

A photograph of a narrow, paved path winding through a dense forest. Sunlight filters through the thick canopy of green trees, creating a bright, hazy glow in the center of the path and casting long, soft shadows on the ground. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

Some Smart People: Views and Lives 9

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Forewords by
Benoit Desjardins
Bishoy Goubran
& Mohammed Jabri

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Some Smart People: Views and Lives 9

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Table of Contents

<i>In-Sight Publishing</i>	2
<i>Some Smart People: Views and Lives 9</i>	3
<i>Table of Contents</i>	5
Acknowledgements	7
Foreword by Professor Benoit Desjardins, MD, PhD, FAHA, FACR	9
Foreword by Bishoy Goubran, M.D.	10
Foreword by Mohammed Karim Benazzi Jabri	11
Conversation with Luca Fiorani on the Partigiani, Virtues, Love, Meaning, Philosophers and Geniuses of Note, and Consciousness and the Soul: First Member, RealIQ Society (2).....	15
Conversation with Clelia Albano on Italy, Catholicism, God, Poetry, Dawkins, Dante Alighieri, and Genius: Member, Capabilis (1)	21
Conversation with Dr. Ricardo Rosselló Nevares on Family History, Catholic Schooling, Being Alone, Mathematics, Bioengineering, and Gifted Identification: Former Governor, Puerto Rico (1)	28
Conversation with Anthony Sepulveda (Brown) on Depression, Love, Recovery, and Lessons: Member, World Genius Directory (9).....	33
Conversation with Dong Geon Lee on The Right Life, Religion, Science, and Agnosticism Bordering on Atheism: Member, CIVIQ Society (2).....	37
Conversation with Daniel Hilton on Family, Intelligence, Genius, and Philosophy: Member, Glia Society (1)	41
Conversation with Hiroshi Murasaki on Family, Intelligence, Genius, Philosophy, and Love: Member, ISI-Society	48
Conversation with LaRae Bakerink on Tales from Youth, MBA in Management, Curmudgeons, Male Brokers' Temperaments, and Mensa International: Elected Chair, American Mensa; Member, International Board of Directors, Mensa International (1).....	65
Conversation with Antjuan Finch on Separation from Family, Christianity, Autism Spectrum, Leonardo Da Vinci, Jacob Barnett, CAI, and PDIT: Member, CIVIQ Society (2)	69
Conversation with Bob Williams on Davide Piffer, Francis Galton, Hans Eysenck, Arthur Jensen, Richard Haier and Rex Jung, Scientists and Artists, Howard Gardner, Robert Sternberg, and Charles Spearman: Retired Nuclear Physicist (3).....	73
Conversation with Michael Baker on Blue Collar Labour, Geniuses, Deism, Collective Intelligence, and His Dog: Member, CIVIQ Society (1)	81
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 (3).....	86

Conversation with Dr. Ricardo Rosselló Nevares on Ph.D. in Bioengineering, Science, Being the Governor of Puerto Rico (2017-2019), and Resignation and Lessons Learned: Former Governor, Puerto Rico (2)	96
Conversation with Donald Wayne Stoner on Family, Life, Love, and Reality: Member, Epimetheus Society	101
Conversation with Paul Cooijmans on Glia Society, Games, Tests, Puzzles, Thoth, Policy, and Absolute Freedom of Speech: Administrator, Glia Society (4)	119
Conversation with Dr. Ricardo Rosselló Nevares on Democratic Participation, Colonialism, and Former President Donald J. Trump: Former Governor, Puerto Rico (3)	129
Conversation with Gareth Rees on Genius and Philosophy: Member, Canadian High IQ Society (2)	134
Conversation with Master Chef Craig Shelton on Science, Food, Farming, and Finance: Founder, Aeon Hospitality (2)	139
Conversation with Dr. Ricardo Rosselló Nevares on the American Social and Political Framework, and Puerto Rico and the Coronavirus: Former Governor, Puerto Rico (4)	144
Conversation with Master Chef Craig Shelton on Common Sense Versus Scientific Validity, and Motivation: Founder, Aeon Hospitality (3).....	149
Conversation with Master Chef Craig Shelton on Economics and Banking Systems: Founder, Aeon Hospitality (4).....	153
Conversation with Mr. Sudarshan Murthy on: Member, World Genius Directory (2).....	159
Conversation with Uwe Michael Neumann on Travelling and Youth: Member, CIVIQ High IQ Society (1)	164
Conversation with Assistant Professor Simon Olling Rebsdorf on Background, Work, Philosophy, and High-IQ Societies: Assistant Professor, VIA University College (1)	167
Conversation with Christopher Angus on Family, Background, Life, Philosophy, Being Christian, and Love: Member, ISI-Society (1).....	180
Conversation with Anthony Sepulveda (Brown) on Abortion, Relational Ethical Quandaries, and Mothers: Member, World Genius Directory (10).....	186
Conversation with Dr. Benoit Desjardins, M.D., Ph.D., on Background, Academics, Intelligence, Science, and Philosophy: Academic Physician; Member, Mega Society (1)	188
Conversation with Richard May (“May-Tzu”/”MayTzu”/”Mayzi”) on “Picking One’s Own Pocket,” “Did Gurdjieff understand his own teaching?”, “What is the work?”, “Truth,” “Good and Evil,” and “Is this what the work has become?”: Co-Editor, “Noesis: The Journal of the Mega Society” (6)	193
Conversation with Bob Williams on David Piffer, Latent Variable Analysis, High Correlations with the g Factor, Executive Function, Leonardo da Vinci, DMN, Booze, Promiscuity, and Charles Murray: Retired Nuclear Physicist (4).....	196
<i>License and Copyright</i>	208

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Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Foreword by Professor Benoit Desjardins, MD, PhD

"Some Smart People: Views and Lives 9" is Scott Douglas Jacobsen's ninth compendium of interviews with exceptionally gifted individuals. These people are not all Ivy League professors, like myself. In fact, few of them are. Often, extremely gifted individuals clash with traditional education systems, pursuing non-conventional paths in life.

In this volume, Scott engages with 22 extraordinary individuals, exploring their lives, interests, and passions, and uncovering the unique journeys that led them to where they are today. With a keen eye for detail and a talent for deep conversation, Scott masterfully curates a wide-ranging collection of voices—from eminent academics and former governors to a master chef whose reflections on food are as insightful as his thoughts on life.

Each conversation dives into the profound and the personal, touching on topics that range from the existential to the empirical, the spiritual to the scientific. Scott's work is a testament to the power of thoughtful dialogue, weaving together a rich tapestry of intellect, passion, and experience. Through these conversations, readers are invited to ponder life's biggest questions—on meaning, intelligence, and the pursuit of truth. It is this blend of philosophical depth and practical wisdom that gives the book its distinct character.

This collection is a celebration of intellectual curiosity and the human spirit. It challenges readers to think deeply, question relentlessly, and engage with the world in a nuanced and thoughtful way. As you turn each page, you won't remain a passive observer but become an active participant in a dialogue that spans across diverse realms of thought and experience.

Scott has crafted a work that is not only intellectually stimulating but also deeply human. It offers readers the chance to engage with some of the brightest minds of our time and explore the rich landscapes of ideas they inhabit. Each interview is a window into the participant's soul, providing insights into their life experiences, philosophical perspectives, and intellectual pursuits.

Embark on this journey of conversation and contemplation—it promises to broaden your horizons and ignite your own quest for understanding.

— Benoit Desjardins, MD, PhD, FAHA, FACR, FNASCI, CEH, CISSP

Foreword by Bishoy Goubran, M.D.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen's engagement with the high IQ community is a testament to his unique blend of intellect, curiosity, and a discerning sense of humor. Over the years, in our exchanges, Scott and I often found ourselves deconstructing the concept of genius—not just as an abstract ideal, but as a lived experience fraught with quirks, contradictions, and occasional absurdities.

We would question its value, laugh at its idiosyncrasies, and delve into the peculiarities that often define those labeled as extraordinary. These dialogues were more than mere banter; they were a shared exploration of the fragile line between brilliance and the very human vulnerabilities that often lie beneath.

For me, these conversations were also a mirror reflecting the dissonance between external perceptions of genius and the inner landscape of self-doubt and complexity that I often quietly navigate. Scott possesses a rare ability to articulate this tension, revealing that the minds often hailed as the brightest are also marked by uncertainty, nuance, and a deeply human sense of imperfection.

His work goes beyond capturing intelligence; it uncovers the full spectrum of the genius experience, marked by humor, introspection, and the private battles that shape even the most remarkable lives. In his interviews, Scott reveals that genius is not a singular attribute but a complex, multifaceted journey that is as much about the mind as it is about the heart.

Foreword by Mohammed Karim Benazzi Jabri

[Traducción al inglés desde el original en español.]

To begin, I am very grateful to Scott Jacobsen for giving me the opportunity to participate in one of these conversations, where various aspects of the lives of people with high IQs are analyzed, ranging from the personal to the spiritual and religious beliefs of this selective group. Often, these individuals share many common characteristics, with their strengths and weaknesses frequently coming together in societies and communities with a common interest that goes beyond their passion for high-range intelligence tests. Some also excel in standardized tests and participate in forums created by these associations of gifted individuals, where they share their ideas, opinions, reflections, and other contributions to the intellectual community, aiming to promote knowledge and intelligence.

Knowing Scott Jacobsen, he has a distinctive style characterized by his meticulous and detailed questioning. He carefully chooses his questions, covering a wide range of topics, from the personal to the experiences and achievements of the individuals he interviews. These qualities are reflected in each of his interviews with the most prominent members of high-IQ societies and communities.

Thanks to high-range tests, I discovered myself within that fascinating and unique world that measures human intelligence in a peculiar and distinct way compared to traditional tests. In some ways, these tests, along with conventional ones, have helped me better understand myself and clarify many doubts I had about my own intelligence—doubts that often negatively impacted my self-esteem. I constantly questioned myself in this regard and had a false perspective of myself and my intelligence. In truth, I suffered from imposter syndrome. I didn't consider myself intelligent or brilliant enough, underestimated myself, and had low self-esteem. This was further exacerbated by the depression and anxiety disorder I suffer from.

I have been battling this disorder for several valuable years of my life, having lived with it for more than 40 years, from the age of 20 to my current age of 45. I have endured difficult moments throughout my life due to various circumstances, including living with a disorder that has significantly limited my life in every sense and brought with it a great deal of suffering. Currently, I remain under pharmacological treatment with psychotropic medications, and I have occasionally received psychological support from psychologists and psychiatrists who have worked together to help me better manage my situation and keep fighting for my dreams despite adversity.

Returning to the topic of high-range tests and based on my personal experience, I believe that, on the one hand, the results of these tests closely correlate with and approximate the results obtained through standard tests like the WAIS. They correlate particularly well with tests that measure the *g* factor of intelligence, such as the Cattell test or Raven's matrices, among others. In tests I have taken under the guidance of experienced psychologists and experts in giftedness, I have achieved results similar ones. From a psychometric perspective, the main difference between high-range tests and standardized tests administered by psychologists—or better yet, neuropsychologists—is that the latter involve a comprehensive evaluation of the tested individual. These tests do not merely focus on measuring a specific IQ but also analyze other fundamental aspects to arrive at a more accurate diagnosis. These aspects include examining the psychological profile, neurodivergence, sensory hypersensitivity, and more to determine whether a person has high

intellectual abilities. This comprehensive approach makes them more precise, as they also measure factors absent in high-range tests, such as high processing speed and both short- and long-term memory.

On the other hand, high-range tests have the advantage of not requiring a set time for completion. This, to some extent, eliminates the stress factor during their execution, allowing the tested individual to reach their full potential, particularly in those who are susceptible to stress or suffer from mental disorders. From this perspective, high-range tests offer a certain level of reliability. Additionally, they are characterized by being much more complex, requiring a high degree of reasoning and divergent thinking in many cases. Most of these tests demand a minimum of 10 hours or more to complete.

In my case, high-range tests were ideal for estimating and approximating my real IQ. This is because I am particularly susceptible to stress due to my condition. Moreover, the psychotropic medications I must take daily affect my processing speed, making it different from that of someone without a mental illness. The stress generated by conventional tests works against you, especially when combined with the side effects of psychotropic drugs, which alter some cognitive processes to a certain extent. As a result, the outcomes will not be the same in often underestimate your true IQ and can create confusion, especially when conducted by psychologists with limited experience, leading to erroneous diagnoses. This is where high-range tests have a relative advantage over conventional tests. However, the scientific community still does not recognize these types of tests as valid psychometric tools for measuring intelligence in many cases. There is significant controversy surrounding this specific topic. Some consider these tests merely a pastime or hobby that fail to analyze several fundamental factors necessary for a comprehensive study of intelligence in its entirety for a specific individual, making their results less reliable from the perspective of many psychologists.

In general, high-range tests focus primarily on measuring the g factor of intelligence, neglecting other components that form part of human intelligence. Moreover, the norms for these tests are often established by authors who lack sufficient training, preparation, or knowledge in the field of psychology—or, when they do possess such knowledge, it is sometimes insufficient. The norms they establish are often disproportionate, as many of these tests measure IQ levels above 160, unlike standard tests.

In conclusion, I find this volume very interesting as it provides a comprehensive analysis of various aspects of the lives of individuals who share high IQs, with their strengths and weaknesses. Scott Jacobsen demonstrates great skill in formulating his questions, and for me, it has been a pleasure to be a small piece contributing to and being part of this volume.

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[Spanish original.]

Para empezar agradezco mucho a Scott Jacobson por brindarme la oportunidad de participar en una de estas conversaciones en el que se analizan varios aspectos de la vida de las personas con alto cociente intelectual que van desde lo personal hasta las creencias espirituales y religiosas de este grupo selectivo de personas que en muchas veces comparten muchas características en común con sus fortalezas y sus debilidades que se agrupan muchas veces en sociedades y comunidades con un interés común que va más allá de la afición que tienen a las pruebas de inteli-

gencia de alto rango, otros tienen además calificaciones de pruebas estandarizadas sino de participar también en foros creadas por estas asociaciones de personas superdotadas que expresan sus ideas, opiniones, reflexiones y otras aportaciones a la comunidad intelectual con el fin de fomentar el conocimiento y la inteligencia.

