American Humanist Association, 1973)

Smart men, Kurtz and Wilson, however, as with personal sensibilities for me, take early enthusiasm with some salting and other flavouring to the stew of Humanism as an evolving ethical philosophy in which the prior “earlier statement” or early enthusiasm seemed “far too optimistic.”

In their case, “Nazism has shown the depths of brutality of which humanity is capable,” as well as “other totalitarian regimes.” In fact, even the perennial issue fought for now, “In various societies, the demands of women and minority groups for equal rights effectively challenge our generation” with the ever-present issue of “traditional theism” or the “outmoded faith” seen in “Salvationism.” Humanism as part – ahem – salvation from these “false hopes” or “false ‘theologies of hope’ and messianic theologies.” Freedom of expression is tapped here some more with some emphasis on “creativity.” It comes in many forms throughout the world as a tendency in human thought, “Many kinds of humanism exist in the contemporary world. The varieties and emphases of naturalistic humanism include ‘scientific,’ ‘ethical,’ ‘democratic,’ ‘religious,’ and ‘Marxist’ humanism. Free thought, atheism, agnosticism, skepticism, deism, rationalism, ethical culture, and liberal religion all claim to be heir to the humanist tradition.” They spoke astutely to “cultivation of moral devotion and creative imagination” as “an expression of genuine ‘spiritual’ experience and aspiration” in which the spirit of freedom of expression is, well, expressed or well expressed. More directly, they speak to “freedom of speech and the press… the legal right of opposition to governmental policies… freedom of association, and artistic, scientific, and cultural freedom…” as well as the need to “safeguard, extend, and implement the principles of human freedom evolved from the Magna Carta to the Bill of Rights, the Rights of Man, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” To humanists, in regards to freedom of expression, in spite of the tempered Humanism in Humanist Manifesto II – in the opinions of Kurtz and Wilson (and myself, and likely many others) – compared to Humanist Manifesto I, these represent ‘sacred’ values of a kind. Over the course of a Jewish life, of a secular humanist life in particular, how has the individualized Humanism changed for you?

Dr. Herb Silverman[1],[2]: You asked how my Jewish life and secular humanist life have changed. I grew up in an Orthodox community and had an Orthodox Bar Mitzvah in 1955 when I was 13. My family mainly instilled in me that I shouldn’t trust goyim (gentiles) because of what they did to us in the Holocaust, and that I should marry a nice Jewish girl. (My wife, Sharon Fratepietro, is not Jewish.)

In Hebrew school, my rabbi refused to answer my question, “Who created God?” He told me the question was inappropriate, but I assumed he just had no answer. One of my best teachers in Hebrew school asked, “Why does the Torah (Hebrew Bible) say ‘God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob,’ instead of the more concise ‘God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob’?” His explanation was that each had a different god, and we must search for and find our own god. I took his statement seriously and my search, beginning at age 12, led me to a god who did not exist. I decided to follow all the things in the Torah that made sense to me, like performing mitzvahs (good deeds), but I stopped doing things like fasting on Yom Kippur, the day that God allegedly determines who shall live and who shall die in the coming year. Perhaps that is when I became a humanist without having even heard the term.

As an adult, I first learned about Humanism from the American Humanist Association, and later became a board member of that organization. I still considered myself a Jew because there is no requirement for a Jew to believe in God. I eventually found a proper home for myself in Judaism when I learned about and joined the Society for Humanistic Judaism (https://shj.org), with its atheist rabbis. SHJ is a member organization of the Secular Coalition for America and has an active social justice program known as Jews for a Secular Democracy.

Jacobsen: Do you agree with Kurtz and Wilson in the opening, as an aside?
Silverman: I agree with them that Humanist Manifesto I was too optimistic about what the state of the world would be like after 1933, and that we need a more realistic vision. One sentence I was uncomfortable with was “Faith, commensurate with advancing knowledge, is also necessary.” I prefer to leave the word “faith” to theists. The authors correctly add that traditional theism, especially faith in a prayer-hearing God, makes no sense. It was wise of them to say, “New statements should be developed to supersede this,” one of which is known as Humanist Manifesto III. We should note that these manifestos are written on paper by humans, not written on stone tablets by an alleged deity, and no humanist is obliged to follow all of their assertions.

Jacobsen: How are the varieties of referenced humanisms connected via the idea of freedom of expression?

Silverman: I think all these referenced humanisms include freedom of expression, whether stated explicitly or implicitly. The humanists I know all think everybody has the right to express ideas and opinions freely, though we should try to avoid making false or misleading statements. Some people consider themselves theistic humanists, and might wish to silence those in their flock who have problems believing in the type of god they espouse. My idea of humanism precludes supernaturalism.

Jacobsen: What is this “moral devotion and creative imagination” inherent in the idea of freedom of expression as played out in the lives of freer human beings?

Silverman: I think we have a moral obligation to speak out against injustices, and it helps to imagine what kinds of injustices are suffered by people who are viewed as different from us in artificial ways. Unfortunately, some people use their imagination to develop “fake news” and consider this to be an appropriate form of freedom of expression. The moral problem with such freedom of expression is that fake news can unfairly hurt innocent people. One example is known as “Pizzagate.” This was a baseless rumor circulated in 2016 that Hillary Clinton and other Democrats were heading up a child sex-trafficking ring out of a specific Washington pizzeria. Based on such rumors and hate speech, a gunman with an assault rifle opened fire at the pizzeria, hoping to save the alleged abused children.

Jacobsen: How are freedom of speech and freedom of the press connected in a humanistic framework? How are they being attacked in the United States today?

Silverman: Freedom of speech and freedom of the press are guaranteed by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. Humanists support this right to speak out verbally, in writing, and by action. Some Americans want to take away the right to burn the American flag, which thankfully the US Supreme Court ruled was constitutionally protected speech. There are also attempts to censor works of art that touch on sensitive issues like religion or sexuality. I think it is fine for people to attack verbally or in writing what someone else says. The problem occurs when someone thinks he has the right to use intimidation, threats, or violence. The way to attack bad speech is with good speech. I still believe the saying I learned as a child: “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.”

Jacobsen: How is opposition to governmental policies being prevented in America today?

Silverman: Opposition to government policies is not being prevented. Many individuals and media have spoken against President Trump’s policies (or lack thereof) on the pandemic, healthcare, climate change, international alliances, and countless social justice issues. Unfortunately, from my perspective, the Republican-controlled US Senate gives Trump whatever he wants. So, opposition to government policies can best be achieved by Americans voting in the upcoming election.

Jacobsen: Regarding “freedom of association, and artistic, scientific, and cultural freedom,” what brings these together in one bundle so as to unite them under a banner of common expansion of freedom for more humanistic societies?

Silverman: Humanistic societies recognize that humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment for the greater good of humanity. Humanism promotes democracy, civil liberties, human freedoms, separation of religion and government, and elimination of discrimination based on race, religion, sex, age, or national origin. Humanists respect the scientific method and recognize that we are an integral part of nature, the result of unguided evolutionary change, and that ethical values are derived from human need and interest as tested by experience.

Jacobsen: Thank you for the opportunity and your time, Dr. Silverman.

Silverman: You’re most welcome.

References

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Founder, Secular Coalition for America; Founder, Secular Humanists of the Low Country; Founder, Atheist/Humanist Alliance, College of Charleston.

Free of Charge 5 – “Humanist Manifesto III,” Humanism, Humaneness, and Meaning

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen
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Abstract

Dr. Herb Silverman is the Founder of the Secular Coalition for America, the Founder of the Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry, and the Founder of the Atheist/Humanist Alliance student group at the College of Charleston. He authored Complex variables (1975), Candidate Without a Prayer: An Autobiography of a Jewish Atheist in the Bible Belt (2012) and An Atheist Stranger in a Strange Religious Land; Selected Writings from the Bible Belt (2017). He co-authored The Fundamentals of Extremism: The Christian Right in America (2003) with Kimberley Blaker and Edward S. Buckner, Complex Variables with Applications (2007) with Saminathan Ponnusamy, and Short Reflections on Secularism (2019), Short Reflections on American Secularism’s History and Philosophy (2020), and Short Reflections on Age and Youth (2020). He discusses: Humanist Manifesto III; a “progressive philosophy of life”; negating consideration of the supernatural; the core principles of Humanism; “consensus of what we do believe” as part of the orientation of the document; a “critical intelligence”; “nature as self-existing”; limiting human ethics to human experience; and our life is “ours and ours alone.”

Keywords: Herb Silverman, Free of Charge, freethought, Humanism, Humanist Manifesto III.

Free of Charge 5 – “Humanist Manifesto III,” Humanism, Humaneness, and Meaning

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Humanist Manifesto III (2003) provided a succinct manifestation of modern Humanism. In turn, this both represents a more well-understood philosophical stance and a more concise statement as to the core of the concept “Humanism.” In this interview, I want to cover some of the modern conceptualizations of modern Humanism, as an evolution from 1933 to 2003. What was the inspiration for this updated document?

Dr. Herb Silverman[1],[2]: The updated third document was expected, as was the updated second document, without knowing in advance what dates they would come. The first Manifesto was written in 1933, the second in 1973, and the third in 2003. Similarly, the founders who wrote the US Constitution understood that their document was not perfect and allowed for future amendments. As we learn more about the world and best practices for humans, we update manifestos. After all, these manifestos are written on paper by humans, not written on stone tablets by an alleged deity. There undoubtedly will be a fourth manifesto, but I can’t say when.

Jacobsen: What does “without supernaturalism” mean in the context of a “progressive philosophy of life”?

Silverman: “Without supernaturalism” means no belief in any gods. It also includes no belief in reincarnation or magic crystals, not fearing black cats crossing your path or dread of Friday the 13th or the number 666. A rabbit’s foot or knocking on wood does not bring good luck. In other words, no
superstitious beliefs of any kind. So we need a philosophy of life without superstition. One can have such a philosophy without being a progressive, but the humanist philosophy incorporates progressivism. It is based on the idea of progress, incorporating advances in science and technology, and advocating for social reforms and social organizations, all vital to improve the human condition.

**Jacobsen:** How does negating consideration of the supernatural change thinking about “our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity”?

**Silverman:** Most people want to lead ethical lives, but folks disagree about how best to do it. Some rely on so-called “holy” books written during the Bronze Age by scientifically ignorant men. Their ideas of ethics might include discriminating against gays, beating disobedient children, not allowing women to have responsible positions, punishing blasphemers and heretics, and advocating for holy wars to capture land promised by “God.” Being free of the supernatural, we can use available evidence to help decide what actions might be for the greater good of humanity.

**Jacobsen:** Why are the core principles of Humanism reason, compassion, and experience? Why is non-dogmatism, as in “values and ideals... subject to change as our knowledge and understandings advance,” a key distinction from most religious stances?

**Silverman:** As with most people, humanists appreciate the ability to reason. Part of what we want to do with our reason is learn how to help make the world a better place. This entails empathizing with others and showing compassion toward those less fortunate than ourselves. We learn from our mistakes and, hopefully, improve on how best to act. When tied to a never changing, dogmatic, religious book, principles become more difficult to change or improve.

**Jacobsen:** It stipulates “consensus of what we do believe” as part of the orientation of the document. How does this universality differ from the other ethics devoted to the transcendent? How does this universality still permit individual deviance of expression?

**Silverman:** Humanists are not all required to believe the same thing, which explains individual deviance of expression. However, there does seems to be a consensus about certain things that most humanists agree on. They include these beliefs: Knowledge of the world is derived by observation, experimentation, and rational analysis; humans are an integral part of nature, the result of unguided evolutionary change; ethical values are derived from human need and interest as tested by experience; working to benefit society maximizes individual happiness.

“Transcendent” usually refers to religion, where a transcendent god has powers independent of the material universe and outside of nature. Some people feel they have experienced transcendence by overcoming the limitations of physical existence through things like prayer, meditation, psychedelics, and paranormal visions. Such transcendent experiences, which can’t be measured, do bring some comfort to many people.

**Jacobsen:** Why is science “the best method for determining this knowledge as well as for solving problems and developing beneficial technologies”?

**Silverman:** Science is empirical, meaning based on observations of nature, and it is potentially falsifiable by new observations of nature. In other words, new evidence can lead us to revise scientific theories. We know how to distinguish good scientific ideas from bad ones. Science relies on experimentation, testing, and skepticism. It thrives on disagreement and on a willingness to question assumptions critically, while we search for evidence until a consensus is reached. That’s why scientific truths are the same in Pakistan, the United States, Israel, or India, though their citizens may have very different religious beliefs. And scientists will change their views when the evidence warrants. To me, critical intelligence means we should carefully and critically examine our reasoning and our conclusions to eliminate errors. We should be free to pose any questions, regardless of how counter they are to what others might think, and then try to provide answers based on evidence.

**Jacobsen:** Why do humanists posit “nature as self-existing” rather than existing contingent on some transcendent object or metaphysical being?

**Silverman:** There is absolutely no evidence for a transcendent object or metaphysical being, and we have a pretty good understanding of nature through Darwin’s theory of evolution. We know how nature can exist without the need of a transcendent object or metaphysical being.

**Jacobsen:** How does limiting human ethics to human experience help simplify and clarify a humane ethic in Humanism? Why are “peace, justice, and opportunity for all,” more attainable by this methodology, of ethics, than their
transcendentalist counterparts? Does this include an opportunity for all to speak their mind or write down their thoughts?

Silverman: Basing human ethics on what we know from experience, rather than on what we don’t know, certainly makes more sense. Applying certain transcendent or religious precepts to everyone is too limiting, since we have no objective way to test if we have the one “true” religion. We learn through human experience and the efforts of thoughtful people throughout history how to work toward the ideals we hope to achieve. We also know that some of our values might change as our knowledge and understandings advance.

Jacobsen: Ultimately, why does this mean our life is “ours and ours alone,” our mind’s ability for freethought of thought?

Silverman: No one else, certainly no transcendent being, is responsible for our life. We must take personal responsibility for how we live, not give credit to an imagined deity for our good fortune or blame satanic forces when we behave poorly. We are free to think about whatever comes into our mind, but we are not necessarily free to act out all our thoughts. We can choose our actions as long as they don’t infringe on the freedoms of others. As the saying goes, your freedom to swing your fist ends at my nose.

Jacobsen: Thank you for the opportunity and your time, Dr. Silverman.

Silverman: Thank you.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Founder, Secular Coalition for America; Founder, Secular Humanists of the Low Country; Founder, Atheist/Humanist Alliance, College of Charleston.

Issue 25.A, Idea: Land of Fire and Ice: Islandia, Snelandia, and Insula Gardari (1)
Conversation with Emily on Postsecondary Education in Iceland: International Officer, Stúdentaráð – Háskóli Íslands, University of Iceland (1)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen


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Abstract

Emily is the International Officer in the Stúdentaráð – Háskóli Íslands at the University of Iceland. She discusses: personal background or story; individual narrative lead into becoming a part of the University of Iceland; the position of the International Officer at the Stúdentaráð Háskóla Íslands; tasks and responsibilities; prospective international students; and the primary and secondary further information important for attending the University of Iceland.

Keywords: Emily, International Officer, Stúdentaráð – Háskóli Íslands, University of Iceland.

Conversation with Emily on Postsecondary Education in Iceland: International Officer, Stúdentaráð – Háskóli Íslands, University of Iceland (1)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: What is the personal background or story for you?

Emily[1],[2]: I am half Icelandic and half German, but grew up in Sweden. In Sweden I attended the German International School, which quickly gave me insight into the importance of international work and friendships. After graduating, I moved to the Netherlands and took the first year of the Bachelor program Liberal Arts and Sciences. From there I moved to Berlin to work and take some time off school / university to find out which academic field interested me the most.

Jacobsen: How did this individual narrative lead into becoming a part of the University of Iceland?

Emily: The University of Iceland was not my first choice. Even though I had spent most summers of my childhood in Iceland, I never thought I’d move here full-time. In the summer of 2013, I started working as a tour guide in Iceland and did this every summer thereafter. I decided to study psychology in 2017 and got accepted to the VU Amsterdam. I went back to Berlin after spending my summer in Iceland working, to pack my things and get on a train to Amsterdam. Even though this decision seemed appealing, my gut feeling told me to go back to Iceland. So I called the course registration office, luckily I had already applied but never accepted my study offer, and asked if they’d still have me – one week before courses started. They told me yes, given that I’d show up in person by the end of the week to enroll and pay my tuition. Long story short: by the end of the week I had cancelled my plans to go to Amsterdam, booked a Friday flight back to Iceland and was sprinting into the admissions office two minutes before closing. Today, I am very glad I had a change of heart and came to Iceland!

Jacobsen: How did you earn the position of the International Officer at the Stúdentaráð Háskóla Íslands?

Emily: During my three-year program in psychology at the University of Iceland, I was active in my
student association and was thereby introduced to student politics. By the end of my studies I applied to the position of the International Officer of the Student Council. Being half Icelandic, but at the same time sort of belonging to the group of international students, I have gained insight into both “worlds” within the university and know some of the challenges that students from other countries might face during their studies. Also, having been an international student at the University of Tilburg in the Netherlands is a great source of inspiration for, for example, the development of the mentor system at the University of Iceland.