Conociendo a scott jacobson tiene una forma peculiar que le caracteriza por hacer preguntas de una forma meticulosa y detallada, elige bien sus preguntas abarcando temas de diversas índole que van desde lo personal pasando por las experiencias y logros conseguidos que quedan reflejadas en cada una de sus entrevistas con los miembros más destacados de las sociedades y comunidades de alto cociente intelectual

Gracias a las pruebas de alto rango yo me fue descubriendo en ese mundo fascinante y particular que tiene una forma peculiar y distinta de medir la inteligencia humana en comparación con las pruebas tradicionales, en cierto modo me ha ayudado junto a las pruebas convencionales a conocerme mejor a mí mismo y aclarar muchas dudas que tenía respecto a mi propia inteligencia cosa que repercutía negativamente muchas veces en mi autoestima ya que siempre cuestionaba a mí mismo al respecto, siempre he tenido una falsa perspectiva sobre mí mismo y mi propia inteligencia propiamente dicho el síndrome del impostor, no me consideraba lo bastante inteligente o brillante me infra estimaba tenía baja autoestima y esto fue agravado cada vez más por la depresión junto al trastorno de ansiedad que padezco, llevo luchando contra este trastorno varios y valiosos años de mi vida, he convivido con la enfermedad más de 40 años desde la edad de 20 años hasta ahora que tengo 45 años, he vivido momentos difíciles a lo largo de toda mi vida por varias circunstancias entre ellas el padecer un trastorno que ha limitado bastante mi vida en todos los sentidos acompañado de mucho sufrimiento detrás, actualmente sigo bajo tratamiento farmacológico con psicótrópos y a veces he tenido un soporte psicológico por parte de psicólogos además de psiquiatras que en conjunto me auto ayudaban a llevar mejor mi situación y seguir adelante luchando por mis sueños y en contra tiempo, volviendo al tema de las pruebas de alto rango y basados en mi propia experiencia personal. Desde mi punto de vista creo que por un lado los resultados de los test de alto rango se correlacionan de una manera estrecha y se aproximan bastante a los resultados obtenidos mediante las pruebas estándar como el WAIS y sobre todo se correlacionan mejor con las pruebas que calculan el factor g de la inteligencia como el test de cattel o matrices de raven s...ect ya que en las pruebas que hice por psicólogos experimentados y expertos en altas capacidades he obtenido resultados parecidos, desde el punto de vista psicométrico, lo que diferencia las pruebas de alto rango y las pruebas estandarizadas hechas por psicólogos o mejor neuropsicólogos es que en que estas últimas hay un estudio global de la persona testada porque no se limitan solamente al hecho de medir un ci determinado sino analizan también otros aspectos fundamentales para llegar a un diagnostico mas certero como estudiar el perfil psicológico, la neurodivirgencia, la hipersensibilidad sensorial...ect para llegar a la conclusión de si una persona determinada tiene altas capacidades intelectuales o no lo que les confiere un carácter mas preciso aparte de la medida de otros factores de los que carecen las pruebas de alto rango como la alta velocidad de procesamiento de la informacion y la memoria tanto a coto como a largo plazo, por otro lado las pruebas de alto rango tienen la ventaja de que no se precisan de un tiempo determinado para realizarlas lo que en cierta medida elimina el factor estrés durante la realización de las mismas de manera que se puede alcanzar el mayor potencial que posee la persona testada sobre todo en personas susceptibles al estrés o que sufren algún que otro transtorno mental los que les confiere cierta fiabilidad desde este punto de vista además se caracterizan por ser pruebas mucho mas complejas requieren un alto grado de razonamiento y un pensamiento divergente en muchas ocasiones, la mayoría requieren un mínimo de 10 horas o

mas para realizarlas, en mi caso eran ideales para una estimación y una aproximación a mi ci real ya que yo soy susceptible al factor estrés y generado por mi propio trastorno aparte de que los psicofármacos que tengo que tomar a diario mi velocidad de procesamiento no es la misma que cuando evalúas a una persona que no padezca algún tipo de enfermedad mental en la que el estrés generado en las pruebas convencionales corre en tu contra y al estar bajo presión sumándolo a los efectos secundarios de los psicofármacos que alteran en cierta medida algunos procesos cognitivos, los resultados no serán los mismos en muchas veces infraestiman tu verdadero ci y llega a crear confusiones sobre todo si están realizadas por psicólogos que carecen de mucha experiencia pueden llegar a llegar a diagnósticos erróneos ahí está relativamente la ventaja de las pruebas de alto grado sobre los test convencionales, pero actualmente la comunidad científica todavía no reconoce este tipo de tests como un instrumento psicométrico válido para medir la inteligencia en muchas ocasiones, hay mucha controversia al respecto a este tema en concreto, otros lo consideran solamente un pasa tiempo o un hobbie que carecen de analizar varios factores fundamentales para un estudio tan completo de la inteligencia en su conjunto de alguna persona en concreto los que las hacen medidas no tan fiables desde el punto de vista de varios psicólogos ya que en general son pruebas que se centran sobre todo en la medición del factor g de la inteligencia obviando otras medidas de otros componentes de la que forman la inteligencia humana aparte que sus normas están hechas por autores muchas veces que carecen de una formación, preparación o conocimientos si los hay a veces insuficientes en el campo de la psicología además las normas que establecen son un poco desorbitadas ya que en muchas pruebas miden un ci por encima de los 160 a diferencia de las pruebas estándares.

En definitiva, encuentro el volumen muy interesante, analiza de forma global varios aspectos de la vida de personas que tienen en común su alto cociente intelectual con sus más y sus menos, mucha destreza por parte de Scott Jacobson en la formulación de sus preguntas y para mí ha sido un placer ser una pieza más para complementar y formar parte de este volumen.

Conversation with Luca Fiorani on the Partigiani, Virtues, Love, Meaning, Philosophers and Geniuses of Note, and Consciousness and the Soul: First Member, RealIQ Society (2)

2021-02-15

Luca Fiorani is the first member of [RealIQ Society](#) by Ivan Ivec with an estimated IQ of 181.2 ($\sigma 15$) combining 9 tests, where he studies and considers himself a philosopher in nuce. He discusses: a family history in the Partigiani; the triplet values; Roman Catholicism; the reason for being a loner; cut off social reality; studying; the “proper credentials for achieving something non-negligible”; a life work; regrets; discovery and commentary by other people at 7-years-old; the main reasons for the “society of exhibitionism”; Plato; Dante Alighieri; Leonardo da Vinci; Gottfried Liebnitz; Werner Heisenberg; Jacques Lacan; Kurt Gödel; some exceptions to the principle of profound intelligence required for genius; work, love, friendship; the correct properties of God; science changing the views of consciousness; personal perspectives on consciousness and the soul; freedom of the will and human nature; test constructors; Kantianism; Rousseauism; economic liberalism; Rawlsian ethics; Spinozan metaphysics; Nietzscheanism; reject solipsism; conscious agents, operators; the numinosum; and love.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: As an irregular army force, the *Partigiani* fighting against both Fascism and Nazism seems most intriguing to me. These stories of “bravery, fortitude, daring,” while ‘giving up is not an option,’ as a maxim, seems to imbue a family narrative with nobility in sentiment. Is this a sensibility found throughout many Italian families with a family history in the *Partigiani*?

Luca Fiorani[1],[2]*: Yes, I guess. Without Resistance there is no Liberation and without Liberation there’s no Liberty. Freedom is something valuable. Their sacrifice won’t be forgotten. Our current battles – for rights, against ideological systems, etc. – are mainly possible because of their battle, less metaphorical but even more representative. They’re an emblem.

Jacobsen: What are some aspects of personal life in which you have been able to fulfill the maxim and the triplet values of “bravery, fortitude, [and] daring”?

Fiorani: In the context of my psychological growth. I had demons to face and I fought them without quitting. This granted me the chance of living a more than acceptable life, I’d say satisfying – the only flaw/defect remains the laborative scope: but I’m less than 30, nothing is lost, I still have opportunities, and I intend to take them.

Jacobsen: What does Roman Catholicism mean to a family living in Tuscany and Liguria while ‘embracing Catholicism in a not too rigid way’?

Fiorani: Roman Catholicism is rule, routine, standard for most families in Italy. The promulgated values are important and elevated. You can follow most of them even without being assiduously practicing, in my humble opinion: in fact, this very thing happens repeatedly, with no clamor.

Jacobsen: What was the reason for being a loner “as a child and as an adolescent”?

Fiorani: I don’t possess all the answers, things just happen, several factors I suppose – i.e. my nature/temperament/personality and others’ cognitive and emotive maturity or lack of it, it depends. Not everything is easily classifiable.

Jacobsen: It seems as if a tendency to only pursue friendships if they fell into your lap rather than heading out into the world to find them, consciously. So, why cut off social reality and from “reality often”?

Fiorani: Maybe I suffered more than I like to admit. Escapism is a response to a stimulus.

Jacobsen: What are you studying now?

Fiorani: Philosophy. I’m about to complete the full cycle of studies. I shall obtain my doctor’s degree within July 2021, I’m preparing my graduation thesis. I am a good student, being *A+* my average grade at university. I’ve also obtained full marks with honors in high school, appearing in *Albo Nazionale delle Eccellenze* [*National Excellence Honours Roll*] as well.

Jacobsen: What comprises the “proper credentials for achieving something non-negligible” in work?

Fiorani: Master’s degree, for instance. Plus, right motivation and befitting *forma mentis*. I’ll reach a stability, I’m pretty confident about that.

Jacobsen: Do you have a life work, as in a pursuit or passion intended for life?

Fiorani: Certainly.

Jacobsen: Any regrets on the side of competitive aspect with addiction and competition as the mindset?

Fiorani: Yes, I do have regrets. Anancasm is not fine.

Jacobsen: How did this discovery and commentary by other people at 7-years-old change the orientation to education? As peers, based on prior commentary, they seemed a distant non-concern while in rapture with your own thoughts.

Fiorani: The orientation to education... I’ve progressively become aware of my talent in various fields, almost everything which involved theoretical conceptualizing and abstract reasoning – as for my manual dexterity, my skills were almost null then, and are very poor now. Also, my drawing ability is close to zero. It’s a soft sub-kind of dysgraphia – my handwriting, for example, is something horrible.

Back to the point, people considered me a brainiac but rarely in its pejorative meaning, I’ve never been a eager beaver *vel similia*, and, as for teaching programmes, nothing changed – giftedness is an almost ignored issue in Italy, which implies *de facto* not taking into account gifted children and possible specific educational programmes. But I wasn’t an underachiever, and I fought boredom in many ways – being also a precocious autodidact.

Jacobsen: What seem like the main reasons for the “society of exhibitionism,” of the creation of *Homo vacuus*, of ‘the society of spectacle’?

Fiorani: I cannot clarify with abundance of details. I may become encyclopedic, pedantic, verbose. I suggest to read works of Guy Debord, Zygmunt Bauman, Slavoj Žižek, Peter Sloterdijk.

Jacobsen: Looking at the examples, it raises some straightforward questions with Plato, Dante Alighieri, Leonardo da Vinci, Gottfried Leibniz, Werner Heisenberg, Jacques Lacan, and Kurt Gödel. What makes Plato a good example of a genius?

Fiorani: Plato has been the first pedagogue of the Western world. He was a formidable writer – his *Dialogues* are literary masterpieces –, his mind was vast. He conceived so many thoughts and

ideas (cf. the famous quote of Alfred North Whitehead on Western philosophy: “a series of footnotes to Plato”, in *Process and Reality*). Philosophy was already alive and strong – Heraclitus, Parmenides –, but Plato let it shine and rise and expand, both following and overcoming his master Socrates. The latter is very present till the end, though. Not a coincidence that Leo Strauss spoke about *zetetic skepticism* describing the Socratic attitude of Plato: doubt and research as keystones.

Jacobsen: What makes Dante Alighieri a good example of a genius?

Fiorani: If one has familiarity with the *Divine Comedy*, it becomes truistic. His poetry is unmatched. Each single verse – of the 14233 of which his masterpiece consists – is not trivial nor easy. Consider as well how much theology was in his work. Dante was able to express things in a way that has never been equaled, I’d say. Take the following lines as a golden example:

«Fede è sustanza di cose sperate
e argomento de le non parventi,
e questa pare a me sua quidditate»

(*Paradise*, XXIV, 64-66)

*faith is the substance of the things we hope for
and is the evidence of things not seen;
and this I take to be its quiddity*

I consider the beauty and depth so amazing that I shall leave to the reader other remarks.

Jacobsen: What makes Leonardo da Vinci a good example of a genius?

Fiorani: He is the most classic and complete example of *Homo universalis*. He was impressively versatile, the novelty of his ideas is now well-known. His skills were various and immense and his contributions to mankind remarkable.

Jacobsen: What makes Gottfried Leibnitz a good example of a genius?

Fiorani: Another polymath... The mind of Leibniz is similar to *The Library of Babel* of Jorge Luis Borges. I’d say then, the total mind. High standing logician [cf. identity of indiscernibles, etc.], mathematician [cf. differential and integral calculus and refinement of binary system as notable examples], elegant and ingenious philosopher [cf. *Monadology*, etc.], prolific inventor [cf. stepped drum and other mechanical calculators]. Some of his intuitions were confirmed more than two centuries after his time. He wrote essays in six languages. His erudition too was something nearly unbelievable.

Jacobsen: What makes Werner Heisenberg a good example of a genius?

Fiorani: He won the Nobel prize in 1932 “for the creation of quantum mechanics”. He really has been a pioneer and key figure in physics. This (r)evolution hasn’t perhaps the same vastness of the ones by Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein, but we’re not that far.

Jacobsen: What makes Jacques Lacan a good example of a genius?

Fiorani: Lacan just brought psychoanalysis to another level. He has been able to re-read and re-comprehend entirely Sigmund Freud, his mentor. His studies on the language are sublime. He reaches a rate of elaborateness so high that he is often considered obscure or even indecipherable.

ble. Difficulty is there, I mean, that's unquestionable, but his complexity is also epiphany, brain-wave and so on. He appears unintelligible, but as well he enlightens us about so many phenomena, that I'm inclined to forgive his excess of sophistication.

Jacobsen: What makes Kurt Gödel a good example of a genius?

Fiorani: I believe that he's the greatest logician ever lived. I'm not excluding Aristoteles and Gottlob Frege, nor Ludwig Wittgenstein, Alfred Tarski, Saul Kripke and Alan Turing, beware! Gödel's incompleteness theorems represent a revolution *tout court*. How we view things – our approach to everything we know, for instance.

The famous Pontius Pilate's question (cf. *John* 18:38), Τί ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια; [Greek]/Quid est veritas? [Latin]/*What is truth?* becomes even more difficult or challenging and intriguing after Gödel.

Jacobsen: What are some exceptions to the principle of profound intelligence required for genius?

Fiorani: In some artistic fields it may happen that one brings a revolution (sort of), without being profoundly intelligent. So, at least to a certain extent this person is *genius*, in a way. To some degree, yes. Andy Warhol seems fitting.

Jacobsen: In a direct sense, you have spent a significant amount of time in intellectual and alternative test-taking pursuits. Why the obsessions with a reduction in the practical concerns for the manner of an ordinary life, e.g., work, love, friendship, and the like?

Fiorani: Assuming that I haven't spent time for things like love and friendship, for example, is incorrect. I devoted time also to important things.

Jacobsen: What seem like the correct properties of God, "bidden or not bidden"?

Fiorani: The correct properties? *Bonum-Verum-Unum-Pulchrum*? Yes, I guess so...

Jacobsen: How is science changing the views of consciousness, the soul, and human nature, even the nature of nature? How do these differ from the past philosophical arguments? How do these not differ from the past philosophical arguments?

Fiorani: Materialistic arguments are winning – in the field of philosophy of mind, which includes consciousness & soul. But that's not a law, just a trend. Neurosciences are changing a bit how we view human nature, indeed. As for the nature of the nature, I guess that contemporary physics arrives. Quantum field theory, Unified field theories, Standard Model, Cosmology, Higgs boson: Wikipedia might help the reader here.

The other two questions require a very long diachronic analysis. Let's just say I don't reply 'cause I'm not able to.

Jacobsen: What are personal perspectives on consciousness and the soul?

Fiorani: A curious and thorough perspective about consciousness is described in: *The Matrix* (1999), directed by Lana Wachowski and Lilly Wachowski; and *Memento* (2000), directed by Christopher Nolan. My 'personal' perspective is similar. About soul, I might quote *The Seventh Seal* (1957), directed by Ingmar Bergman; and *Life of Pi* (2012), directed by Ang Lee. Why do I cite movies? I don't know, it has been genuine.

Jacobsen: Any thoughts on freedom of the will and human nature?