**Jacobsen:** Now, within the remit of the International Officer station at the Stúdentaráð Háskóla Íslands, what tasks and responsibilities come with the position?

**Emily:** The International Officer of the Student Council acts as a contact person for all international students, both exchange students and those who have moved to Iceland, as well as students of the University of Iceland applying as mentors for exchange students. The International Officer oversees the International Committee, that consists of students of the university, and works closely with the International Office. Together, they organize many events for international students and help them become a part of Icelandic student life. The International Officer also ensures that the rights of foreign students are taken into regard both by the university and the student community.

**Jacobsen:** As prospective international students look to the University of Iceland, what should they primarily keep in mind about Icelandic culture and attending the university? Even things like demographics, for example, there are only a few hundred Canadians registered in all of Iceland based on the census data.

**Emily:** The University of Iceland is attracting more and more international students each year, creating a big community of curious travelers who explore the island together. However, due to language barriers, it is sometimes tricky to mix them with the larger group of local students, as some courses are only available in Icelandic. Since the increasing group of international students is quite new to the University of Iceland, it is still adapting to this growing group of international students and will add more courses in English over time. Only last week, the University of Iceland alongside its eight partner universities of the AURORA alliance, have been granted financial aid from the European Commission, which will promote the internationalization at home, as well as mobility of AURORA university students. The University of Iceland has been an active member of the AURORA network, advocating sustainability and research, diversity, inclusion, and societal engagement.

But coming back to international students who are new to the University of Iceland, the advice that I give everyone coming to Iceland is: give it time. Both Icelandic words and friends will come naturally, and you’ll be surprised how many cozy events are happening during the cold and dark winter days.

**Jacobsen:** Where can students find the primary and secondary further information important for attending the University of Iceland?

**Emily:** Both [https://enGLISH.hI.IS/](https://enGLISH.hI.IS/) and [http://student.is/node/142](http://student.is/node/142) are great sources of information for all students of the university. Otherwise, I recommend liking facebook pages, such as Háskóli Íslands, Stúdentaráð Háskóla Íslands, and International Student Life at the University of Iceland, as well as joining resembling facebook groups.

All international students will also have the opportunity to apply for a mentor, which will help them integrate in the local student community. There will be 1-2 mentors of the University of Iceland overseeing groups of 5-8 international students, which is a great start to finding friends at the university. And I definitely recommend taking part in all activities during the Orientation Days at the beginning of the semester!

**Appendix I: Footnotes**

[1] International Officer, Stúdentaráð – Háskóli Íslands, University of Iceland.

Conversation with Heiðrún Ósk Sigfúsdóttir on Sustainable Fashion in Iceland: Founder, Dimmblá (1)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen


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**Abstract**

Heiðrún Ósk Sigfúsdóttir is the Chief Executive Office of Dimmblá and Chief Executive Officer of Rebutia. She discusses: new developments on Dimmblá; Dimmblá and Rebutia; the second company start; and sustainability in fashion.

**Keywords:** Dimmblá, Heiðrún Ósk Sigfúsdóttir, Rebutia, sustainable fashion.

Conversation with Heiðrún Ósk Sigfúsdóttir on Sustainable Fashion in Iceland: Chief Executive Officer, Dimmblá (1)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Okay, so, it’s been several years since we last talked.

Heiðrún Ósk Sigfúsdóttir: Yes [Laughing].

Jacobsen: We’ve collaborated twice. I was an editor [Ed. and writer] for Trusted Clothes. We did an interview for Dimmblá. Secondly, you’re one of the few people, in fact, who I’ve permitted to do interview with me.

Sigfúsdóttir: [Laughing].

Jacobsen: I have been offered several. It was for your blog. So, I appreciate the opportunity to take part in that. So, here we are again, a third time, this time we will be focusing on something of which I am already aware, which is Dimmblá, and then a second thing which I only became aware only based on a conversation before the interview. It was the start-up that you’re beginning to – well – start up. Let’s start on known ground, what are some new developments on Dimmblá and then preface this on some conversation on ethical and sustainable fashion for those who may not know what it is?

Sigfúsdóttir: For developments for Dimmblá, basically, for years, when I had been working for Dimmblá, my passion became more and more on educating people more. In Iceland with Dimmblá, I was one of the first to start with an sustainable ethical brand. People were, more or less, shocked to see, “Why is this more expensive? Why do I buy something expensive? Why don’t I go to a fast fashion store and buy something 1/3rd of the price of this?” I started to do my newsletters and blog to, more or less, educate people. It is, more or less, helping them. It is not preaching to them. It is more like I don’t want people to get scared. I don’t want to scare children. I want people to be more aware of what they can do to do better in their daily life. It is not simply by me. Because, now, I am presenting brands, which I love and am a collaborator. For example, tomorrow, I am going live with a brand in Budapest. She is making amazing stuff from plastic straws and cork from the bottle.

So, I thought, “Okay, it is not only my brand, which I want to present. I want to present them. The small brands and startups that need to get to the market. However, I don’t have the knowledge of how to present themselves or do the marketing. However, I
have experience and want to make use of it, and to present them. Also, I want to get to the masses of people of how to live a more sustainable life.” That’s, basically, the direction that I went. Even now, I started with accessories, scarves. I did a little bit of dresses, but I never wanted to go into mass production of anything. So, I started the pre-orders. Now, I am doing organic cosmetics or skincare. That’s the next thing that will come out from Dimmblá. This is my passion. I think there’s an occasion. This is what brought me to start the other company. I was really sure about my purpose. My purpose was to bring people service that will have reduced impact on the world. That’s exactly what I always think about; everything I do for Dimmblá. Also, everything I do for my other company, Rebutia. This one purpose has driven me forward.

**Jacobsen: What does Dimmblá mean? What does Rebutia mean?**

**Sigfúsdóttir:** [Laughing] Okay, so, Dimmblá is, basically, a Navy Blue. When I chose Dimmblá, I wanted to have something, which represented the nature of Iceland. When I started to think about the nature of Iceland, this is Navy Blue. We see this in so many things. When you see some of the collections that I did with the glacier collection, you see a lot of this colour. It is not that I wanted to see everything in blue [Laughing], as some may have thought, because it was Navy Blue. It was because I wanted something representing nature, so I chose this name. With Rebutia, so, you know what we’re doing to make the connection. We are developing an artificially intelligent stylist. [Laughing] Yes. It is a stylist online, which will help you pick the correct clothes, according to body structure, hobbies, and occupation.

**Jacobsen: That’s amazing.**

**Sigfúsdóttir:** [Laughing] So, this has, actually, been in development for some years. Now, we are working with Reykjavik University, not University of Iceland. We got the grant this year. It is 20,000,000ISK. That’s like ~200,000CAD. So, we got the grant. We are full speed now, in development, for the next months. We are a team of 4 people. We have two software engineers working with us. Then we have a stylist with 20 years of background as a stylist for companies and people in Iceland.

**Jacobsen: That’s amazing. So, Dimmblá started in 2014. When did the second company start, or at least its in-development planning phases?**

**Sigfúsdóttir:** Yes, so, we have been working; basically, it is a funny story. I started in 2018 to work on an idea that I had to start something new. In the beginning, I thought that this was the direction to go with Dimmblá. That was renting clothes. However, I needed the platform to help me with that. Then one of my friends here in Iceland. This is one of the things. We are all connected in some way or another. Basically, you only need to talk to someone, as we’re only connected in seven steps.

**Jacobsen: Seven degrees of Kevin Bacon!**

**Sigfúsdóttir:** [Laughing] Yes, my friend called me. I remember this call. I was on a Summer vacation in Akureyri. She called me to talk with me. She said, “What are you doing now?” I told her about this idea. I had a partner in Sweden by that time. I was telling her about this idea. She said, “Oh my God,” this was in 2018, “I have to introduce you to my friend,” or, “a person who I talked to.” She mentioned them developing a platform, which I could use. I said, “Really.” She connected us.” My stylist who I am working with. She had been developing this platform for 3 or 4 years. She had been working on this with programmers. We started the company last year in February. We had been starting last year and deciding how we were going to continue this. We found out, basically, renting clothes has been done, of course, as you know. There are so many companies like that.

When we started to think about it, we thought, “That’s a lot of waste. You send the clothes back and forth. You are cleaning the clothes. Everything is included. So, in the end, how can you be saving the environment by doing this?” So, we thought that it would be better to use the platform, which had already been used. The raw software, to build on it. We decided to make out a stylist that chooses the correct clothes for you. Then you purchase the clothes. What do you want to do? You want to reduce the turn rate. We want to drastically reduce the turn rate of clothes. So, people are more confident when they are buying clothes online. Same thing with today with increased people buying things online. We want to be sure that we are, actually, purchasing the right clothes. So, you don’t have to return them. I think this will also save the retailers a lot of money. The clothes returned are, usually, not resold.

We were chosen to participate in an accelerator in Iceland last year, Startup Reykjavik. We were met in a competition in Finland, which we won in September of last year. Then we got the grant [Laughing] We are full speed now. It is an awesome project, our company. We are a talented team. I think that’s been a little bit tough for me with Dimmblá. I started this as my idea. It was my baby. I was alone. I really wanted to build another company. I wanted to have a talented team. When you start a company, you can’t do everything yourself. Then you have to have to hire people, which I have done with Dimmblá. It is
different than just having the great team from the start. Where, of course, there are two founders, female founders, with Rebutia. It is a totally different experience than starting Dimmblá. This is, of course, more technology than fashion companies. So, the ethical and the sustainable part is that we are using the resources. We are not affecting the environment negatively.

For example, the re-using of materials or repurposing or using materials made without harming nature. The ethical part, for me, I think, in the future, we should not have to ask, “Is this sustainable? Is this ethical?”

**Jacobsen: [Laughing].**

**Sigfúsdóttir:** How far away? I have to ask, “Is this fabric sustainable? Is this company fair trade?” No, everything will be like that. Of course! Why should it be any different?

**Jacobsen:** Some people may not realize. When you mentioned how regular materials and clothes are not reused, not only are they not reused, they are thrown into the ocean or the landfills. Most of those clothes, the vast majority of the materials for those are polyester.

**Sigfúsdóttir:** And that’s why you can’t reuse it. I don’t want to give any names. There is a fast fashion chain. It says, ‘You can return all the clothes. So, we can reuse all the materials.’ Sorry, we are just not there, yet [Laughing]. It’s just not possible. I know some people might be all into this “greenwashing.” Maybe, that’s the name for it. I mean, I don’t know. What do they do with the material, when we know it’s not possible to re-manufacture them from plastic? I don’t know.

**Jacobsen:** They do the same things as always with false advertising, instead, with the public facing of it.

**Sigfúsdóttir:** I don’t want to say. They are making an effort. That’s always good. I applaud everyone who is making an effort to make things better. When you are making false statements, that’s another thing.

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**Appendix I: Footnotes**

[1] Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Dimmblá; Co-Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Rebutia.

Conversation with Professor Helga Ögmundardóttir on Laxness, Pivotal Early Moments, Iceland Then and Now, and Hydropower in Iceland Highland: Assistant Professor, Social and Human Sciences, University of Iceland (1)

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Abstract
Professor Helga Ögmundardóttir is an Assistant Professor in Social and Human Sciences at the University of Iceland. She discusses: family background; some pivotal moments of early life; some early indications of interest in anthropology; the culture of childhood with the culture of Iceland now; Uppsala for the Ph.D. in Anthropology; Ph.D. dissertation was entitled “The Shepherds of Þjórsárv.: Traditional Use and Hydropower Development in the Commons of the Icelandic Highland” (2011); the central thesis and question about the traditional use and development of hydropower in the Iceland Highland; the main findings of the thesis; and some of the teaching content.

Keywords: Helga Ögmundardóttir, human sciences, hydropower, social sciences, University of Iceland.

Conversation with Professor Helga Ögmundardóttir on Laxness, Pivotal Early Moments, Iceland Then and Now, and Hydropower in Iceland Highland: Assistant Professor, Social and Human Sciences, University of Iceland (1)

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: For this first round of questions, naturally, I would like to start from the beginning. I should note. These interviews take place within a context of simply falling in love with Iceland. It has its issues, as with any country. But it is so lovely and functional, and democratic, and gender equal, and intelligently run, etc., compared to so many other places on Earth. Francis Fukuyama once said, “How do we get to Denmark?” I completely disagree. Well, I agree. Denmark is great. It’s a tough road to progress to there. However! I will give a modern riff on it, “How do we get to Iceland?” Part of the answer sits with the people. Another lies within the context of the development from earlier lives into the present to produce political structure, economic diversity, gender-equal policies, and the formation of a sociocultural structure dynamic to suit the needs of men and women for individual Icelandic citizens to pursue their best selves, their best lives. What was family background for you? I am aware of the culture described by Laxness and the idea of ‘Independent People.’

Helga Ögmundardóttir: I am born in 1965, my parents in 1944, my grandparents both in 1912, my maternal grandmother in 1918 and the other one 1921, so my great-grandparents were 19th century people, and of them I remember all of them very well, except my paternal grandfather who died just before I was born. He is my namesake, I’m his oldest grandchild and he never even knew I would be born. But my grandmother, his wife, my “amma”, married again and her husband became my “afi” and I loved him much. And I remember my great-great
grandfather on my father’s side, my “langafi” well, and my “langamma” – my mother’s grandmother. We always were very close as an extended family, on both my parents’ side, so the strings in my upbringing cover a very broad time-spectrum, stretching far back in Icelandic history, but I’m also a product of 20th century modernistic aspirations, nationalistic ideas of recent independence (Iceland got full independence from Denmark in 1944) and then we have post-everything being the context of my personal and professional life today. Now that my parents are both deceased and I am now a member of the “oldest” generation in my family, I see the ties of blood disappear, alas, and the feeling of belonging to a clan belongs to the past for me. But as for the Laxness-related ideas, I resent all attempts at dividing people, whether on nationalistic notes, in terms of the modernistic idea of the “developed” vs. the “underdeveloped/developing”, which is probably both the cause and effect of my anthropological identity today. I appreciate him as a writer who had enormous influence on Icelandic society in the 20th century; his respect for gone generations, as well as the way he depicts them in a funny and often sarcastic way. He – Halldór Laxness – and my grandfather were cousins, so he was also a part of the idea I was raised with, of the extended family contributing to what I am and where I come from, both genetically and socio-culturally. But what mostly formed my identity from early on is this contradictory mix of “old” and “new”, probably more than anything else because my father was a historian, philologist and folklorist and we were very close. Her was “in the past”, so to speak, telling me about our past all the time, my mother “in the present” as a political activist, both a socialist and a feminist, and even if we were somehow not very close, I always looked up to her as a role model and a brave woman who stood by her ideas about a better world.

Jacobsen: What were some pivotal moments of early life for you?

Ógmundardóttir: I cannot name any specific events or moments; I recall my early life rather badly as I don’t really recall the specificities of events, but more the atmosphere, smells and sounds, feelings, perceptions in general, that I now connect with moments and events, in my mind. But being sent to a farm in northern Iceland as a 10 years old for two summers, to help with the farm-work, that was a great thing for me as I was and am fascinated by animals, and as a 12 years old starting to work in a fish-factory, for many summers to come, that was a big disappointment since my farm-life was thereby over and instead of being outside, free, in the short Icelandic summer, I was confined inside a wet and noisy fish-factory from June to August. Well, we got well paid, I guess, but the money went to my parents’ account as a contribution to our common economy. This was the tradition then and I could do little to object – well, I had my little “rebellions” but they never changed anything. The deaths of dear ones, close relatives, of my pets as well, had profound impact on me as well as a child and teenager. The first time I went abroad, as a 9 years old, to Denmark with my parents, was revolutionary! I saw frogs for the first time, tall trees, huge palaces, trains, could be outside in shorts into the night as it was warm enough… and the list goes on! I was lucky to have marvelous teachers in primary and secondary school, and I read books like there was no tomorrow – I finished all the children’s books in the city library quite early and went on to the grown-ups’ department and many books had profound influence on me, whether books for children or not. We didn’t have a TV until I was several years old and watching telly in my friends’ homes or – even more importantly – the American army-base’s TV-station; now that was a life-changing thing! I could see it in my cousin’s home in Hafnarfjörður, which was close enough to the Keflavik-base to get the signal. And there are countless good and bad “things” I could name as influential, some had impact that left their mark on me early and have since lost some influence – fortunately for the negative ones – others have increasingly popped up in my memory as something that has been there all the time but are now gaining meaning and my understanding of them growing. This is how we – at least I – have been throughout life, and I see us as fairly fluid beings with a complex, changing identity, not at all clearly bound but reaching out to the world all the time; and the world “coming to” or merging with us, not least.

Jacobsen: Were there some early indications of interest in anthropology? Or was this something happening more in early university education?