Fiorani: The verdict of *Mahābhārata* is a thought of mine: “The knot of Destiny cannot be untied; nothing in this world is the result of our acts”. Please cf. also *Dark*, the famous German TV series, which debuted in 2017. The ambition and complexity of its narrative deserves our praise. My hasty prose does not deserve praise, instead. Speech is silver, silence is golden – never mind.

Jacobsen: Those test constructors: Theodosis Prousalis, Xavier Jouve, Ron Hoeflin, Jonathan Wai, James Dorsey, Iakovos Koukas, Nick Soulios; they are well-known within the high-range testing community. Whose tests seem the most g-loaded tests, whether numerically, spatially, or verbally, or some admixture of them?

Fiorani: It depends. The (good) verbal ones might be the most g-loaded.

Jacobsen: Why Kantianism as the ethical philosophy?

Fiorani: Because there is less heteronomy but not less universality.

Jacobsen: Why Rousseauism as the social philosophy?

Fiorani: His *Discourse on Inequality* and *The Social Contract* are fascinating. You need to understand the impact of civil society on people – and nature of people – in order to overcome social injustices. Otherwise you won’t go anywhere. I don’t concur with everything he said, for example about private property as original source of all inequality, but I like his method – Rousseau has been a pioneer too.

Jacobsen: Why economic liberalism as the operating system for an economy?

Fiorani: Because that system is the one that, *in Wirklichkeit*, in factual reality, works the most. *In concreto*. There are better systems *in abstracto*, i.e. ideally. But history proves that they don’t work with a similar efficiency for a relevant amount of time.

Jacobsen: What parts of Rawlsian ethics most definitively sets forth an ethical vision of a political system?

Fiorani: Advantaging the underprivileged is one of the main ideas of Rawls. That’s the most important point. How he applies this principle is explained updating some instances of Kantian philosophy. He also uses a variant of the social contract theory (a reinterpretation of Jusnaturalism).

Jacobsen: Why does Spinozan metaphysics (philosophy) as demarcated by Hegel help thinking about things outside of the physical?

Fiorani: There’s a third level of knowledge, the first being by perception and the second by reason. The third kind is *amor Dei intellectualis* – you may call it intuitive. The second kind of knowledge is OK for the physical, but it’s not enough. To comprehend reality in all its aspects, metaphysics is necessary, thus the third level of knowledge. Spinoza describes these things in the most solid philosophical system I know. That’s all.

Jacobsen: Why does Nietzscheanism provide a comprehensive system of thinking for you?

Fiorani: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*... Almost everything is there. *A Book for All and None*. Explanation concluded.

Jacobsen: Why reject solipsism as in the intersubjectivity of meaning?

Fiorani: Human being is φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῷον (*by nature, social animal*) and our mind is, *Bereshit*, in principle/in beginning, relational. Solipsism is wrong, *sic et simpliciter*.

Jacobsen: With meaning externally and internally derived synchronously, what does this state about a universe or an area in the universe without conscious agents, operators?

Fiorani: There is an universe/area if there are conscious agents.

Jacobsen: With the “ineffable sacred mystery” of the *numinosum*, what does this mean for the process of discovery of science and the human activity of organizing the findings into theoretical constructs, organizing principles?

Fiorani: Nothing. That process – consisting of: discovery, theoretical constructs, organizing them, etc. – continues and works.

Jacobsen: As love is the “most marvelous sentiment that we have,” what is a life without love?

Fiorani: Life without love would be an error.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] First Member, ReallQ Society

[2] Individual Publication Date: February 15, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/fiorani-2>;
Full Issue Publication Date: May 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 Clelia Albano on Italy, Catholicism, God, Poetry, Dawkins, Dante Alighieri, and Genius: Member, Capabilis (1)

2021-02-15

Clelia Albano is from Italy. She's a teacher of Italian and Latin, painter and poet writing in Italian and English. She has two collections of poetry, *In Assenza di Naufragi*, that was a finalist for the National Literary Contest "Il Mio Esordio 2018," selected by the International Festival of Poetry of Genova, and "Come Tutte Le Cose di Questo Mondo", a prosimetrum. She's been published also in English on the american anthology "Winter" and by the literary magazine "The Night Heron Barks". She loves reading, learning languages and editing for Wikipedia, which she has done since 2012. She is a Member of Capabilis and the United Sigma Intelligence Association. She 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 discovered; 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; work experiences and jobs; particular job path; the gifted and geniuses; God; science; the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations); the range of the scores; ethical philosophy; social philosophy; economic philosophy; political philosophy; metaphysics; philosophical system; meaning in life; meaning externally derived, internally generated; an afterlife; the mystery and transience of life; and love.

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

Clelia Albano[1],[2]: I love this question. It brings back memories of incredible people very significant in my life. My father was a teacher of Latin and Greek from Naples. He belonged to a remarkable family. Along with fairy tales I was mostly told stories of some ancestors and of notable relatives but also stories related to specific historical context such as WWII.

With regard to ancestors, my father recounted often about a well known poet of the Renaissance, Luigi Tansillo, one of the most prominent petrarchist of southern Italy – according to Treccani – who was the ancestor of his mother. This created a sort of mythical aura around my dad's legacy. In addition he loved to recount anecdotes of his uncle -brother of his father- Leonida Albano, who was a magistrate who built a case against the fascist general Rodolfo Graziani. He also had two amazing aunts: Laura and Alba, both teachers, both erudite, both single by choice. In sum they were forerunners of the modern emancipated women. Laura was incredibly tall, a beautiful red-haired woman with green eyes and with an enormous number of men who vowed her hand. Alba was the opposite. A gracious little figure, but equally exquisite and fascinating. She taught Italian literature, Latin and Greek. I keep her vocabulary of Latin, a priceless memory. My father told me that given her skills and competencies she was hired as a private preceptor of the little prince of Montenegro at the time he was in Naples.

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

Albano: Yes, they have. Particularly they shaped my awareness of the importance of learning and of democracy. With regard to the feminine side of my family I also shaped the idea that a woman can self determine herself and that a woman can be what she wants to.

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

Albano: My family is of Italian language and catholic religion.

On the paternal lineage, cultural background is characterized by a high educational level. Many graduated in various fields – from teaching to medicine, from the military to law. The majority were teachers and head-teachers. My mother comes from a humble family. Her father was an employee at a municipal office. She has many siblings. Living in a very small town in a mountainous area with a limited budget and resources for traveling and attending universities, made not possible for her to earn a degree. Despite the obstacles they are brilliant and smart people though.

Religion is a relevant point in both my parents' background.

I was raised as a catholic. Gradually I developed skepticism over faith although I can say I was a believer in my childhood and for half of my adolescence but always dubious. My dad was a church goer and he had an intellectual idea of faith; on the one hand as an intimate and private feeling, on the other as a form of rational dimension that gave no room for superstition, fanaticism and theatrical performance. He disliked the grotesque side of certain expressions of faith.

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

Albano: It was a good experience. I have attended public schools, the high school was a classic lyceum, and what I remember is the environment of the entire scholastic iter was heterogeneous. Honestly I got bored when lessons were too repetitive and I would be lying to say that I enjoyed the small tough chair and the constraint of school time. In my opinion once you have assimilated the contents you should be put in the condition of going further. It's a mistake when teachers flat progresses. Doing like that transforms them into bureaucrats who close minds in evolution in a box. Being an only child I usually tended to socialize. On the other hand, I also tended to be selective because my tastes and attitudes didn't often match the peers' ones. I loved to paint, writing poems, create objects with clay and to draw illustrations, and I loved to listen to British and American pop music; as a child I loved Franco Battiato who is a singer, musician and a painter whose texts were revolutionary for the poetic texture and for the multiethnic influences, an odd taste for a kid. Strangely I have never been a child who giggled to children tunes and enjoyed songs for kids. As a student I was one who easily learned but I often think that a non conventional school would have met my inclinations better.

I have had some good teachers though.

Jacobsen: What have been some professional certifications, qualifications, and trainings earned by you?

Albano: Well, after graduating in Literature and Philosophy – my degree is quadriennial that is equivalent to a Master degree – I earned a certification in Italian literature and history, another one in Italian literature and Latin, a certification in History and Philosophy. All these represent different teaching chairs in Italy, which means I'm qualified as a teacher for each of these certifications.

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

Albano: I took tests by chance. Before taking them I have had only some fun with taking these IQ tests that pop up in the Internet ads. One day I received a friend request from a Mensan,

founder of one of those IQ societies and I told myself why not to give it a try? Since then, given the very good result, I entered several IQ societies and later I was friended to another Mensan who got the highest IQ score in the world a couple of years ago, and I took more than one of his tests. There are incredible, fascinating people in those societies, sensible and humble.

To be frank my personal purpose was to satisfy the curiosity to test my capabilities but I don't feel comfortable being tested because I think there are aspects of our minds that cannot be measured.

Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?

Albano: There always have been things that were easy to comprehend and to retain in my mind, since my childhood. When you're a kid you don't notice that much the difference. You think everyone is like you. When you grow up you start to acknowledge that your mind works differently from the standard particularly because of the enormous size of the contents and information you realize you retain and with regard to myself also memory. Acquaintances, friends, school-mates, and gifted people, were impressed by how easily I remembered contents even of a distant past.

More than memory it would be preferable to call it comprehension, because I retain what I'm interested in and what I want to learn. OK I also remember things that are not useful sometimes (such as an anecdote of a cat named Sugar who fell down from a skyscraper ten years ago and it landed safe), but they surely were related to a certain mood or particular moment or a context that somehow was affecting my interaction with the world around me (with regard to Sugar it's because I love cats) not necessarily relevant context or memorable days though. Anyway across the time I realized that everything I remember is useful and precious. I have developed the idea that reality, life and experiences are linguistic codes and every single memory is a set of words that must be there in the vocabulary of our mind even if we will leave them in pages we will never visit again.

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.

Albano: I think the reason is people feel uncomfortable in the presence of extra-ordinary, when someone does not meet the standard, the convention, the predictable. People find attractive those who are simple to imitate, they like to find in the other a mirror equipped with the same notions, prejudices, look, or by contrast they like social models that appear on the glossy covers of financial magazines or fashion zines or gossip. But a genius is different. A genius has nothing to do with social and economic business nor with aesthetical trends to launch. Looking back to the tragic end of many beautiful minds of history I think not only they were considered abnormal but given they were intellectuals, scientists, philosophers, artists and so on who reversed the monolithic knowledge and the officiality of held views (such as religious beliefs), they were seen as dangerous, they were considered a threat.

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

Albano: Many to me are great. It's not a piece of cake to make a choice. You know, was I a scientist I would have answered Einstein or Tesla but I'm a teacher in Humanities and I'm also a painter and a poet and although I am fond of a long list of writers, philosophers, painters, poets,

all geniuses, I must admit that Dante Alighieri is more impressive than others because of the variety of narrative situations, of metaphors, of cultural contents and subjects he put inside the Divine Comedy. Moreover he is impressive because of his imagination. They say his contemporaries saw him as a voyant, strongly convinced he went across the three ultramundane reigns actually. This happened due to the realistic details of every experience he narrates. Beside this, he is the greatest because he had the courage to criticize the Church corruption and because he acknowledged that there is an innate predisposition even to feel love, among other things.

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

Albano: Generally I think sometimes they coincide. Profound intelligence is the faculty of understanding and interpreting others emotions, and learning. On the other side genius is intuition, exceptional ability to penetrate and dig inside the most intricate, complex problem. It is also creativity, inspiration but it is not for granted a genius is always empathic.

For a better explanation of what I mean I want to quote a passage from “Imaginary Lives” by Marcel Schwob, on the famous artist Paolo Uccello (Paul of the Birds):

“The truth was that Uccello cared nothing for the reality of things, but only for their multiplicity and the infinite lines and angles that form them; so he painted blue fields, red cities, knights in black armour on ebony horses with mouth aflame, and spears bristling skywards in every direction like rays of light... The sculptor Donatello would say to him: ‘Ah, Paolo, you are neglecting substance for shadow!’

Schwob portrays Uccello like an artist who is obsessed with lines and abstractions to such an extent that he loses sight of life and death, of love. So, if genius is not rooted in the emotional side, it lacks the intelligence of feelings. This is the difference.

Jacobsen: Is profound intelligence necessary for genius?

Albano: Yep.

Jacobsen: What have been some work experiences and jobs held by you?

Albano: All related to teaching. There are other experiences that can't be considered works. I write poems and I published two books. The first collection was chosen by the International Festival of Poetry of Genova and I was a finalist in this national and international literary contest. My other experiences are related to art. I am also a painter and other experiences are related to cultural fields such as being wikipediaian since 2012.

Jacobsen: Why pursue this particular job path?

Albano: I have to repeat myself, my faith in education and the influence of my father and relatives.

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?

Albano: In my opinion a myth is that all the gifted people are sensitive, empathic, altruistic (as I briefly said before). To my knowledge some masters of art considered geniuses, weren't so nice and good privately and if I think of my personal experience I can say I have known some highly intelligent people who are sadic, racist, misogynist.

I even don't think that necessarily a poet or a great writer are sensitive. I have no clue why this happens. It might be that emotional intelligence is not always developed in intellectually developed people.

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

Albano: As I told you before once there was a time I was a believer, although in adulthood I realized this idea of God was instilled into my mindset by default, given my family's background and beliefs.

Nonetheless I already doubted the existence of God when I was a child because the deepest mystery for me consisted in His invisibility. I was attracted by the idea of supernatural entities and this was for a certain period of my youth what triggered my curiosity even to the likelihood of another life on another dimension or planet.

When I grew up with my knowledge and critical thinking I lost my faith. Despite this I consider religions necessary. I see them as a form of literature and mythical narrative that specially in Italy with regard to Catholicism, during the Middle Age, passing through Renaissance, gave a strong impulse to Arts, and due to its closeness to the best minds of those times did contribute to the birth of spectacular frescoes, chapels, cathedrals, paintings, manuscripts, and why not, also poetry. Dante's works, I aforementioned, are a perfect paradigm of poetic inspiration drawn from God. With regard to the other question, study of theology and philosophy is to be considered fundamental. Philosophy played a pivotal role in my formation.

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

Albano: Science is essential, although I must say it cannot explain everything. I'm scared by scientists like Dawkins, for example. To think there is mystery, that there are unexplainable things, gives me the sensation of being a human being. To think we are only neurons, synapses, chemistry and predictable beings transforms us into machines and it sounds creepy.

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

Albano: Spatio, visual and verbal. Respectively 138, SD 15, and 152, SD 15.

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

Albano: I can mention many philosophers that have influenced my idea of ethics, but since for me what structures life and society is a series of interconnected values and fields of knowledge – I don't share the relatively recent habit of separating disciplines into sectors, because it produces only fragmentation – I will answer ethical philosophy that is carried by Gadamer's aesthetics and hermeneutics. The reason is simple. Gadamer acknowledged there are not absolute truths and in *Truth and Method* (1960) he formulates the aesthetic concept that Art is related to the transmission of meanings across time. He wasn't persuaded with the idea that a work of art loses its meaning when it is subtracted to the time of its creation, in opposition with what Schleiermacher theorised, for example. The artistic products are vehicles of objective truths that through an hermeneutical approach take new meanings. This addition of meaning has an impact on the collective culture, education, ideals and ethics. What he calls prejudices (pre-judices) represent not negative preconceptions but our preformed cultural views, our knowledge, and as such they can

be transformed by interpretation, since cultural values and aesthetical values have to be interpreted through the time. They can modify ethics because aesthetic he referred to is a set of signifiers that affects our behaviour, in other words Art, poetry and so forth, forward messages that for every span of time must be decodified, and trans-codified. I believe in the educational and ethical power of Art and Literature.