Ógmundardóttir: I talked about my wonderful teachers when in primary school; I would trace my interest in the world, other people, other cultures to their methods and the material we used to learn from. I will not go into details as that would require a whole essay, but in short, we learned all the classical subjects through learning about different nations and human groups all over the world. As an example, we learned mathematics by following the news on the radio about what cargo-ships were coming and going to and from Iceland – being an island in the middle of the Atlantic, shipping was vital for us – and we made schemes about all the ships and what type they were – size, route, days at sea, types and amount of cargo, etc. and calculated all kinds of information out of
that. Another project was to pretend to be farmers in Scandinavia and the northwestern British Isles in the 10th century, heading for a new land somewhere in the northwestern Atlantic Ocean, and decide what to take with us on our ships, how much, how long it would take, how much each member could eat per day and so on and so forth. We basically relived the settlement of Iceland but not on nationalistic terms but practical and creative ones – and of course we learned about any other subject you have to learn in school with these and other such projects and exercises. To make a long story short; when I discovered anthropology, its interdisciplinary character and local-global focus fascinated me and I found myself totally at home in its bosom. But I really didn’t know that something like anthropology existed as an academic subject until I sat in my first class of Introduction to anthropology, really. But there was no turning back, I was stuck and even if the way through university studies, all the way through a PhD was windy and bumpy, it was somehow meant to be because for me, anthropology is a way of life, not just “my job”.

Jacobsen: If you compared the culture of childhood with the culture of Iceland now, what are the major differences? I like to make a comparison, even with Canada. We closed the last Residential School in 1996 or the same year the Hon. Vigdis resigned after 16 years of leadership in Iceland. People love Trudeau, in general. Yet, our history is two decades behind Iceland. It is in the fine details of gender equality that Iceland excels in what I love and term “pragmatic gender egalitarianism.”

Ógmundardóttir: The major differences – what we have now full-force, but weren’t back then or were just somehow in the background and/or emerging: The internet, globalization of everything, more or less, tourism (although we have a little breathing-hole now because of covid), and last but not least: an environmental crisis affecting all and everything. Concerning gender issues here: we are in many ways moving forward but in some other terms we’re just as much struggling as everyone else. And what’s more, steps forward are NOT here to stay – they so easily are erased by bad laws, changes in our values and thus society – how we interact and see and evaluate each other – so it’s like anything we fight for, believing it’s for improvement, it’s precarious and its existence is only real if we practice what we preach, so to speak. We have domestic violence that is more often than not directed towards women and children, we have rapes and other sexual violence that also affects women more than men, we still have a salary-gap between men and women that cannot be explained with anything but their gender, and so on. Although I want to shake the boat more and stop this duality-view of humans as either male of female – we are so much more complex and it’s very old-fashioned to focus so much on male-female equality. But I know what you mean, in many ways we are ahead and when I talk to my friends abroad, in countries where it’s basically life-threatening to be a woman, I am rather pleased with the situation here.

Jacobsen: Now, why go to Uppsala for the Ph.D. in Anthropology?

Ógmundardóttir: I had taken my undergraduate in Gothenburg and Stockholm, my MA in Iceland, and there was no doubt in my mind I wanted to go abroad for my PhD. And I simply searched for a programme and a supervisor who fit my topic of interest and found that in the Department of cultural anthropology at Uppsala University. I couldn’t afford a university that cost much, so Scandinavia was a good choice. I took my two little girls with me to Sweden and the school-system there for young children was appealing to me. I had friends in the country already and by going there I would be closer to them. I knew the language and the system, had a social security number already and slipped into the system easily.

Jacobsen: You Ph.D. dissertation was entitled “The Shepherds of Bjóðsárver.: Traditional Use and Hydropower Development in the Commons of the Icelandic Highland” (2011). What is the feeling in getting the Ph.D.?

Ógmundardóttir: It was nice, of course, but also a little sad because it meant I would have no reason to stay there longer, really; Uppsala is close to my heart and my best friends since decades live there or close by, and I miss them every day. But it meant I had a certificate to wave, so to speak, and my words had increased weight in discussions – and we can argue if that is right and fair or not – and last but not least, I had more freedom to be mobile as an academic which is the best thing of all for a restless soul like me who needs freedom more than most other things to thrive.

Jacobsen: What was the central thesis and question about the traditional use and development of hydropower in the Iceland Highland? Also, for those who do not recognize the terminology from Anglo ancient law, what is the commons?

Ógmundardóttir: The commons is this space – in terms of geographical space, but also social and cultural space – where we in a way become equal, in terms of access and ability to be present and heard/seen. I cannot pretend to give the one and only definition of “the commons” but for me, these traits
are important. To define a certain area, resource, phenomenon of various kind, that everyone (either all humans or a certain group of humans) has equal access to, is an old way of relating to each other and to our surroundings/environment, and it has lasted and endured in most areas of the world since – most likely – the beginning of human time, in spite of all kinds of political and economic attempts at eliminating them, the commons, by those who believe in private property and want to take them as theirs to use and thereby prevent others from enjoying their treasures, of whatever kind they are. Our atmosphere is a commons, space is (still) a commons, big parts of the earth’s oceans, much of our freshwater, etc. (although the privatization of water is increasing and posing problems to many, especially the poor). My thesis was about the social, cultural and political means people have to protect a piece of land – in this case the commons of a specific rural municipality in Iceland – against state and corporate encroachment. The theme is the familiar one of a hydropower dam-building plan that would destroy a wetland ecosystem, Þjórsárver, and reduce its cultural value and thus hurt the common identity of the community that has used it for centuries, both in terms of access to grazing for their sheep, and as a mental and social refuge from the repetition of daily life. It also has a scientific and conservation value and is one of the last untouched patches of vegetation and birdlife in the highland of Iceland. It is both a strength and a weakness that the area the farmers want to keep intact is a commons; the strength is that they have a common responsibility for it, it being an area of ancient common use, and it is a part of their common identity, but also their weakness because not everyone agrees on its worth and value, as some farmers don’t have sheep and have not emotional nor social ties to the area. But the picture is more complex than that because even people in the community who don’t have sheep and even never have still would never allow its destruction, and the issue of families, family ties, party politics, economic interests within the are and so on, cross-cut the mobilization against the dam scheme.

Jacobson: What were the main findings of the thesis?

Ógmundardóttir: Well, some of it I talked about in the former answer, but basically these several dozens of farming families have managed to prevent the National power company, owned by the Icelandic state, from building the reservoir Norðlingaáluðveita, for decades now (the original plan even dates back to the beginning of the 20th century). Against all odds, against nationalistic ideas of progress of a newly free nation, against the dominant party politics ideology, against very strong industrial and corporate economic interests, they have succeeded with an amazing “toolkit” to stop the plan, sometimes so close to defeat that I sweat when I think about it! Their knowledge and resourcefulness has enabled them to play the multiple strings of resistance, and it has not least been their ties to foreign aid from natural scientists and activists that has made the difference between defeat and victory. Iceland is not an island in all meanings of the term – we are a part of the world and what we do here with “our” nature is not our private business, and when the eyes of the world are on us doing “the wrong thing”, our vain politicians (well, some of them!) often understand that it matters how you talk and behave; it’s not just your fellow country-people who hear you! And “my” farmers have also played their political party-cards well, pulling strings that have strategically helped them bringing forward their cause. And the fact that all Icelanders belong to families and clans (I sometimes call them tribes – Iceland is really an industrialized tribal society, you know?) has enabled my farmers to pull the strings of family- and blood ties which are of great importance here if you want to get anywhere with your ideas and life in general.

Jacobson: To some of the teaching content for you, what is the state of globalization now? What is the state of ethnography?

Ógmundardóttir: Ethnography has become a fashionable way to do anything between interviewing people about their driving behavior, through cities and institutions being inclusive in planning and constructing, to saving the world from the ills of climate change. Now, my engineering colleagues are incorporating ethnographic methods into their university programs, wanting to learn about qualitative methods, participant observation, action research and I don’t know what! As an example, I remember being a part of groups of interdisciplinary researchers dealing with, let’s say emissions or sustainable fisheries, 20 years ago as the only qualitative, female researcher (two boxes ticked by hiring me!) to now being one of several social and humanities researchers and the qualitative methods being an integrative part of the premise of the project (in order to get funding – again; boxes ticked!) and not just an add-on towards the end, when the modelers and oceanographers and biologists and engineers had done their part – the bulk of the project, in terms of manpower, time and money. Well, I might be a bit unfair here, but overall the scientific landscape has changed and I find myself in the situation of being THE ethnographer, wanted (alive, not dead!) in research because environmental issues cannot be dealt with but by many disciplines in
cooperation and communication. Alas, less and less time is allocated to do the research, which is against anything ethnographic – and my task is to somehow fix that. For me, ethnography is a way of life, again, it is how I cope with reality, both for good and bad – I find it hard to put my ethnographic self aside when I’m not at work, sometimes I succeed, sometimes it just happens automatically, but above all it has become my coping method to deal with the globalized world with all its horrors and heavens. And to teach this approach to the human condition is such a privilege – I would have given up and turned to something else if I didn’t have to opportunity to explore ethnography with my students. That is the essence of anthropology to me.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Assistant Professor, Social and Human Sciences, University of Iceland.