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

Albano: About one year ago I read a book I consider one of the most beautiful books I ever read and one of the best books of philosophy of the last centuries: *This Life*, written by Martin Hägglund, professor of Comparative Literature and Humanities at Yale University. Page after page I nodded in agreement with the concept that this life is the only life we have. This means we have to employ our time to care for others, since there is neither religious consolation nor the promise of an infinite ultra mundane existence. Sociality is essential in Hägglund's line of reasoning and so are politics and economics according to an original interpretation of Karl Marx. The ideal society should pursue democratic socialism. That said, I want to focus on social and human meanings this book carries with it because it's, above all, a work on life and the social function of acknowledging our frailty and values, emotions and feelings related to loss and death which capitalism and neoliberalism tend to erase from our culture for replacing them with a dehumanizing frantic rhythm of living. In this work there's no transcendent aspiration. Hägglund argues one has to realize themselves here by cooperating with each other.

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

Albano: It makes sense the theorisation of equality according to Enlightenment on the one hand, democracy conceived as a process strictly linked to contingency and not democracy as an absolute truth the way Hägglund has formulated in his philosophical speculation also through Derrida and Marx (in two different works).

Jacobsen: What metaphysics makes some sense to you, even the most workable sense to you?

Albano: Metaphysics is a fascinating word. It evoked parallel worlds in my youth, the aspiration to go beyond limits, the platonic Hyperuranius, the inexhaustible query of inspiring emotions. Nowadays poetry is my metaphysics.

Jacobsen: What worldview-encompassing philosophical system makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?

Albano: I think there isn't only one philosophical system I can apply to my worldview. As a human being I see myself as part of an extended reality, as a person amongst thousands of people. That's why I consider myself cosmopolitan and my *weltanschauung* cosmic. Not universal but cosmic since the word cosmic from the time of the ancient Greeks embraced the idea of multiplicity whilst universe is related to "unus" (one) and "monos" sounding exclusive and merely unilateral.

Jacobsen: What provides meaning in life for you?

Albano: Bonds of affection, empathy, progress.

Jacobsen: Is meaning externally derived, internally generated, both, or something else?

Albano: Part of the meaning comes from experience, the way we interpret the world, part is a construction.

Jacobsen: Do you believe in an afterlife? If so, why, and what form? If not, why not?

Albano: Being not a believer I don't. This doesn't mean there is not another dimension, a new form of existence. It would be amazing if reincarnation was a possibility. One thing I can do for sure to grant me an afterlife is to become a tree which is possible due to the so called Bios Urns. I read somewhere it is expensive though. Who knows, when I will die it might be they lower prices. Lol

Jacobsen: What do you make of the mystery and transience of life?

Albano: Inspiration.

Jacobsen: What is love to you?

Albano: Many things. First of all something to cultivate and nourish.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Italian & Latin Teacher; Painter; Poet, Member, Capabilis.; Memvber,

[2] Individual Publication Date: February 15, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/albano-1>;
Full Issue Publication Date: May 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 Dr. Ricardo Rosselló Nevares on Family History, Catholic Schooling, Being Alone, Mathematics, Bioengineering, and Gifted Identification: Former Governor, Puerto Rico (1)

2021-02-22

Ricardo Rosselló Nevares holds a PhD in Bioengineering and Biotechnology. He graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) with a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry and Biomedical Engineering with a concentration in Developmental Economics. Rosselló continued his academic studies at the University of Michigan, where he completed a master's degree and a PhD in Bioengineering and Biotechnology. After finalizing his doctoral studies, he completed post-doctoral studies in neuroscience at Duke University, in North Carolina, where he also served as an investigator. Dr. Rossello was a tenure track assistant professor for the University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus and Metropolitan University, teaching courses in medicine, immunology, and biochemistry. Dr. Rossello's scientific background and training also makes him an expert in important developing areas such as genetic manipulation and engineering, stem cells, viral manipulation, cancer, tissue engineering and smart materials. He discusses: the family history; Catholic schools running through kindergarten through high school; earliest stages of being alone as a child; bioengineering as a path in education; and formal tests.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: So, superhero movies are very popular now. So, I want to ask, "What is your origin story?"

Dr. Ricardo Rosselló[1],[2]*: [Laughing].

Jacobsen: Some of the family history, as with any historical process, how this led to your coming into being.

Rosselló: When I was a little kid, I had parents that were loving, caring. I was the youngest of three children. I was not necessarily planned for. I came a little bit after the others. Even though I was the smallest of three, I had two worlds.

I was treated as a young child, but was a lonely child, the anomaly child. After that, I had some moments or certain moments creating the person who I am right now. I would say one of them was a pretty serious surgery when I was young. I had to be taken off school for a while.

I had two very complicated kidney surgeries when I was about 8 or 9. So, I mentioned that before because when I was in school in kindergarten, first grade, second grade. I had a hard time fitting in. One time, I went to Catholic school. When they were teaching us to write our name, I would write my name from the center on outwards.

I would take two pencils and start the first letter of my last name with my right and the last letter of my first name with my left. I would then expand outward. Instead of seeing that as sort of a novelty or, at least, a neat parlour trick, they thought there was something wrong with me.

I had to partake in writing lessons, writing calligraphy. It was pretty rudimentary because I was ambidextrous. They, essentially, had to tie a pencil to one of my hands, so I would only use my right hand. That was one of the moments.

I would say like that. I can share other stories. There were unique challenging moments where I had this mix of feeling I had to overcome big obstacles and then enjoying afterwards. It was not

until a little bit later that they figured out; I was not possessed.

Jacobsen: Ha!

Rosselló: Or had severe learning disabilities, but that I had a higher IQ, that started changing things. Another story parallel to that, because of this apprehension in the get-go, I didn't really get into math. I thought I was very bad at mathematics.

Kids that go to these sorts of events start preparing and training from the very early get-go. For my case, I can clearly state that I didn't get into mathematics or had any interest up until the first two months of 9th grade, where I had a serendipitous event.

One teacher can change the life of a person. I had this one teacher. For some reason, I fell into the advanced mathematic class. Even though, I was horrible. This guy was notorious for calling out people. He was a guy who trains mathletes.

When I came in, he didn't feel like I belonged there. So, he picked on me. My first reaction was to sit in the back and not say anything, to blend in and move by; one day, he put this math problem on the board for people to solve. He picked on me.

I was afraid. I went up there. I solved it. It was not a technical mathematical problem. It was IMO, the International Mathematical Olympiad, type of problem and took a hold of it. He sat me down and said, "We have this math club. I would like you to come by."

To me, it was completely surreal. I had no business. I really had big lagoons on basic mathematical operations, and so forth. But the long story short. Through high school, I was able to thrive on that.

One of the first people from Puerto Rico to ever get to the International Mathematical Olympiad. It was really that serendipitous moment in time, where I was really just flowing by, playing sports, and doing that sort of thing, not focusing on my intellectual development.

Thanks to that sort of intervention, it geared me into a more academic route towards the future. I think those are a few of the events. So, it is serendipity combined with bad luck that just turned out in a positive way.

Jacobsen: Were these Catholic schools running through kindergarten through high school?

Rosselló: Yes, back home in Puerto Rico, the education system is really unequal. Over here in the States, right now, for example, I have my kids in public school. These public schools are just as good as private schools.

There are certain tangential things that you can add on the private side, but in terms of looking at how the kids succeed, enter college, and have opportunities; it is pretty much evened out. In Puerto Rico, it is completely the opposite.

If you went to a private school, the chances of going to college were 95%. If you went to a public school, obviously, as kids drop out and so forth, taking the basis as kids that enter the public school and kids that leave, then about 2% to 3% of them get to college.

So, it was a very different mindset. My parents, my dad is a physician turned politician afterwards. My mom, she was social services and psychologist. They put a big value on education and having the opportunities to move forward.

Jacobsen: You were mentioning various earliest stages of being alone as a child. Was this common even as you went into adolescence?

Rosselló: It is very common. I think I had those two compartmentalized – personalities if you will. It sounds awful. This very introspective persona that I have. Even though, I was the youngest. Again, my older brothers were adolescents when I was born.

I played with myself. I did all those things. When I had to go to the hospital for a year, it was a lot of internal mental games and thought experiments that I had to go through. I tried many sports. The one I really enjoyed was tennis. The one I thrived at was tennis.

It was largely because it was very individualistic. I would say that embedded in my DNA is that need. Even to this day, I can do tasks. I can do certain things with people around me, and learn to enjoy it.

But if I am going to do anything that I think is meaningful or creative, then I need to – literally – be closed up in a room to think about these things. The other part involved is the more public persona. I don't know if I have given it a lot of thought.

I don't know if it because of the lack thereof that I had in the onset or not, but I do enjoy being with people, working with people. It is trying to rationalize this dichotomy. I think it was (former) President Bill Clinton who said, 'If you're an extrovert, then when you're around people; you get more energy. When you're an introvert, you expend the energy.'

While I enjoyed it, every time that I had these big activities and so forth. It would take a physical toll on me. I think there is this space – I don't want to say, "Loneliness," but a very introspective space that I still need to function. Otherwise, I feel things around me start crumbling.

Jacobsen: Why did you pick bioengineering as a path in education?

Rosselló: These are other stories in the making.

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Rosselló: When I was a little kid, when everybody wanted to be a police officer and a fireman, and so forth, I wanted to be a bioengineer. The reason: Since I was a kid, there were second-generation G.I. Joe toys called Cobra-La.

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Rosselló: They were bioengineered supervillains. Obviously, the superheroes came along with them. I was fascinated by being able to engineer one's biology. Not simply on the engineering end of cars and so on, but one's biology.

When I was a very young kid, my dad gave me a few books to read and pick my imagination, *Brave New World*, which would tap into things that were obvious. But when I was growing up, we were just tapping into it.

That kind of faded into the background. I don't know. I lost my way there. I was bouncing from thing to thing. All of the sudden, when I went to college, I chose at random, by the way. [Laughing] When I was deciding on what colleges to apply, when the day came to decide, I didn't really know.

In my internal setting, it was between Princeton, MIT, and Wharton. I thought that I wanted to study business at one point, that's why Wharton was there. I just left it up to chance. Luckily, for

me, I picked MIT.

I really enjoyed my experience there. When I got there, I had no idea what I wanted to do. The MIT platform allows you to navigate freely for about a year-and-a-half before you know what you want to do.

I started looking at engineering. Within engineering, chemical engineering, once you start getting more specialized, I reconnected with the idea of biology and looking at biological systems to essentially enhance our humanity.

It would be medicine or tackling diseases. The way I see it. I used the engineering concepts to try to grasp what was occurring within biology. So, that's the first Newtonian step. Once you're there, you realize there's a lot more complexity. I think it is a beautiful thing about biology and bioengineering.

Essentially, that's how I had a primitive urge when I was 4-years-old. That dissipated and, somehow, I found my way, again, into it.

Jacobsen: When you're going through university education, high school education, were there any formal tests to identify, "Oh, he's a gifted kid"?

Rosselló: Yes, I took the Stanford-Binet. At that point, for some reason, the mentality is very different. I'm sure you've encountered this. They would tell the parents. Don't let the kid know, don't make him feel different, my parents always treated me as a smart kid.

So, there was no real change. Obviously, when I took that exam, they saw that there was more potential. The immediate aftermath of that was that they expected more of me [Laughing].

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Rosselló: I was cruising along getting the bare minimums. They were very happy when things jelled with the mathematics part of it because it was something that was of interest. I had a very hard time finding anything to read that was interesting to me.

My dad in 4th or 5th grade, when I couldn't concentrate or find anything interesting, would give me these little booklets. I remember one was *A Brief History of Time*. That was by Stephen Hawking and really grabbed my attention.

He started getting me books in cosmology and astrophysics because it was really the only thing I kind of veered towards or had any interest in reading. There was that. Then there was at the University of Michigan, when I was doing my Ph.D. There was another test.

It was the Cattell test. They were doing these trilingual brain studies. They wanted to see what areas of the brain would light up. You had to have a certain minimum IQ score for that. I took that one as well.

Those were the first two indications. One was at some point in the intermediate school and then the other one was more in graduate school.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Former Governor, Puerto Rico.

[2] Individual Publication Date: February 22, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/rossello-1>;
Full Issue Publication Date: May 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 Anthony Sepulveda (Brown) on Depression, Love, Recovery, and Lessons: Member, World Genius Directory (9)

2021-03-01

Anthony Sepulveda (Brown) is a Member of the World Genius Directory. He discusses: the fallout; the process of recovery; religion for support; professional therapy for support; personal, independent methodologies for helping; the religious community; professional therapy; forms of religious comfort; depression; the diagnosis; people's sympathy; the mental health; and a higher sensitivity to the events in life.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Since the affair with Tango, what was the fallout?

Anthony Sepulveda (Brown)[1],[2]*: I became emotionally unstable and unable to focus on anything else. As a result I was suspended and, nearly, fired from my present job. I also spent most of my money on alcohol in a futile attempt to forget about my problem for a few hours.

Jacobsen: How have you developed a sense of healthy self once more?

Sepulveda (Brown): Yes. With a great deal of effort, I managed to get myself back into a healthy state of mind.

Jacobsen: What is the process of recovery?

Sepulveda (Brown): For me, I cannot turn to religion or professional therapy. No one really listened when I did so in the past, often responding with some general cliches that are only effective for those incapable of independent thought. Instead, I dedicated my time towards trying to solve (or at least resolve) the problem. For weeks I couldn't focus on anything other than her decision to throw me away. I needed it to make sense. And I knew that no matter how painful the truth was, it was the only move I could make. Otherwise I couldn't move on. And despite how irrational it seemed and how painful it was to think about, I knew it was the quickest way to get through it. So I spent every day recalling every detail of every encounter and conversation we'd had since she'd got back into contact with me, certain that there were enough details there for me to understand why everything went so wrong. Eventually, I found a few incontrovertible truths that clarified everything enough for me to accept.

Jacobsen: Why didn't you turn to religion for support with this?

Sepulveda (Brown): As I mentioned before in part 1, I consider religion to be a comforting delusion for those unwilling to actually work through their problems and I'll never turn to it for any amount of solace. Instead, I'll take the harder route of accepting the truth as it is, no matter how I feel about it.

Jacobsen: Why no professional therapy for support with this?

Sepulveda (Brown): I underwent several years of therapy after my parents' divorce at the behest of my mother and, personally, found it to be a waste of time and money. While a therapist can be quite useful for many people, I believe that it's ultimately up to the individual to be willing and able to solve their own problems.

Jacobsen: What were some of the personal, independent methodologies for helping with this situation?

Sepulveda (Brown): There is one universal truth I keep in mind when I work on a problem – this has to make sense. No matter how complicated or confusing a subject can be or how we feel about the answer, every situation has a perfectly logical consistency. So, as I mentioned above, I focused on finding the details I needed to understand my situation. And I found them.

For example, I'd profess my love to her as often as I could. But said that she was unwilling to reciprocate such things verbally while she was married. I accepted that condition quickly and didn't think much of it until I needed to. And when I recalled those occasions, I focused on her facial expressions. She'd smile, but it was a tight, reserved one and she'd look downwards. Now this matches her generally introverted personality. But it indicates that she's uncomfortable about something she enjoys. She felt guilty. Not just because she was having an affair, but also, likely, because she didn't feel as strongly for me as I did for her.