Conversation with Sigurður Rúnarsson on Norwegian and Icelandic Humanism: Humanist Officiant, Siðmennt/The Icelandic Ethical Humanist Association & The Norwegian Humanist Association

Abstract

Sigurður Rúnarsson was born in Iceland in 1974 and works as a humanist officiant for both Siðmennt (The Icelandic Ethical Humanist Association) since 2013 and HEF (The Norwegian Humanist Association) from 2015. He was on the board of HEF in Drammen and Lier (Norway) local affiliate and served as a board member alternate for Buskerud county affiliate in Norway. He now lives in Oslo, Norway, but works both in Iceland and Norway. He discusses: a global, internationalist outlook on the world in Iceland; young people talk about religion; gender equality part of the erosion of religious traditionalism; tourism; the sensibilities of Iceland; the humanist community in Norway; the humanist community in Iceland; become a humanist officiant; a humanist ceremony; intriguing requests and outcomes for some humanist ceremonies; and final feelings or thoughts.

Keywords: Humanism, Iceland, Norway, Siðmennt, Sigurður Rúnarsson, The Norwegian Humanist Association.

*Please see the footnotes listing after the interview.*
Scott Douglas Jacobsen: I went to Iceland last year in the Summer. All light during the day; mostly light-ish during the night with pubs and bars open until 4:00 am or later – completely baffling and incomprehensible to a North American and, as I was told by Europeans, to Europeans. Also, a super gender-equal country by most metrics, as I found out based on conversations with many Icelandic women and looking at the real statistics. The public opinion matches the statistical rankings of gender equality – truly a remarkable achievement. How does this gender equality and openness of the people and tourism create the basis for a global, internationalist outlook on the world in Iceland?

Sigurður Rúnarsson: We have been going from Christian opening hours to more normal humans [Laughing]…

Jacobsen: …[Laughing]…

Rúnarsson: …opening hours for restaurants and bars. So, that’s what really has been happening in Iceland for the last 30 years because we have been so tightly connected to the church, the state church. We cannot have restaurants, bars, and clubs open on Good Friday. We cannot have them open on Easter Day, and so on. Because we have been very tightly connected with the Christian religion and the church. So, to address that, it is the state furthering itself from the Christian values in many ways. Because when I was younger, we had to close at 2 o’clock or 3 o’clock. But it is getting longer and longer opening hours for the clubs. Things are changing. We are distancing ourselves from the religion.

Jacobsen: How is this influencing the way young people talk about religion?

Rúnarsson: In Iceland, and, actually, in Norway too, young people do not talk that much about religion. They’re not very connected with religion. Until, it comes to the age of about 14 years old, when they are supposed to be confirmed. Religion, for young people, if that’s the question, is not something people talk about or practice in Iceland. So, in many ways, it is like a private club somewhere in the background. There are some people practicing the religion. But many people who are doing that; they are doing this very privately. They don’t boast about it, don’t tell others about, even if they go to young Christian camps, which we still have. It is not very much spoken about. People don’t talk about it in school. It is a private thing. It is getting more and more unusual or special to be very religious in many ways. Young people try to steer away from talks.

Jacobsen: I want to focus on gender equality too. Because most religions through most of the last several thousand years have had an emphasis on not being fair or equal to women. Iceland, according to the World Economic Forum, has been the most gender-equal country in the world for many years, probably almost a decade straight. Obviously, this is a conscious move and affects culture. I can give a personal example. When I was in the pubs in Iceland, it was a common and casual thing: if a guy likes a gal, he buys her a drink, which is normal in North America and expected, but the reverse was also the case. If a girl liked a guy, she would buy him a drink. So, it was less a gender thing and more, “Do you like this person? Do you make an offer to them?” It was different. Is gender equality part of the erosion of religious traditionalism?

Rúnarsson: I think the short answer is, “Yes.” I think the long answer is, “Women don’t want to be owned anymore.”

Jacobsen: Right.

Rúnarsson: They don’t want to be in debt or get the feeling that they owe a man something because of all of the drinks. I think we have come so far in equality in Iceland. It is not about religion anymore. It is about the independence of the woman. The women, they are exactly the same free spirit as men. They can do what they like with their mind, body, and soul. They can have boyfriends and lovers. They can choose to buy a guy a drink. They don’t owe anybody anything. This is more to do with the independence of the woman. In the last years with the Me Too revolution, but it started much sooner in Iceland, women went out and fought for equal pay. They fought for an equal pension. All of those things. We have gone through them for the last 30 or 40 years. You are seeing something today at the bars; a process that has been boiling for 40 or 50 years in Iceland. You are seeing very strong, independent women who take matters into their own hands. They go by the Iceland women’s strong spirit. Definitely, Iceland women possess it.

Jacobsen: At the University of Iceland bookstore, one of the gentlemen behind the counter recommended a book to me. I think it was called Independent People. I did buy it. It was by Laxness.

Rúnarsson: [Laughing] By Halldór Laxness, yes, winner of the 1955 Nobel Prize in Literature.

Jacobsen: I was told this was the most famous or prominent late/deceased author in Iceland. He told me, “This particular author really got the
heart of what Iceland is, Icelandic people are, truly about.” I think it goes right to the point that you’re making in terms of the evolution over the last 30 to 40 years of independent people.

Rúnarsson: Yes.

Jacobsen: That really encapsulated a lot of my experience there. It really did.

Rúnarsson: I think, without being a book critic, and I have read this book, but not in recent years, that he is writing about how the men and the fathers control everything. In the book, in a clever way, he is talking about how the mothers and the women control a lot without it being at the forefront. So, women’s equality, he is dipping his toe into it. This is very early, the last century. So, he is, actually, describing the beginning of women’s evolution or revolution. I think, in many ways, Iceland as in other countries, like in Africa, and so on, the mothers have always controlled things a lot, e.g., the ‘big mommas’ or whatever you call this—when the mother controls the home, the food, the food supplies, the children, and the men are more outside working. This is very early 1920 to 1935, where this book is written and taking place in Iceland in the early 20th century. You can probably see this in the book. But I don’t have the details. This is starting there. I don’t know if this is the same feeling that you get. When we Icelanders read it, we definitely see a man writing the book. But he is definitely talking about how the mothers and grandmothers are teaching their children and grandchildren how to do their job, how to do the work of the farm, even speaking the Icelandic language correctly.

Jacobsen: Fishing still is a big, but was a much bigger, part of the economy.

Rúnarsson: Fishing hasn’t really reduced in the last 50 years. But we have had other export industries that have grown bigger. Fishing is as big as it was before. But we have had other IT, medical, and, of course, tourism, starting to be bigger than fishing export. Fishing is, definitely, as big as before. At least, we are catching as much cod as before. We have had other technological advantages, as well as tourism being much bigger in Iceland than it was.

Jacobsen: How about tourism? Is this a big industry and a way in which there’s an internationalist view of the world, but by Icelanders?

Rúnarsson: I don’t think so. I really don’t think so. I think Icelanders are very well informed. They watch a lot of foreign TV. We have always watched TV in the original language and with text instead of dubbing. We have seen a lot of TV from the States. We have seen a lot of TV from the UK. We have seen a lot of TV from the Nordic countries, from Germany. We are very well informed about international politics. I am not sure how big the tourism industry has done for us. I think this comes from within the Icelandic soul and from within the Icelandic culture. We’ve always been explorers in many ways. Before, we got a lot of our international information from Denmark because Denmark used to be our mother country until 1944. We had a Danish crown over us until 1944 in the Second World War. Copenhagen used to be our capital city. That’s just in recent years. For example, with my grandparents, they remember that. So, before, we got all the information from Scandinavia, mainly from Denmark. After the information revolution, we started to see Sky News, CNN, and Al Jazeera. We have Icelandic News Television. In many ways, we are interested in the world. We have always looked for information. We have never been closed in our small country.

Now, I am talking about the last 30 years. Before, we only got the information from the capital city of Copenhagen in Denmark. In the last 50 years, we’ve been educating our students abroad. We sent them to universities; or, they have chosen to go to universities abroad. They go on to academic teaching and working, e.g., doctors, historians, and whatnot. We are very interested in what’s happening in the world. We have always, some percentage of us, been up to date in everything in international politics. For example, let’s just say, India, everyone was watching what was happening when she was running for office or Putin when he was going from the presidency to be the prime minister and from being prime minister to being president. We were always watching international politics, of other countries. Let’s not forget the States, we are very interested in what happens in the States, in the pre-caucuses, and have been for many years. So, tourism is only expanding in the last 10, 15, or 20 years. I don’t think that we get our information from tourists or because of the tourists. I think we started much earlier doing that.