Luckily for me, human nature is fairly universal. So it wasn't hard to work out why she made her choice.

There are only three reasons why people avoid each other – fear, annoyance and disgust. Given how close we were, it was obviously the former that was pulling her away. She was scared that there wasn't any way to avoid some unacceptable consequence with me in the equation. With this in mind, I reviewed our last few conversations and concluded that she did, in fact, still have strong feelings for me, that she didn't think she would be able to suppress them to the point where we could maintain a casual friendship and that if she acted upon her feelings she could lose everything else she cared for.

It should be known that even this little step of progress took me weeks to reach. During which point I was also trying to determine how much I wanted to keep living. Without love in it, everything seemed pointless. And my history of personal relationships has been absolutely terrible. So, if I couldn't make it work with Tango, the one person who knew me best, then for what reason could I expect to find anyone who'd care about me? There were many occasions where I'd reflect on everything I've accomplished (from being a published artist in several different media, to my high IQ scores, to co-hosting a presentation alongside the head of the Pacific Neuropsychiatric Institute without even having a college degree) and thinking that no matter what I did or how hard I worked or how I felt, no one was ever going to care. Because they don't have to. There's no incentive for them.

But then, unexpectedly, I got enough of a distraction from my problems to rest my mind. It was then that I was able to objectively consider what would happen if I gave up on my life. I can't know for certain, but, as I've mentioned before, the most probable outcome seems to be reincarnation. And I have no way of determining what the end result of that process would be, so is my life really so bad that it'd be worth rolling the dice?

No, it wouldn't be.

While my life isn't always fun or easy, I can honestly say that I like who I am as a person. More importantly, I respect myself. And not everyone can say that. And it's not worth the risk of being reincarnated as one of those people.

I've proven time and time again that I'm a decent, reliable, dynamic person. And I've accomplished more than the average thousand people put together with casual effort.

Since then I've decided that since I'm going to keep living, I'm going to live the best life I can. I've been making plans for my future. And I'm very excited to see it through.

Jacobsen: When others enter such a situation, for example, with religion, the religious community may condemn these states of affair(s). How is this not helpful?

Sepulveda (Brown): Religious people are often too biased and closed-minded to actually consider the context of the situation enough to offer a fair judgement.

For context, Tango found herself in a marriage that was both emotionally and physically unsatisfying. She'd call me crying at least once a week because her husband would yell at her for irrational reasons (often in front of their infant child) and left her so hurt and stressed that most will never really understand why she put so much effort into maintaining their marriage. Yet surely, anyone could why she'd pursue things to enjoy outside it.

Jacobsen: Others may enter professional therapy. However, the therapist may be outdated in training or given Christian therapy certifications. How are these not helpful?

Sepulveda (Brown): In every way. By habitually relying on outdated or illogical methodologies, you limit your ability to actually solve or resolve any existing problem. In reality, you often have to be willing to compromise and work with the problem on it's own terms to find a solution.

Jacobsen: What forms of religious comfort or professional therapy may help people?

Sepulveda (Brown): It's seems to me that religious people simply let go of their problems by accepting them as part of God's plan. While I must admit that this can help people in many situations, I feel that such beliefs are too irrational and lazy to be taken seriously.

Jacobsen: Did you suffer depression after the affair?

Sepulveda (Brown): More so than ever before. She was the most important person in my life. And I became so focused on losing her that I could barely feel physical sensations. I accidentally shut my finger in a door during that period. And all I did was stare at it, unsurprised that I wasn't capable of feeling the pain.

Jacobsen: Was the diagnosis formal or informal?

Sepulveda (Brown): Informal, but very obvious.

Jacobsen: Were people sympathetic?

Sepulveda (Brown): A few were. But not enough to do anything about it. Which I'll argue is the key difference between caring and simply saying you do.

Others stopped associating with me altogether.

But there are several people I'd like to thank –

Derek, for being the only person at work to ask me how I was doing.

Heidi, for giving me your number and time.

Jodi, for listening when others only heard.

Elaine, you're a saint for putting up with me.

Julia, for spending time with me when you didn't have to.

My mother, for always being there for me.

Jess, I'd be in prison now if it weren't for you.

Harry, for keeping me going, constantly engaging with me and giving me a reason to smile again.

And Tango, for giving me some of my most treasured memories. I'll never forget you.

Jacobsen: What seems like the source of the disregard of the mental health of men, by women *and* men, in our societies?

Sepulveda (Brown): It's now my belief that people are inherently selfish. So unless alleviating the suffering of another person can also give you some personal satisfaction or you benefit from associating with someone emotionally or physically, there's no real incentive for you to extend any effort towards that end. Men often feel the most neglected due to their natural position in the gender dynamic; where people tend to feel safer around women because they are often physically stronger and/or are so much more attracted to them that they feel comfortable enough to express themselves honestly. As a result, men are often neglected, even amongst each other. Which is why they comprise about 90% of successful suicide attempts. Few people have the confidence or decency to really listen to what they have to say. All too often, we only receive consideration based on what we can provide (Financially, socially, personally, etc.) because that's the role we're 'supposed' to fill.

Jacobsen: Highly intelligent people can be emotionally sensitive too – without proper calibration. Something like a hot house tomato. What is an important lesson for those emotionally in tune with themselves, and others, and having a higher sensitivity to the events in life?

Sepulveda (Brown): I'd advise anyone willing to actually focus on a problem to keep in mind that no matter how illogical or ridiculous it seems, it makes perfect sense. All you're missing are a few pertinent details and some context. Once you have those, everything becomes much easier to accept and/or work towards resolving.

And no matter what the answer is or how you feel about it, life goes on. You should too, when you're ready.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Member, World Genius Directory.

[2] Individual Publication Date: March 1, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/sepulveda-9>;
Full Issue Publication Date: May 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 Dong Geon Lee on The Right Life, Religion, Science, and Agnosticism Bordering on Atheism: Member, CIVIQ Society (2)

2021-03-01

*This is an interview with a youth member of the high-IQ community in South Korea, **Dong Geon Lee**, who is a Member of CIVIQ Society. He discusses: the right life; the right life being lived as the right life; other people aware of living the right life; religion; rejecting the religion of youth; an atheist; atheism; hostile and jealous; respect; the reaction of parents and the school system; mathematics, physics, and physical theories; Johann Carl Friedrich Gauß; the right moral behaviour; a morally right behaviour; the qualities or characteristics of morally right speech; not harming others in one's speech; someone born in a house without religion; religion as illogical; parts of religion are good; the believers of the religion; general agnosticism bordering on atheism; the explanation of reality; the forms of "minor bullying"; this deification a form of protection; a relationship between the geometric laws about shapes as ellipses and the expansion of the universe as dark energy; and any limitations to Carl Friedrich Gauß as a mathematician.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Why were you told to live "the right life rather than just being nice"? How has this impacted life view and personal journeys?

Dong Geon Lee[1],[2]*: My mother said that she could be beaten to live a good life, and that she would not be ashamed of herself if she lived properly. And it actually happened.

Jacobsen: What is the right life being lived as the right life?

Lee: It is to behave morally and not to harm.

Jacobsen: How are other people aware of living the right life to you?

Lee: Basically, it will be revealed in my actions, but you will find out other things while talking to me.

Jacobsen: As someone from a religious family, what kind of religion? What form of religion? What were the practices of the religion?

Lee: I was born in a house with no religion. There is only religious freedom. (There must be some mistake.)

Jacobsen: Why did you reject the religion of youth?

Lee: It's illogical, and the religion itself may be good, but the believers of the religion have not seen anything good.

Jacobsen: Why become an atheist rather than another religion or an agnostic?

Lee: It is an atheism that is close to agnosticism. And if there was God, he would have done nothing but creation.

Jacobsen: What makes atheism most appealing and true to you?

Lee: It is because it does not explain everything with the intention of God, but it holds and explains a logical, big system, and does not wish for faith.

Jacobsen: How were they hostile and jealous of you? What were the behaviours of them to you?

Lee: Perhaps the reason is because of my intellectual ability. Also, they inflicted minor bullying

on me.

Jacobsen: What were the manifestations of their respect for you?

Lee: They deified me (did not like it), but they protected me from those who rejected me.

Jacobsen: What was the reaction of parents and the school system to writing at age one and reading books at 4 years old?

Lee: They were surprised and proud of me.

Jacobsen: What kinds of mathematics, physics, and physical theories have you been developing over time?

Lee: It's hard to say, but in geometry, we've discovered many laws about shapes that are different from ellipses. Physics has also created expressions that describe the expansion of the universe as dark energy.

Jacobsen: Why Johann Carl Friedrich Gauß for than others?

Lee: He did everything he could in math.

Jacobsen: What is the right moral behaviour in this context in addition to not harming?

Lee: First of all, you don't make unconditional concessions to others. And from the mind to the altruistic mind, it is to practice it. No one should be harmed in the process.

Jacobsen: How does one enact a morally right behaviour, even in speech?

Lee: Words have the power to move people. That moving power is used to bring moral thought to others. In other words, it has an indirect influence.

Jacobsen: What are the qualities or characteristics of morally right speech?

Lee: Expressions that do not hurt others, expressions that make others feel good, but should not be different from the facts, expressions that are not exaggerated, unreduced, expressions that do not contain dual meaning, etc.

Jacobsen: How does one not harm others in one's speech (another form of behaviour)?

Lee: There is no special technique. It's to rethink what I have to say in my head and check the expression.

Jacobsen: As someone born in a house without religion, how does this compare to the wider nation in terms of religious identification or not?

Lee: I don't understand.

Jacobsen: Why is religion illogical? Is this more based on argument or evidence for the premises, e.g., scientific evidence informing argument, or both?

Lee: Science uses the method of exploration to explore. And if there is a problem in the process, make corrections repeatedly. Religion, however, is limited to the worldview created by someone, and if there is a problem, it is hidden or consistent with the will of God.

Jacobsen: What parts of religion are good?

Lee: It teaches people to live in profit.

Jacobsen: Why have “the believers of the religion... not seen anything good”?

Lee: Religious people created the concept of hell (Jesus did not mention hell), used to wage war because of religion, and now in my country, also Covid 19 is widespread because of religion.

Jacobsen: I will relate one similar sentiment to yours, “It is an atheism that is close to agnosticism. And if there was God, he would have done nothing but creation.” The relation is with an exposition by Dr. Heinrich Siemens of the Giga Society and the Mega Society. The part of our conversation went as follows:

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.*

Does this more precisely reflect the general agnosticism bordering on atheism for you?

Lee: Aye!

Jacobsen: Why is the “logical, big system” without the “wish for faith” important in the explanation of reality to you?

Lee: When some begin to believe too much in their wish to believe it, like the framing effect, causes many to believe it, and the reality is distorted and becomes like the novel 1984.

Jacobsen: What were the forms of “minor bullying” inflicted on you?

Lee: I told myself important facts or spread bad rumors about me to other children.

Jacobsen: How was this deification a form of protection against those who rejected you?

Lee: They thought I was the smartest person in the world. So when other people are attacking me, I think it’s an insult to the children who deify me. And they attack them.

Jacobsen: Is there a relationship between the geometric laws about shapes as ellipses and the expansion of the universe as dark energy?

Lee: There is no relation between the two. I just studied each topic separately because it was fun.

Jacobsen: Were there any limitations to Carl Friedrich Gauß as a mathematician?

Lee: There are no limitations other than failing to solve Fermat’s last theorem.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Member, CIVIQ Society.

[2] Individual Publication Date: March 1, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/lee-2>; Full Issue Publication Date: May 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 Daniel Hilton on Family, Intelligence, Genius, and Philosophy: Member, Glia Society (1)

2021-03-01

***Daniel Hilton** is a Member of the Glia Society. 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 discovered; 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; work experiences and jobs; particular job path; the gifted and geniuses; God; science; the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations); the range of the scores; ethical philosophy; social philosophy; economic philosophy; political philosophy; metaphysics; philosophical system; meaning in life; meaning externally derived, internally generated; an afterlife; the mystery and transience of life; and love.*

Interview completed December 17, 2020.

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

Daniel Hilton[1],[2]*: That is not really how our family worked, we had many good outings and holidays, but I feel we lived in the moment rather than spending time looking back.

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

Hilton: As above, we were more focused on the here and now.

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

Hilton: Unless I am mistaken, I am of Anglo-Irish heritage, I grew up mainly in the North of England and Yorkshire is home, we are an English-speaking household, I am British and for my part I am an atheist.

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

Hilton: I very much enjoyed school, though high school age comes with many trials for most, I was no different. I enjoyed learning the subjects I was naturally quite good at, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography for example. On reflection I was less committed in subjects that fell outside my sphere of interest, though I doubt I am alone in that. I certainly should have worked harder at school; I met some talented individuals who were blessed with intelligence and commitment. I remained in the same school throughout my Senior years, this brought a sense of familiarity and community, it was a large school, so there were always like-minded peers amongst the many students there. I was fortunate to have a group of friends outside school, mostly from other schools that was important to me during the latter part of my adolescence, these friends were the ones I really connected with as I lived close to them and we grew up together.

Jacobsen: What have been some professional certifications, qualifications, and trainings, earned by you?

Hilton: UK education, GCSEs and A Levels and a Mathematics Degree from Birmingham University, PGCE qualifications in Mathematics and Research in Education. I occasionally take courses with the Open University at Master's level, but I have no real interest in completing a full Master's degree as the bulk of the courses do not interest me. The things I want to know are readily available online and I can find clear explanations of what it is I wish to understand without expending the time, effort or money needed to secure official certification. Indeed, this for me demonstrates the key difference between intelligence and cleverness. If you take a textbook, someone clever who has studied it would be able to explain the material to you, whereas someone profoundly intelligent is quietly confident that if, and when, they read it, they will readily understand it.

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

Hilton: I enjoy the questions, when I have spare time I like to think about a puzzle, after mulling a problem over a deeper level of thinking emerges in my mind, and occasionally insight forms and a solution presents itself, other times there is no end product, but it is a depth of thinking and focus that rarely takes place in normal life and it has a deeply cathartic effect on my state of mind. Most high-range IQ tests are untimed so you can spend many hours thinking about a problem before having an insight, if that ever comes to pass.

Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?

Hilton: I was 27 when I took the Mensa test, I had recently entered the teaching profession and was working at a Grammar school with many bright students and staff. I felt right at home in that environment. It was a gradual realisation that I was able to quickly understand anything that was presented to me without repetition, regardless of context or complexity. As a teacher you see, and of course guide, the learning process up close and the hard work the vast majority of students put in becomes evident. It dawned on me that I had needed to work as hard as those I was teaching and I began to wonder why? I have since developed a more focused attitude to learning and more importantly understanding.

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.

Hilton: For me this is just statistics in action, in any field, group, skill, or whatever you choose to investigate, there will be those who perform to the upper end of the scale, let us assume we are using a normal curve and left to right is a trait becoming more positive. Human beings are fundamentally competitive, so those on the extreme left of the scale in any measure will be looked down upon by the majority, pitied, vilified, criminalised (depending on the context). Conversely, those at the extreme right of the scale will be envied by the bulk of the population, this can manifest itself as respect, support, hatred, exclusion, the response really depends on how that individual/culture views that particular trait and how tolerant they are of it expressing itself differently and strongly.