Jacobsen: What do you consider the sensibilities of Iceland that are easily aligned, now, with Humanism? What values of Iceland are similar to the values of Humanism?

Rúnarsson: I think, in many ways, my previous answer to the interest with international things, international politics and discussions, are also a primer to this. In many ways, we are very taken by technology, very taken by science in everything, of course, nature, and religion. You could say, “Where
science deepens the theories of Christianity,” for example, “about the Earth, the weather, the plagues, medicine, and many things.” So, I think when you have a nation, which is much better than before. People start to wonder, “Why are we believing in a book – Bible (New Testament, Old Testament)?” It is just storybooks, like Hansel and Gretel. It is just storybooks. After they grow up, you could say; they grow out of this – we call it – “children’s belief in God.” Somehow, the children believe in God, but not the parents. But the parents allow them. I think many parents have, in many ways, relaxed about it. Because the parents found out when they grew up. They just went away from this religious belief and thing. Children, somehow, do this when they get older. I think the answer is that people are aligning with the humanist take on life, the human, and the world – the mind, science, not least all the beautiful things in the world like music and art. We have a relaxed attitude against everything.

The humanists in Iceland are not very extreme. They take part in public talks about the church and religion, but not very extreme. They do a lot of services to the people or to their congregation. They do naming conventions, confirmations (coming of age), weddings and do funerals. They are providing these essential services and ceremonies to the people, where people can relax and go on with, if you can say, a typical ceremony without the burden of religion. I think, in many ways, Iceland started the humanist revolution in Iceland with – we call it – “a citizen confirmation,” where a 14-year-old girl. What do you call this in English, “Coming of age”? Many people were enlightened. They didn’t need to go through the church system or back to the church. Their parents hadn’t been in their church for many years. A part of the success of the humanists in Iceland and the reason that people are aligning with them is that they have a relaxed attitude against procedures and religion. But they are still doing ceremonies in a way that the people want to have them done. Sómennt humanists have taken a position in some cases on assisted death, opening hours of public places that I mentioned at the beginning of the interview – opening hours of restaurants and bars, how we are not able to play Bingo on Friday and such.

They have been trying to take part in public discussions and telling the governments to relax a little bit with the old law that banned this and that on Easter days and Christmas days. For example, there are not many years since we weren’t allowed to have restaurants open on Christmas Day. Then we had already started Christmas trips to Iceland for foreigners. We have had problems finding a restaurant for travellers.

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Rúnarsson: Because out of religious belief, we are not allowed to open on Christmas Day, Long Friday, and Easter Day, and so on. So, it was very strange, very old-fashioned thinking. We needed to correct it; and, we did. So, it is much better now. The humanists have been taking a lead in some or, actually, many of the discussions, where rules and regulations are still built on church rules or religious rules. I think humanists are aligned with the thinking of many people in Iceland. I think that’s part of the magic that has happened with the humanists in the later years.

Jacobsen: How is the humanist community in Norway?

Rúnarsson: The humanist community in Norway is big and well known amidst the Norwegian people. The Norwegian Humanist Association has, as of 2018, over 90,000 members registered in the organization.

Jacobsen: How is the humanist community in Iceland? How do these two compare to one another?

Rúnarsson: In March 2007 a giant step towards this goal was taken when Baard Thalberg, one of the leaders/trainers at the Norwegian Humanist Association’s ceremonies service came and held a training program for Icelandic celebrants. The course was aimed primarily at training celebrants for secular funerals but also covered baby namings and weddings. Of the 10 Icelanders who undertook this training, 6 of them became the first official Sómennt celebrants when our ceremonies service was inaugurated in May 2008. Sómennt has run several training programs in recent years and now has 25 celebrants.

Jacobsen: How does one become a humanist officiant?

Rúnarsson: I got to know of humanist ceremonies through my upbringing in Reykjavik. Sómennt – the Icelandic Ethical Humanist Association was founded in February 1990, a year after a group organized the first coming of age education program or civil confirmation (Icel. borgarleg ferming) in Iceland.

Even though, I did not take part in their ceremony; I always found this new approach to teenagers fascinating and heard of many that went through their course.
Later, Siðmennt started offering celebrant for civil funerals and weddings. And it was in 2010 that my brother and his fiancée where married in a humanist ceremony at Geysir in Iceland by a humanist celebrant on behalf of Siðmennt.

In 2013 I was working at a funeral home as a funeral director as I had done from 1990 when I was 16 years old in my family business.

That year we got surprisingly many requests for funerals without priests or a church being involved. We arranged for that and some ceremonies were conducted by a humanist celebrant and somewhere just conducted by us, the funeral directors and family member. After this experience, I contacted Siðmennt and met with them. I signed up for the course they were starting for new humanist celebrants in the fall of 2013 and graduated a few months later with a diploma and a license from the Icelandic government, arranged for by Siðmennt as a registered secular life stance organization, to officiate weddings. The following week I got my first chance to conduct a funeral for a woman and soon after that, I had my first naming convention for a young girl. This was the start of my career as a humanist officiant both in Iceland and Norway.

I’m still doing humanist ceremonies today. 2019 was a very busy year for me as I conducted over 20 humanist ceremonies in Iceland and Norway, both wedding and naming conventions, where over 70 children got a name. 2020 is already looking to be the busiest as I have 10 weddings already booked until Christmas 2020.

More ceremonies will follow, but naming ceremonies in Iceland tend to be booked with very short notice.

The custom in Iceland for naming ceremonies is to hold one ceremony for every child, and they are either held in the home of the parents or family member or in a small venue like a hotel or community halls.

In Norway the procedure is different. There the parent’s book in advance on one of the prearranged naming convention days of one of the local branches of the Human-Etisk Forbund (The Norwegian Humanist Association) and up to 10 children are joined with parents and family in a public ceremony in one of the community halls.

Jacobsen: What makes a humanist ceremony aligned with the principles of Humanism? What are the necessities and negotiables of humanist ceremonies?

Rúnarsson: People can choose ceremonies, which are purely secular or those which also contain Humanistic values. Our naming conventions do not involve inducting the child into our life stance organization, the way baptism involves induction into a religious organization. Siðmennt discourages people from enrolling babies and children into life stance organizations until the age of 16. For this reason, our civil confirmation program does not require joining Siðmennt and is open to everyone. Neither our naming conventions nor our confirmations require any oath or commitment to follow any leader or accept any dogma, as is done in Christian confirmations.

Siðmennt supports human dignity, human rights, and a broad-minded diverse secular society.

Jacobsen: What have been some intriguing requests and outcomes for some humanist ceremonies?

Rúnarsson: The vast and changeable nature of Iceland, the venues in Iceland, the clothes we the celebrants wear. Standing on a stone or a cliff, near bubbling volcanic waters and blue lagoons, the gazing wind, the rain and snowstorm, performing and conducting the ceremonies in sync with the magnificent nature and unpredictable and ever-changing weather.

Over 50% of weddings conducted by Siðmennt, in 2019, was for foreign citizens travelling for the sole purpose of getting married there. Many of them only travel alone and have nobody from their family or friends circle.

Jacobsen: Any final feelings or thoughts in conclusion based on the conversation today?

Rúnarsson: Many of the things that I have already said also apply with Norway. I think, in many ways, this is Scandinavian thinking. Of the four Nordic countries, Denmark and Sweden have not gone as far as Iceland and Norway. So, but there is more to be done in this part of the world, the humanists in Scandinavia and the Nordic countries need to work more together and put pressure on governments to relax in the same way that the governments in Norway and Iceland have done. That’s probably my special take on the matter because I worked in Norway and Iceland.

Jacobsen: Thank you for the opportunity and your time, Sigurður.

Rúnarsson: Sure! You can find more information here: https://Siðmennt.is/english/history/.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Humanist Officiant, Humanist Officiant, Siðmennt/The Icelandic Ethical Humanist

**Conversation with Heiðrún Ósk Sigfúsdóttir on Artificial Intelligence in Ethical and Sustainable Fashion Design in Iceland: Founder, Rebutia (2)**

**Interviewer:** Scott Douglas Jacobsen


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**Abstract**

Heiðrún Ósk Sigfúsdóttir is the Chief Executive Office of Dimmblá and Chief Executive Officer of Rebutia. She discusses: potential industry partners connected through the university system in Iceland; artificial intelligence and ethical and sustainable fashion dynamics; and style for Dimmblá.

**Keywords:** artificial intelligence, Dimmblá, Heiðrún Ósk Sigfúsdóttir, Rebutia, sustainable fashion.

*Conversation with Heiðrún Ósk Sigfúsdóttir on Artificial Intelligence and Sustainable Fashion Design in Iceland: Chief Executive Officer, Rebutia (1)*

*Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: With the University of Iceland and Reykjavik University, how are potential industry partners connected through the university system in Iceland and small business owners & startups such as yourselves?

Heiðrún Ósk Sigfúsdóttir[1],[2]: When we are developing the artificial intelligence into our service, when we applied for the grant, we spoke with Reykjavik University. They have a department within the university, which is an A.I. department. They have been working with companies. They are really respected by the Research Development Grant that we get. They are really respected by them. I am sure that this collaboration is helping, or did help us, to get the grant, definitely. When they, Reykjavik University, sign an agreement, they worked with us, and bigger companies in Iceland, to develop an A.I. for them. The agreement says that, since they get so much innovation and knowledge from every research that they do in the development work, they can use it for the benefit of other companies; that are not in competition. So, let’s say, Marel (machining manufacturer in Garðabær, Iceland) are developing a fishing machine with A.I. This A.I. that they are developing for them could be helpful for us. In our case, there might be some angle there, “Yes, oh, we can use this.” They are, actually, profiting other companies, helping them out, grow faster, and be better in international competition later on. It is a huge benefit for companies to collaborate with the university. Now, funny that you say this, I am, actually, applying for another grant in collaboration with the University of Iceland. It is a collaboration with a student for the Summer. I have an idea about what we want to do; I applied with the student. They get their angle into the application. They might think something different than I do. Then we get new views on the application, “Oh! We can go to this direction and complete this in three months.” Of course, both the student and the university, and the society, van benefit, because, if we see this person is a good fit for the new company, we can hire them. It can be a good benefit for when we are growing the economy here in Iceland. This is one of the reasons, probably, that the government decided to spend more money on the start-ups. This
kind of collaboration is really great for everyone, I think.

Jacobsen: Some of the economic hits that came to Iceland’s economic shores. They have been the 2008 crash. They’ve been the counter-intuitive boom from the explosion, volcanic eruption [Laughing].

Sigfúsdóttir: [Laughing].

Jacobsen: Based on my knowledge so far of Icelandic history and the people, it’s a survival culture. It’s a culture where, to quote Laxness, is “independent people.”

Sigfúsdóttir: Yes.

Jacobsen: Right? It is a people where the men went out; the women handled themselves. They’re fine.

Sigfúsdóttir: [Laughing].

Jacobsen: When men weren’t acting properly in the sexual dynamics of life for men and women…

Sigfúsdóttir: …

Jacobsen: ...there was a MeToo before MeToo. When bankers were involved in kind of financial ill-dealings, they were dealt with according to, where law. And they got their penalties. There are cases in the United States, where they were bailed out with over $700 billion (USD) when the banks were acting bad. So, it was a nanny state for the super-rich. Then when it came to the MeToo movement and the TimesUp movement, we see this in the United States, but only in the last few years since, not only the election of Donald Trump but also, the explosion of the myth around a lot of these prominent male figures in Hollywood.

Sigfúsdóttir: Yes, exactly, definitely.

Jacobsen: So, Iceland is way, way, ahead. How are these artificial intelligence and ethical and sustainable fashion dynamics fitting into the larger weave of Icelandic history and culture, where it’s ahead of the curve and very conscious of things that are right and things that are wrong well ahead of their time?

Sigfúsdóttir: I think, we are a small society. We are 350,000 people.

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Sigfúsdóttir: [Laughing] That’s the nature of Iceland. Like you talked about in the beginning, you went to the bar [Ed. Pre-interview conversation]. Accidentally, you meet your cousin.

Jacobsen: Right [Laughing].

Sigfúsdóttir: [Laughing] You have to go to check [Ed. The digital application is called Ísleifinga-App, which references Ísleifingabók or The Book of Icelanders.] If someone who you were dating was someone related to you [Laughing]. That is the problem that we have had in Iceland. I think because we are, basically, a small community.

Jacobsen: That’s a good way to put it.

Sigfúsdóttir: Heritage is our nature. It is our heritage. It is all around us. I live in the city. After five minutes, I can, actually, be in the woods. Of course, I live in the suburban area. However, I only have to travel five minutes to have the river, to have the woods, and to have the beautiful valley, which is untouched. I think I can tell, at least from my perspective, and the people around me. When I was growing up, I spent a lot of time with my grandma. I still remember; she saved everything. She kept jars. I am drinking from a jar now [Laughing].

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Sigfúsdóttir: I still remember it. She needed a bedroom table. She went to her basement to make one. A table and other stuff, they were putting this together. Then she had a nice table for her bedroom. We just built it, out of stuff that she found. She never bought a bag when grocery shopping. This is 30 years back. She was concerned. She reused. People were poor. They did not have the money. So, they just had to adapt. I think because we were a poor country; people, we learned from our grandparents. This was a way of living. You had to survive with the small things that you had. You had to repurpose things. We learned a lot from our grandparents and being so close to nature. Many of us in the younger generation have gone travelling in Iceland. We are only a few minutes from Reykjavik. You are amazed, “Like, wow!” We have the highlands and so much untouched nature. Many people, when the tourism was really high in Iceland, were scared as well.

Because when there was so much tourism in Iceland, when you travel abroad or to the United States, you pay for everything. It wasn’t the case in Iceland. You could see the waterfalls and everything, but then thing changed with so much tourism. Suddenly, we were standing in line. A few years back, you were standing alone. Nobody was there. That was the best thing. Now, it was crowded with people. People were paying to see something. Even us Icelanders, at least, we had to pay for everything. For us, it was like, “Really?! I am travelling in my own country.” We are so close to nature. We might be brought up by parents, grandparents, who didn’t have much and had
to make the most of things. I think this has, definitely, made us more conscious. At least, some of us [Laughing], most of us.

Jacobsen: [Laughing] The township where I live is hovering around 120,000 or 130,000. The capital of Iceland with Reykjavik is floating around the same number.

Sigfúsdóttir: Vancouver, I went there when I worked for an orthopedic company. I liked Vancouver. It is so beautiful there. Oh my God! This is a place I could imagine living. You could go out. You could be like, “What am I going to do today? Should I go skiing, swimming at sea?” [Laughing].

Jacobsen: A big thing, I think, for a lot of Vancouverites. I live in the Greater Vancouver Area. I live on the outskirts in a small town called Fort Langley. It was the first capital of British Columbia. It was a colony before Canada was a country. To get to Downtown Vancouver, it is a significant amount of travel relative to a European’s idea of travel. You can walk from one corner of Reykjavik to the other in about an hour. That’s the length of the drive to Downtown Vancouver.

Sigfúsdóttir: Yes, exactly. That’s a benefit of Iceland, or Reykjavik [Laughing].

Jacobsen: Yes, Canadians don’t understand how other people view them because provinces that we have are bigger than most countries. That really puts it into perspective, I think. I think Canada has a lot of Icelandic-Canadians as well, maybe 100,000.

Sigfúsdóttir: Exactly, true.

Jacobsen: What other areas could we touch on that are relevant to others to cover the relevant dynamics of Iceland? I think the fashion rooted in the culture. With Dimmblá, every fashion company has a particular style. You’re rooted in Iceland. Other than things like Sky Blue and Nay Blue. Things like this. What other things are you thinking in terms of style for Dimmblá?

Sigfúsdóttir: I have been going away from fashion a bit. Because I have been focusing on sustainable living. What I have been designing is basically the accessories, like scarves, of course, I was designing the dresses with a designer before. We were always thinking about what we wanted to capture: As a woman, what you would be feeling when you were wearing the Dimmblá clothing. That’s mostly what I was thinking. It was for women who were free spirit going out into nature. Something reminding her of the nature and the comfort. Someone who is, actually, a traveller who has been around the world, basically. Because what I have learned, you begin to appreciate things more, especially, for me, when I travel, “Oh wow, we have this at home.” You start to appreciate your nature and your heritage more when you start travelling. So, when people are travelling more and learning about new culture, I have seen that for many cases. People start to appreciate. They start to get more conscious about things around them after travelling, learning new culture.

You want to, basically, (not save) keep the heritage and the nature. I see this when people come to Iceland. They travel and come to Iceland and see the nature. They go, “Oh wow, you have managed to keep nature so untouched. It is amazing how much nature that you have.” Then they start to say, “You have to keep it. You have to make sure that it is not ruined. It is the feeling when in nature and close to nature. It is the feeling, which I that want to inspire with my products. You want to get this sustainable and to not be affected by the chemicals or the pollution, which are so-often used in this business. I think that’s a really important perspective for me, in everything I do. I want to inspire people and make the right choices, basically. When you buy something, you know this is something authentic. They believe in this. It is something that you want to be a part of.

Jacobsen: Thank you for the opportunity and your time, Heiðrún.

Sigfúsdóttir: [Laughing].

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Dimmblá; Co-Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Rebutia.

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