We are each on a near infinite array of these normal distributions representing every attribute of human existence, for most traits we are in the central region and thus fit in relatively anonymously with the wider population. But for those traits where we are too far to the left or right of the distribution, those traits will likely shape our lives. For the most positive traits we have, if we

follow the path of least resistance and remain grounded, they should help make our life comfortable and by extension the lives of those around us. In some instances, the reach of the sphere of influence of an individual is much larger than normal, few humans are equipped to deal with this and they risk imploding under the spotlight, some do carry it off, those with high levels of intelligence are no different in this regard. Most highly intelligent people, I would argue, retreat into self-imposed exile and comfortable obscurity.

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

Hilton: They will likely have had little input into history, but to their own folk and/or communities they will have helped herald in good times. Forced to choose a brilliant mind from the past I would have to say William James Sidis stands out for me, if even a small portion of what is written about him is true, then he would have been a fascinating person to meet.

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

Hilton: For me there is no difference, their impact upon mainstream consciousness seems to define how they are remembered, of course the majority of people in any field will be footnotes to history. Looking at IQ societies, you could make arguments that up to 1% of the population are geniuses, but that does not mean they are solely responsible for the betterment of humankind, nor that not being in the top 1% is a restriction to greatness. A combination of good levels of intelligence, a conducive environment and luck seem to be what is required to become a “genius”. In the end you could argue genius means whatever people want it to mean, it is used with a degree of elasticity that renders the word meaningless in most contexts.

Jacobsen: Is profound intelligence necessary for genius?

Hilton: They are two sides of the same coin when referring to genius level intelligence. It seems however the modern usage of the word is more flexible and is applied to anyone with any exceptionally developed skills. Take the great footballers, in that context it is not genius level IQ that is being commented on, though that is not to say they may not possess said high IQ, rather exceptional levels of skill are being acknowledged. Messi or Ronaldo offer a useful analogy to genius level thinking, they have the capacity to play at a level well beyond their peers, with the results easy to see, with genius level intelligence it is harder to see, but the same difference in capacity is there, though it is rarely met by the cheering of thousands of fans.

Jacobsen: What have been some work experiences and jobs held by you?

Hilton: I am a teacher and school leader and have been for some 20 years now, no other job, of the few I tried before teaching, brought a similar level of enjoyment or satisfaction. Teachers are exceptional human beings and provide the clearest evidence that not all superheroes wear capes.

Jacobsen: Why pursue this particular job path?

Hilton: The path of least resistance led me here, this path is not the lazy concept it sounds like from the outside, life steers you and guides you toward your talents, you must pay attention and follow the subtle advice the universe prompts you with.

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?

Hilton: That a genius is some kind of celebrity and must make a huge difference to humanity.

That gifted people will find school/life easy and always excel. That extremely high intelligence is desirable, when it in fact comes with many painful downsides, I would argue there is a sweet spot for intelligence where success in life, by most measures is assured, Doctors, Engineers and top professionals are often in this range, with IQs beyond that things become hit and miss, the 'gifts' may still lead to success, but there are lots of folk in that highest region who retreat into obscurity, take work well below their capacity, and have to deal with the side effects of understanding things easily.

If you picture life like an unseen road ahead, a person like a car, the mind like an engine, having a profoundly high IQ is like introducing high-octane fuel, when things run well life is good and progress easy, but the higher speeds attainable can make the car harder to control when you hit unexpected bumps in the road, crashes are more likely to be serious and the engine can be blown by the high-octane fuel at any moment. High intelligence without emotional stability and a supportive environment, preferably with some like-minded peers, for many would be a living curse.

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

Hilton: No, these offer me no interest whatsoever.

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

Hilton: Science is the route to understanding, but we have discovered things place restrictions on what we can know, when I first learned of Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem, it shook the foundations of Mathematics for me, that I could spend my life trying to prove something that is in fact true a Mathematical fact, but one that is impossible to prove to be true within the Mathematics we use, this heavy blow was quickly followed by the crunching uppercut of Tarski's undefinability problem, in particular where applied to semantics, there are other examples such as that of Church's demonstration that Hilbert's Entscheidungsproblem cannot be solved, or Turing's demonstration that there is no algorithm that can solve the halting problem. These bolts across what was a fervent belief in Science in my youth have made me conclude that not all answers can be extracted by Science and some must be divined by human thought.

Science sees ever deeper and I am a great believer in this, yet I do not believe it is the ultimate answer to everything, that said most things will eventually fall to Science's blade. I see little progress in it explaining me to me, that is a task left for me to decipher, in this case I mean my individual human consciousness, in the end Science may help us understand everything except our individual self, and by extension the individual self of others, though we may believe we know how all others (as a group) will behave on the average from our studies of Psychology, but that is converting raw data into grouped data, thus the individual is lost. I see progress toward medicines tailored to individual DNA, and the use of big data to garner meta-level insights, if humanity is waking up to the idea of understanding the individual and by extension all individuals in their own right, then perhaps a new golden age of Science is just around the corner, that would be a first step toward helping the individuals understand themselves, thus lessening the need to take anything on faith, which to me is always folly.

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

Hilton: In the last few years, the following 3 stand out.

Spectra IQ 174 sd 15

MultDiv IQ 172 sd 15

Narcissus' Last Stand IQ 171 sd 15

These were the scores awarded at the time of marking, these can be adjusted up or down over time if the test has not yet had a final norming.

However, my natural inclination to share highest scores perhaps demonstrates the unreliability of testing at the high range, my most common score is 164 (though interestingly my average varies by test setter to some degree).

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?

Hilton: I have taken many tests over the last 20 years. Thinking in terms of sd 15, these have been between 155 and 175, the most common score is 164 on tests that go to that level and beyond to levels I am unable to access. My favourite test was Paul Cozijman's Narcissus' Last Stand for which my score of 40 is currently the highest. I have enjoyed many of the tests by James Dorsey, my favourite test of his was the Spectra test, which returned an IQ 174 at the time, and is to date the only perfect score I have ever achieved, it is unlikely to happen again, this score completed my full set of Opals at the Opal Quest Group. I took the test for Mensa UK in 2002 and joined Mensa International once I moved overseas. Unsurprisingly I most enjoyed the tests I scored highly on, but that was true before I knew the results, as I made a connection with these tests, luck must have played a part as they played to my own personal strengths in IQ testing. This is why it is useful to take many tests, to learn where your strengths and weaknesses lie, you are more likely to get a true general intelligence score if you view your average across a variety of tests, with varying question styles and different authors.

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

Hilton: What are ethics but the observations of what is right by the majority? They are not absolute truths; you only have to look to History for evidence. In a developed culture ethics seem to be viewed as the truth, the right and true opinion of the majority, with extremes of behaviour diverging from these viewed as unethical. Ethics therefore are an inevitable consequence of society, though societies develop and as such so do ethics. For me a philosophy where the boundaries of ethics are tested with reasoned debate would seem the ideal, where skilled speakers advocate for pushing the boundaries of ethics, others supporting the norm. We are a long way from this as views outside the norm are vilified immediately, for me this is actually a sign western culture is in decline, where intelligent debate is replaced with cancel culture. This does not justify the breaking of ethical norms, only allows platform for debate. After all, have all shifts in ethical belief lead to negative outcomes for humans? I doubt it, yet challenging ethical beliefs comes with huge risks, why must this be so?

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

Hilton: Again, what is society, is it the same the world over? Surely no, so this again has no answer and leads differing groups into conflict. If everyone worked for the betterment of their sphere of influence, whilst taking reasonable steps to avoid disadvantaging those beyond, instead of offering a set of values as a social philosophy, this eventually, would allow individuals to take different value positions within different groups. This is of course is a lofty goal, but the idea of degrees of separation means that your sphere of influence is much smaller than your meta-sphere of influence. It could be argued that the greatest advantages humans have are intelligence and

competitiveness, it could conversely be argued these traits are the most likely to lead to our ultimate downfall. If humans can set aside the need to compete, I suspect our long-term chances would increase dramatically.

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

Hilton: I would give a similar response as the above, a philosophy that maximises inclusion.

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

Hilton: I would give a similar response as the above, a philosophy that maximises inclusion.

Jacobsen: What worldview-encompassing philosophical system makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?

Hilton: My own, though it is not so grand as to be a worldview-encompassing philosophical system. What I believe is likely covered by other philosophies, but is assimilated from life experience, indeed I have not read much philosophy, I find I am unable to draw satisfactory conclusions to non-empirical matters by following the thinking of others, so I have to think about it myself. That is not to say I am not taken with ideas when I hear them, I was drawn to stoicism when I first read about it, but while it felt homely for a while, it did not capture me, it was a comfortable cloak at that time in my life. I feel the same about much philosophy, if one is a devout and permanent adherent to one way of thinking, I fear one may be missing the point of life, to grow, develop, change, morph, all philosophies I have heard seem like clay to me, they can be made to fit with my worldview, but they are no longer the same shape, no-one has ever written anything philosophical that I can fully agree with, I hope that is true for everyone, as that would imply philosophy and metaphysics are absolute truths which they are not, for if they were they would be Science, they are evolutions of the views and opinions of either a majority, or more commonly, a significant, in some way, minority.

Jacobsen: What provides meaning in life for you?

Hilton: Looking to the future, my 5 sons and more children if we are blessed, their journey through time and that of those who will follow provides deep meaning for me. To the present my wife, I owe her more than she will ever appreciate and together we have made a good life. Looking to the past, all of those friends, family and loved ones who enriched my life and tolerated my eccentricities with good grace, one in particular who was taken from us much too early through ill-health, much to the detriment of us all. Life has meaning for me because these people will exist, currently exist, or existed in the past.

Jacobsen: To set the stage for the further conversation, what comprises intelligence in the abstract?

Hilton: I think this is literally the human capacity to create ideas, ponder questions and improve systems. As a species we seem to excel at this kind of thinking and our capacity to make connections, see patterns and associate things have led us on an incredible journey.

Jacobsen: What are the mainstream and fringe theories of human intelligence on offer over time?

Hilton: Human intelligence is not evolving quickly enough for us to adapt to the technological world we are creating. We need to look at psychometric, cognitive, cognitive-contextual, and biological theories to better understand intelligence in terms of the species and more interestingly

from my perspective the individual, big data should be looking to this, rather than recommending I buy a particular brand of trainers as I happen to be near a store that sells them, having predicted I may like them from my previous purchasing history.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Member, Glia Society.

[2] Individual Publication Date: March 1, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/hilton-1>; Full Issue Publication Date: May 1, 2021: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

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Conversation with Hiroshi Murasaki on Family, Intelligence, Genius, Philosophy, and Love: Member, ISI-Society

2021-03-01

Murasaki Hiroshi is a Member of ISI-Society. Hiroshi 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 discovered; 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; work experiences and jobs; particular job path; the gifted and geniuses; God; science; the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations); the range of the scores; ethical philosophy; social philosophy; economic philosophy; political philosophy; metaphysics; philosophical system; meaning in life; meaning externally derived, internally generated; an afterlife; the mystery and transience of life; and love.

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

Murasaki Hiroshi[1],[2]*: My family is far away now. We spent a lot of time together when we were close. I was raised harshly and severely by my mother, to whom I am very much indebted. She is not my real biological mother, but she has taken her place. She taught me the essential values to which I am very attached. The stories she told me were from real life, not fairy tales. We often played together, even video games. The stories she told me, very often, were visions of the future. A future we would build together.

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

Hiroshi: Everything my mother taught me is like tattooed on my skin. It helped me develop a personal sense of myself vigorously. I learned the value of constancy, commitment, getting things done, and always doing my best. She taught me about having pride in myself and people who deserve respect. She taught me the value of strength, of willpower.

Without her teachings, I would hardly be the person I am: I have a definite love for the identity that I managed to build, I hate making promises I can't keep, I hate leaving things unfinished. Above all, I hate not achieving the goals I set myself. For me, it is unforgivable. I know I'm very strict, but I like the way I am. My family has had many faults but, to me, they are very precious, more than merits, because they made me proud of both myself and them.

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

Hiroshi: My family is very heterogeneous, it includes different countries, different cultures, different languages, and different religions. I am a native speaker of three languages.

It is difficult to identify a single reference background, even if the common idea is the same. Perhaps a common flaw that many of us have is excessive pride, which I judge badly. An advantage is the sense of unity and the strong perception of the concept of respect and the scientific consideration of things.

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

Hiroshi: I've always been the weird, the different, one. In adolescence, I had to deal with a strong sense of aggressivity that alienated me from others. When I was in high school, I enjoyed going to college courses instead. I've always done things with absurd timing to say the least, in the negative sense of the term. I never got along with my peers because I have always loved independence and work. I never asked my parents for money and I always made money by myself with jobs. I have always had strong corporate inclinations, linked to ambition, even as a teenager: I liked forming groups and doing creative projects, which always aimed at solving a problem and earning money.

Jacobsen: What have been some professional certifications, qualifications, and trainings earned by you?

Hiroshi: My professional life is divided into two major phases. That of working in the company as a developer and communicator and that of an artist. So I have various certifications for studies and courses that I have done like those of Adobe, those of Magento or WordPress, a slew of certifications for business management courses... I also have a degree in languages that I took when I was younger. Now I'm getting my degree in physics. Lately, I have decided to clear my professional background and focus on physics and art, possibly together.

I've worked so hard, now I just want to do things I like. For this I am currently studying social media, how to be a freelance artist in the science sector and how to do a good branding job on myself. The IQ certifications, however, I did not take them to serve me professionally. I took them to solve an insecurity problem with the university and because I was hoping to get financial help to study. As a working student, it can be very frustrating not being able to devote as much time as possible to studying, which is my greatest passion.

So I invented a job where my job was to study for others.

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

Hiroshi: Intelligence tests provide a not indifferent emotional engine, they can give an answer to some questions when you feel not up to something or not accepted. The first time I took the test it was for an emotional response. At the physics college, a lecturer told me that I wasn't smart enough to go to college and I took the test to have a counter-proof, a proof that he was wrong.^[1] At the time, I couldn't afford to pay taxes and in truth, I admit, I wanted to be pampered for my intelligence. I think it is correct to take care of very intelligent people, rather than forcing them to lower themselves to the level of others, getting bored to death. For me, to a certain extent, a test passed with a high score was also a moral obligation towards myself, I could not say that I was not intelligent enough to do something. If it was my duty to do it, surely I could have completed it, the test obliged me, but it also allowed me to constantly validate myself, to learn and therefore to become smarter from time to time: a learning positive feedback mechanism.

Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?

Hiroshi: When I was young I felt smarter than everyone else: I programmed, repaired computers, studied, had a job... In my head it was obvious that I was superior to others and often looked at them with disdain.

When I got to the heart of this issue and my studies, I realized that there was really something wrong.^[1] The first association I met was for 130-140, it was 2016, and I was already studying physics. I had entered to prove to myself that I was enough to attend physics faculty. Although it was an association for high IQs, I did not perceive them as intellectually superior to me, while at

university I still felt the same as everyone who attended the degree course, on the contrary, I felt less than them, that they were much better than me certainly on the application part.

Of course, the problem could be the background. I already had a degree in literature, while many of them came from the scientific and had a mindset more adapted to the sciences and their way of thinking.^[1]

Later, as the school years progressed, I totally lost interest in IQ. To date, my IQ is certified at 164, and this certificate has done nothing to me except to upset people when I talked about it by appearing superb. I value things for their functionality. Certified IQ makes me feel different, attackable. However, right now I feel anything but confident in my brainpower. If I think about the limits of my reality and try to reason as if I were outside the physical system of which I am a part, my head goes up in smoke.

I feel limited by current mathematics, which, if interpreted as a language, seems to have the same limits as us. When faced with what I see, what I study, I feel small. So, in truth, the discovery of higher intelligence is only an illusion. Intelligence is a complex factor, formed by a spectrum of non-interchangeable and alienable capacities over time.

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.

Hiroshi: Because human beings do not tolerate solutions that are incomprehensible to them, genius is not easily understood and is derided, like Baudelaire's Albatross. The human being laughs at what he does not understand, thinking that humiliating something makes the sense of inadequacy he feels or the ridicule he covers up disappear. As for being shy or not in front of a camera, each person is different and each category collects infinite nuances. The word *genius* is a whole with indefinite outlines and unclear properties.

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

Hiroshi: I would say Dirac. After Einstein, Noether, Godel and Heisenberg there is Dirac, which is what I feel closest to. What distinguished Dirac more than anything else is the beauty of mathematics, and the idea that theoretical physics can be based entirely on mathematics, not as a tool, but as a language capable of offering direct access to the mechanisms of the universe. He proved that it is possible, opening the door to a new way of doing physics.

Dirac had his own vision of the world made explicit in the affirmation "*if science is the attempt to say in words understandable by all things that people did not know before, poetry is its opposite, that is the tendency to talk about things known with dark words*". I like poetry, but Dirac is right. It takes less opinion, more clarity and fewer personal interpretations of nature. The scientific method needs to show everyone its beauty and elegance. What is the meaning of beauty in mathematics, however, should be explored.

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

Hiroshi: The genius knows how to put both hemispheres in communication, he knows how to move in multidisciplinary, he knows how to feed himself and look for things even in the most unthinkable places. An intelligent person looks for answers in his own rationality and in himself. The genius knows how to look for the answers outside. The truth is, we are a not-too-well-

planned database of what we see. Furthermore, the genius understands that the difference between reality and fantasy is marked only by hard work, after all, genius comes from ingenuity, not from intellect.

Jacobsen: Is profound intelligence necessary for genius?

Hiroshi: No, intelligence develops over time. It can be trained, genius is a mindset. It certainly has genetic basis, but it is not enough. Furthermore, having high intellectual abilities means nothing: aptitude plays a fundamental role.

Jacobsen: What have been some work experiences and jobs held by you?

Hiroshi: I've done a lot of jobs in my life, because I needed to find my way. My studies were also strange, but somehow everything managed to converge in one place.

I was a communicator, with advanced web and graphic development skills.

I worked for important sports clubs in Serie A (football), I worked for the Aerospace department and for companies always linked to aerospace, I worked for universities and I was the technical director of a national TV oriented to children aged from 16 to 25 years.

All these experiences led me to the realization that I want to go back young and dream of my career in theoretical physics. Now I can look at physics studies through the eyes of a more mature person, richer in experience.

At the moment, I study physics full time and my main job is being a science illustrator and communicator. Recently, I have been preparing a path as a scientific V-Tuber. I love science and I want to show its beauty to as many people as possible, without ever making it look boring.

Jacobsen: Why pursue this particular job path?

Hiroshi: I had to build my economic stability day after day, really seizing every opportunity. I have always offered communication and development services, but I started from the bottom. I have always combined my work as a freelancer with some personal projects that were seriously linked to my personal interests.

Since I enrolled in a second university to study physics, I have had to deal with the shortage of time, so I have gradually started to eliminate personal projects and reduce the number of clients. Nowadays, I no longer communicate for anyone who is not linked to the scientific / university sector. I work mainly as a scientific illustrator but I also do more versatile things, if the work team is pleasant and I feel comfortable.

I have recently started, but I have already obtained jobs for very important universities (in the top 10 in 2020), I can finally say that I have found my way.^[1]_[SEP]

It makes no sense to work in an industry that you don't love madly: you become cynical and bored. I study to become a researcher in Theoretical Physics, but I work every day to spread to the youngest, to offer free training, to explain science through art and manga. Because after all, I'm a nerd who believes too much.

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?

Hiroshi: I have always grown up surrounded by people who admired me simply because I knew

how to do many things and, in their opinion, well, the truth is that I was curious and hyperactive, but everything I learned, I learned it with effort: I can draw and this has required at least ten years of study. I can speak many languages, but I started as a child and practically never stopped (last year I thought about moving to Denmark and I successfully completed the basic Danish language course). Today I don't live in Denmark and I have forgotten almost everything I had learned, while in the common idea of a genius they learn immediately without effort and remember forever, which is absolutely not true.

So, the bottom line is that necessity creates virtue. We learn the things we need and probably the genius is the one who has learned his trade and who has understood that he needs to learn more to train his talent. Precisely, as a sportsman continues to train more and more to overcome his limits, the truth is that one day I decided I wanted to become a genius and, therefore, I started doing things like geniuses, even if I never believed in genius as ordinary people do.

I played the part, but I never forgot the work behind the scenes, a bit like a magician would. I believe that people must first understand that intelligence (technical part) and genius (attitude and mental state) are things that are built and it is never too late to do so.

I started building it around the age of 25 (very late), and the results came very quickly. Maybe being a genius is closer to being an influencer than a philosopher, inspiring others by doing what you love. ^[SEP]It doesn't matter how big the numbers are.

For example, when I enrolled in college I had absolutely no idea how modern physics was organized. I just knew I was interested in time travel, so I read about Einstein, Dirac, and some other famous names. I started playing the violin at 27 because Einstein played it. Nowadays, I don't like Einstein as much as I used to, but the violin is part of my life.

I read the biographies and tried to read the same books as in the case of Einstein and Dirac, who have the most particular thought possible: I found that the rationale for their studies was realized through the reading of Mill's deductive logic. I bought the book and started reading it as soon as I realized it.

What does this mean? If you want to be a sportsman you have to think like a sportsman. Talent is the consequence of doing something with passion by immersing yourself in that way of being, which you learn little by little. When they say 'want is power' and that 'hard work brings results', it is true. You are not born geniuses, but only very lucky because the environment has already put you in that mentality from an early age. If you weren't lucky, you can fix it yourself.

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

Hiroshi: I don't believe in a divine figure as imagined by the great monotheistic religions and the figure of a divinity drawn in this way is only a political rather than a spiritual tool.

My first university career was history, cultures and religions.

Studying physics it is difficult not to believe anything, but I believe that this discourse deserves a separate space. What I can say is that the more I study, the more I feel I am small. The smaller I feel, the more I want to grow. For me, the concept of God is this sense of movement. Sometimes I have imagined the existence of the divine, in a place where I thank him for creating something as beautiful as the universe. The truth is that, before we can deal with the big questions of philosophy, we must have better weapons.

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

Hiroshi: Science is the foundation of every single event that happens in the world. In biology, it is said that nothing makes sense except in the light of evolution. Physics reaches an even more visceral level, so visceral that it leaves you speechless. I love science more than anything else: as a former humanist, I say that the beauty of physics is something that can communicate with the soul better than a Dante's triplet would.

What moves me every day is science. I absolutely want to get to know it better, day after day. I can't imagine a world where physics is not part of my existence.

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

Hiroshi: I did a Mensa test, Figure test with 164 (SD15), ENST20 test of which I don't remember the score, but always between 158 and 165. All deviations are sd15. I then wanted to focus on getting a 170+ certification because in my worldview of IQ it is not true that you are 160 and remain 160. By raising the aerobic threshold of the brain, IQ can go up, just like in the gym.

Unfortunately, however, the fact that I had to work a lot and that when I asked for a scholarship to be able to focus on my studies, the state of poverty was more important than my intellectual abilities, threw me into a deep crisis. Not only that: talking about your IQ puts you in a compromised situation. People tell you that you want to put yourself above others, that certifying intelligence is nonsense and so I stopped worrying about trying other higher tests because I couldn't see any achievable advantage. At present, I want to be able to get admitted to a university of the caliber of Cambridge (actually, I would like Cambridge), from what I understand the projects in the portfolio count much more, rather than an exaggerated IQ. So, although my ambition made me think I wanted to try the GIGA, after the 4G I eventually lost the reason behind the purpose. Ultimately, smart or not, we always need a community to feel part of and to feel protected from, with which to share goals and visions.

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.

Hiroshi: Generally 162 or 164, I don't remember exactly. Once there was a 151, as well as a 172. I like to think 164, because my girlfriend did a 166 and I like to say she has a few more points than me, because I find it fun and also very inspiring.

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

Hiroshi: I have written my personal Ethical Path over the last 10 years, mixing visions and philosophies, even conflicting with each other, since modern society is a linear combination of these philosophies, even dichotomous ones.

My ethics require me not to waste time on silly thoughts, to work hard to get what I want at any cost, to be sincere and to always show my will, at every opportunity. Don't lie and use the truth as a weapon, always be true to myself.

Reject prejudice in all its forms, stay curious. Learn from everyone and always offer something from your experience to teach. Research, experiment.

Fight your own defects and improve yourself, set yourself very ambitious goals, reaching at least half of them every year. Challenging the improbability, to find yourself in a life that is always changing. Unlikely calls unlikely, so different occasions, every time.

Living in the cult of one's vision. Life is too short to sacrifice ourselves, we have to live fully for ourselves. If it's not possible, try the impossible.

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

Hiroshi: At this moment in my life, I am studying social dynamics with interest for the first time and I am approaching emotional intelligence. Personally, I had a particularly strict and wild background, so I don't appreciate too soft approaches, but I think it depends on the types of people. The truth is that I don't like to surround myself with soft people, even if my curious nature makes me want to understand rather than judge.

I'm far from grasping social understanding and trying not to fall into the trap of hypocrisy, but I hope in a few years to be able to answer this question. For now, I say that I am transgender (born woman, became man) and therefore gender issues should be my point of reference. Probably, however, I am only interested in discussing the social dimensions of scientific knowledge and a philosophy that revolves around this. A bit like it happened in the early twentieth century.

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

Hiroshi: Personally, I believe that capitalism is something unsustainable. However, the possibility of not being able to increase one's wealth scares me. If in the future there was a payment on time and services, I don't think I would be happy. Because I'm lazy and because I build job opportunities mainly based on optimizations.

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

Hiroshi: I hate democracy when it makes no sense to exist. I live in a country where people don't know what they're talking about. The civic sense is at a minimum and the situation is of profound crisis. People who talk about flat earth, about conspiracies, about not wanting vaccines and so on. These people have the same right to vote as me. This democracy, as Plato said, makes no sense and is a strong degeneration. Each has a weight. One is not worthy, in this context.

To date, the only political philosophy that pleases me is Chinese legalism, which comes from Confucianism. From there the geniocracy, which sees as its basic principle measuring the raw intelligence and giving the right to vote only to those who have an intelligence above the average of a certain percentage while the possibility of government is only for the geniuses that is those most intelligent than the average in a remarkable way. Let's say 10 and 50% respectively. It would therefore be a question of a selective democracy, which does not neglect emotional intelligence and the ability to introspect.

Jacobsen: What metaphysics makes some sense to you, even the most workable sense to you?

Hiroshi: Like the magic square of the SATOR, every metaphysical phenomenon is just a physical phenomenon not yet explained, it's just a matter of time. It is up to our sensitivity and our attitude to decide whether Sator refers to a Catholic vision in which the divine is manifested (*Ego Sum Alpha et Omega*, in the deciphered reading of the sator), an unofficial translation, more than anything else hypothetical, as "Sator Abrepo, Opera tenet rotas" ie the sower disappears, his work continues by itself, or a simple symmetrical matrix.

As I said, I lived first as a humanist, so the fact that only now is seeing the symmetrical matrix makes me think a lot. Nothing proves what the true interpretation is, but nothing proves that reality is univocal.

Anyway, what I see with my own eyes is that will is the most beautiful metaphysics I want to believe in. In emotions, there is the force behind the movement. It seems to me the most relevant thing. Physics has the role of explaining the inexplicable, whether it is photoelectric effect or abracadabra for us, this should not be limiting. After all, today's photoelectric effect was yesterday's abracadabra.

Jacobsen: What worldview-encompassing philosophical system makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?

Hiroshi: To date, no suitable philosophical thought has been produced and it is for this reason that society is still involved. If philosophers were a little more careful about the logical processes to be adopted, rather than forging ideas about discontent, they might have more value to me.

Jacobsen: What provides meaning in life for you?

Hiroshi: There are two things that give my life meaning. The first, certainly the most important of all for me, is to be recognized as myself. The second thing is trivial: to seek an explanation for existence, as the ancient Greek philosophers did. To do this, you have to break the barriers of your intellect, which is anything but easy, and that is why it is my goal to follow logical processes that are not linear, but transcendent (in the mathematical sense of the term).

Jacobsen: Is meaning externally derived, internally generated, both, or something else?

Hiroshi: There is no internal or external, because we are not a closed system with adiabatic processes.

Jacobsen: Do you believe in an afterlife? If so, why, and what form? If not, why not?

Hiroshi: Just recently I wanted to talk to a refrigerator, I believe that electromagnetic fields and consciousness are closely related and I also believe that there is not much difference between our cognitive processes and the computation of a quantum computer, so I made myself the idea that there is an explanation to all the philosophical, religious and literary legacy left by our ancestors. The recurring forms and myths are perhaps a starting point for science. When I go to sleep in the evening, I always think that when I die I will be an electromagnetic wave discharged to the ground in many small fragments or that has the possibility of traveling in the vacuum of the universe for a very long time. If I can put forward a hope I would like to believe that there is no reincarnation, nor death in the epicurean sense, but that it is a phase transformation, in which I will finally be able to explore the universe and be part of it in another form, as long as I am conscious. I hate this sense of helplessness, I would like to know more.

Jacobsen: What do you make of the mystery and transience of life?

Hiroshi: I would like Einstein to be right when he says that God does not play dice, but the problem is that he does, at least as far as Bell's inequality proves. But in one of my very fanciful ideas there is perhaps another explanation. After my master's studies, if this idea will withstand the elements of knowledge, I will try to deepen and why not: maybe demonstrate.

Jacobsen: What is love to you?

Hiroshi: When Plato talks about divided souls he didn't go very far. The person I love is my opposite, so opposite as to be complementary, he is certainly smarter than me, but also more stupid (in the nice sense of the term). He is involved in biology and manages not only to understand

what I think, but to feed new thoughts. Probably, since when I think of us the left hand on the violin string and the right hand holding the bow comes to mind, probably love is nothing more than the music produced.

Original Italian

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

Murasaki Hiroshi[1],[2]*: La mia famiglia ora è lontana. Quando eravamo vicini passavamo molto tempo insieme. Sono stato educato con durezza e severità da mia madre verso cui sono molto debitore. Non è la mia vera madre biologica, ma ne ha esercitato le veci. Mi ha insegnato valori molto importanti a cui sono molto legato. Le storie che mi raccontava erano di vita vera, non favole. Giocavamo spesso insieme, anche ai videogiochi. Le storie che mi raccontava, molto spesso, erano visioni del futuro. Abbiamo scritto una storia insieme, una specie di libro, a cui sono molto affezionato.

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

Hiroshi: Tutto ciò che mi è stato insegnato da mia madre per me è come tatuato sulla pelle. Mi ha aiutato a sviluppare un senso personale di me stesso in modo molto forte. Ho imparato il valore della costanza, dell'impegno, del portare a termine le cose e di mettere tutto me stesso in ogni cosa che faccio. Di svolgere i miei compiti bene, o almeno provarci. Mi ha insegnato l'orgoglio verso me stesso e le persone che meritano il rispetto. Mi ha insegnato il valore della forza, della volontà.

Senza i suoi insegnamenti difficilmente sarei la persona che sono: ho un fortissimo amore per l'identità che sono riuscito a costruire, detesto promettere cose che non posso mantenere, detesto lasciare cose incompiute. Soprattutto, detesto non ottenere gli obiettivi che mi sono prefissato, per me è imperdonabile. So di essere molto rigido ma mi piaccio così. La mia famiglia ha avuto molti difetti, ma per me sono preziosissimi più dei pregi perché mi hanno reso orgoglioso sia di me che di loro.

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

Hiroshi: La mia famiglia è molto eterogenea, comprende diversi paesi, diverse culture, diverse lingue e diverse religioni. Io stesso parto con tre lingue madrelingua. È difficile se non impossibile identificare un unico background di riferimento, anche se l'ideale comune è lo stesso. Forse un difetto che accomuna molti è l'orgoglio eccessivo, che considero una cosa poco utile. Un pregio è il senso di unità e la forte percezione del concetto di rispetto, unità e considerazione scientifica delle cose.

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

Hiroshi: Sono sempre stato quello strano, diverso. Il secchione, per intenderci, quando ero più piccolo. Nell'adolescenza ho dovuto fare i conti con un forte senso di aggressività che mi ha allontanato dagli altri. Quando ero al liceo, mi piaceva andare a seguire i corsi universitari. Ho sempre fatto le cose con un tempismo a dir poco assurdo, nel senso negativo del termine. Non sono mai andato d'accordo con i miei coetanei perché ho sempre amato l'indipendenza e il lavoro. Non ho mai chiesto i soldi ai miei e ho sempre guadagnato da solo con dei lavoretti. Ho

sempre avuto forti inclinazioni aziendali, legate all'ambizione, anche da adolescente: mi piaceva formare gruppi e fare progetti creativi, che puntassero sempre a risolvere un problema e guadagnare dei soldi.

Jacobsen: What have been some professional certifications, qualifications, and trainings earned by you?

Hiroshi: La mia vita professionale si divide in due grandi fasi. Quella del lavoro in azienda come sviluppatore e comunicatore e quella da artista. Quindi ho varie certificazioni per studi e corsi che ho fatto come quelli di Adobe, quelli di Magento o di WordPress, una sfilza di certificazioni per corsi sulla gestione aziendale, ho anche una laurea in lingue che ho preso quando ero più giovane. Adesso sto prendendo la laurea in fisica. Ultimamente ho deciso di cancellare il mio background professionale e di focalizzarmi sulla fisica e sull'arte, possibilmente insieme.

Ho lavorato così tanto, che adesso voglio solo far cose che mi piacciono. Per questo sto attualmente studiando social media, come essere freelance artista nel settore scientifico e come fare un buon lavoro di branding su me stesso. Le certificazioni sul quoziente intellettuale, però, non le ho prese perché mi servissero professionalmente. Le ho prese per risolvere un problema di insicurezza con l'università e perché speravo di ottenere un aiuto economico per poter studiare. Da studente lavoratore può essere molto frustrante non poter dedicare tutto il tempo possibile allo studio, che è la mia più grande passione.

Allora ho inventato un lavoro dove il mio compito fosse studiare.

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

Hiroshi: I test di intelligenza forniscono un motore emotivo non indifferente, possono dare una risposta ad alcune domande, quando non ci si sente all'altezza di qualcosa o non accettati. La prima volta che ho fatto il test è stato per una risposta emotiva. All'università di fisica, un docente mi ha detto che non ero abbastanza intelligente per frequentare la facoltà, ho fatto il test per avere una controprova, una dimostrazione che lui si sbagliasse.^[1] All'epoca non potevo permettermi di pagare le tasse e in verità, lo ammetto, volevo essere coccolato per la mia intelligenza. Penso sia corretto prendersi cura anche di persone molto intelligenti, anziché costringerle ad abbassarsi al livello degli altri, annoiandosi a morte. Per me, in una certa misura, il test superato con punteggio alto era anche un obbligo morale verso me stesso, non potevo dire di non essere abbastanza intelligente per fare qualcosa, se era mio dovere farla sicuramente avrei potuto portarla a termine, il test mi obbligava, ma mi permetteva anche di validarmi costantemente, di apprendere e quindi di diventare più intelligente di volta in volta: un meccanismo a feedback positivo di apprendimento.

Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?

Hiroshi: Quando ero giovane mi sentivo più intelligente di tutti gli altri: programavo, riparavo computer, studiavo, avevo un lavoro, nella mia testa era ovvio che fossi agli altri superiore e spesso li guardavo anche con sufficienza.

Quando sono entrato nel vivo di questa questione e nel vivo dei miei studi, mi sono reso conto che c'era davvero qualcosa che non andava.^[2] La prima associazione che ho conosciuto era per il 130-140, era il 2016, già studiavo fisica. Ero entrato per dimostrare a me stesso che ero abbastanza per frequentare la facoltà di fisica, nonostante fosse un'associazione per alti quozienti intellettivi, non li percepivo come persone a me superiori intellettualmente, mentre all'università mi

sentivo comunque uguale a tutti quelli che frequentavano il corso di laurea, anzi, mi sentivo anche da meno rispetto a loro, molto più bravi di me sicuramente sulla parte applicativa.

Certo, il problema poteva essere il retroterra, io avevo già una laurea in lettere, mentre molti di loro venivano dallo scientifico e avevano una forma mentis più adattata alle scienze e al loro modo di ragionare.^[1]_{SEP}

Successivamente, con il progredire degli anni scolastici, ho totalmente perso interesse verso il QI. Ad oggi, il mio QI è certificato a 164, e questo certificato non mi è servito a nulla, se non a indisporre le persone quando ne parlavo apparendo superbo. Io valuto le cose per la loro funzionalità. Il QI certificato mi fa sentire diverso, attaccabile. Poi, in questo momento mi sento tutto tranne che sicuro delle mie capacità intellettuali. Se penso ai limiti della mia realtà e provo a ragionare come se fossi fuori dal sistema fisico di cui faccio parte, mi va in fumo la testa. Mi sento limitato dalla attuale matematica, che come linguaggio da noi interpretato, sembra avere i nostri stessi limiti. Di fronte a quello che vedo, a quello che studio, mi sento piccolo. Quindi in verità la scoperta dell'intelligenza superiore è solo un'illusione, l'intelligenza è un fattore complesso, formato da uno spettro di capacità non intercambiabili e alienabili nel tempo.

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.

Hiroshi: Perché gli esseri umani non tollerano soluzioni a loro incomprensibili, il genio non è facilmente comprensibile e viene deriso, come l'Albatro di Baudelaire. L'essere umano deride ciò che non capisce, pensando che umiliare qualcosa faccia sparire il senso di inadeguatezza che prova, o il ridicolo di cui si copre. Per quanto riguarda l'essere timidi o meno di fronte a una telecamera, ogni persona è diversa e ogni categoria raccoglie infinite sfumature. La parola genio è un insieme dai contorni indefiniti e dalle proprietà poco chiare.

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

Hiroshi: Direi Dirac. Dopo Einstein, Noether, Godel e Heisenberg c'è Dirac, che è quello a cui mi sento più affine. Quello che ha distinto Dirac più di ogni altra cosa è la bellezza della matematica, e l'idea che la Fisica teorica si possa basare interamente sulla matematica non come strumento, ma come linguaggio capace di offrire accesso diretto ai meccanismi dell'universo. Dimostrò che è possibile, aprendo le porte a un nuovo modo di fare Fisica. Dirac aveva una visione tutta sua del mondo esplicitata nell'affermazione *“se la scienza è il tentativo di dire in parole comprensibili da tutti cose che prima la gente non conosceva, la poesia è il suo contrario, cioè la tendenza a parlare di cose risapute con parole oscure”*. A me piace la poesia, ma Dirac ha ragione. Ci vuole meno opinionismo, più chiarezza e meno interpretazioni personali della natura. Il metodo scientifico ha bisogno di mostrare a tutti la sua bellezza ed eleganza. Quello che è il significato di bello in matematica, però, andrebbe approfondito.

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

Hiroshi: Il genio sa mettere in comunicazione entrambi gli emisferi, sa come muoversi nella multidisciplinarietà, si sa autoalimentare e cercare le cose anche nei luoghi più impensabili. Una persona intelligente cerca nella propria razionalità e in sé le risposte. Il genio sa cercare le risposte fuori. La verità è che noi siamo un database non troppo ben programmato di ciò che ve-

diamo. Inoltre, il genio capisce che la differenza tra realtà e fantasia è marcato solo dal duro lavoro, in fondo, genio viene da ingegno, non da intelletto.

Jacobsen: Is profound intelligence necessary for genius?

Hiroshi: No, l'intelligenza si sviluppa nel tempo, può essere allenata, la genialità è una forma mentis. Ha sicuramente basi genetiche, ma non bastano. Inoltre, avere capacità intellettuali alte non significa nulla: l'attitudine gioca un ruolo fondamentale.

Jacobsen: What have been some work experiences and jobs held by you?

Hiroshi: Ho fatto veramente tanti lavori nella mia vita, perché avevo bisogno di trovare la mia strada. Anche il mio percorso di studi è stato strano, ma in qualche modo tutto è riuscito a convergere in un unico punto.

Ero un comunicatore, con capacità avanzate di sviluppo web e grafica.

Ho lavorato per importanti società sportive della serie A (calcio), ho lavorato per il dipartimento Aerospaziale e per aziende sempre legate all'aerospazio, ho fatto lavori per delle università e sono stato direttore tecnico di una tv nazionale orientata ai ragazzi dai 16 ai 25 anni.

Tutte queste esperienze mi hanno portato alla consapevolezza di voler tornare giovane e sognare la mia carriera nella fisica teorica. Ora posso guardare gli studi di fisica con gli occhi di una persona più matura, più ricca di esperienze.

Al momento studio fisica a tempo pieno e il mio principale lavoro è fare l'illustratore scientifico e il comunicatore. Da poco, sto preparando un percorso da V-Tuber scientifico. Io amo la scienza e voglio mostrare la sua bellezza a quante più persone possibili, senza mai farla apparire noiosa.

Jacobsen: Why pursue this particular job path?

Hiroshi: Ho dovuto costruire la mia stabilità economica giorno dopo giorno cogliendo davvero tutte le opportunità possibili. Ho sempre offerto servizi di comunicazione e sviluppo, ma sono partito dal basso. Ho sempre affiancato al mio lavoro da freelancer qualche progetto personale che fosse seriamente legato ai miei interessi personali.

Da quando mi sono iscritto alla seconda università per studiare fisica, ho dovuto fare i conti con il poco tempo, quindi ho iniziato via via a eliminare progetti personali e ridurre il numero dei clienti. Oggi non faccio più comunicazione per nessuno che non sia legato al settore scientifico / universitario. Lavoro principalmente come Illustratore scientifico, ma faccio anche cose più versatili, se il team di lavoro è gradevole e mi sono trovato bene.

Ho cominciato da poco, ma ho già ottenuto lavori per università molto importanti (nella top 10 nel 2020), finalmente posso dire di aver trovato la mia strada.^[1]_[SEP]

Non ha senso lavorare in un settore che non si ama alla follia: si diventa cinici e annoiati. Io studio per diventare un ricercatore in Fisica Teorica, ma lavoro ogni giorno per divulgare ai più giovani, offrire formazione gratuita, spiegare la scienza attraverso l'arte e il manga. Perché dopotutto sono un nerd che ci crede troppo.

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?

Hiroshi: Sono sempre cresciuto circondato da persone che mi ammiravano semplicemente perché sapevo fare tante cose e secondo loro bene, la verità è che ero curioso e iperattivo, ma ogni cosa che ho imparato l'ho imparata con sforzo: so disegnare e questo mi ha richiesto almeno dieci anni di studio, so parlare tante lingue, ma ho cominciato da piccolo e praticamente non ho mai smesso (l'anno scorso avevo pensato di trasferirmi in Danimarca e ho completato con successo il corso base di lingua danese), oggi non vivo in Danimarca e ho dimenticato quasi tutto quello che avevo imparato, mentre nell'idea comune del genio lui impara subito senza sforzo e ricorda per sempre, cosa che non è assolutamente vera.

Quindi il succo è che la necessità crea la virtù, impariamo le cose che ci servono e probabilmente il genio è colui che ha fatto dell'imparare il suo mestiere e che ha capito che gli serve imparare dell'altro per allenare il suo talento, proprio come uno sportivo continua ad allenarsi sempre di più per superare i propri limiti, la verità è che io un giorno ho deciso di voler diventare un genio e quindi ho iniziato a fare cose da geni, anche se non ho mai creduto nella genialità come fanno le persone comuni.

Ho recitato la parte, ma non ho mai dimenticato il lavoro dietro le quinte, un po' come farebbe un prestigiatore. Credo che le persone debbano innanzitutto capire che l'intelligenza (parte tecnica) e la genialità (attitudine e stato mentale) sono cose che si costruiscono e non è mai tardi per farlo.

Io ho iniziato a costruirlo circa a 25 anni (molto tardi), e i risultati sono arrivati molto in fretta. Forse essere un genio è più vicino ad essere un influencer che a un filosofo, ispirare gli altri facendo ciò che si ama.^[1] Non importa quanto siano grandi i numeri.

Per esempio, quando mi sono iscritto all'università non avevo assolutamente idea di come fosse organizzata la fisica moderna, sapevo solo che ero interessato ai viaggi nel tempo, quindi ho letto di Einstein, di Dirac, di qualche altro nome famoso. Ho iniziato a suonare il violino a 27 anni perché Einstein lo suonava. Oggi Einstein non mi piace più come prima, ma il violino fa parte della mia vita.

Ho letto le biografie e ho cercato di leggere gli stessi libri, come nel caso di Einstein e Dirac, che hanno il pensiero più particolare possibile: ho scoperto che la base logica dei loro studi è stata realizzata attraverso la lettura della logica deduttiva di Mill. Ho comprato il libro e ho iniziato a leggerlo non appena me ne sono reso conto.

Cosa significa questo? Se vuoi essere uno sportivo devi pensare come uno sportivo, il talento è la conseguenza del fare qualcosa con passione immergendosi in quel modo di essere, che si impara a poco a poco. Quando dicono 'volere è potere' e che il duro lavoro dà risultati è vero. Non si nasce geni, ma solo molto fortunati perché l'environment ti ha già messo in quella mentalità fin da piccolo. Se non sei stato fortunato puoi rimediare da solo.

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

Hiroshi: Non credo in una figura divina come immaginata dalle grandi religioni monoteiste e la figura di una divinità disegnata in questo modo non è che uno strumento politico più che spirituale.

Il mio primo percorso universitario fu storia, culture e religioni.

Studiando fisica è difficile non credere proprio a nulla, ma credo che questo discorso meriti uno

spazio a parte. Ciò che posso dire è che più studio più sento di essere piccolo. Più mi sento piccolo, più voglio crescere. Per me il concetto di Dio è questo senso di movimento. A volte ho immaginato l'esistenza del divino, in un luogo in cui lo ringrazio per aver creato qualcosa di così bello come l'universo. La verità è che prima di occuparci dei grandi quesiti della filosofia, dobbiamo avere armi migliori.

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

Hiroshi: La scienza è il fondamento di ogni singolo evento che avviene nel mondo. In biologia si dice che nulla ha senso se non alla luce dell'evoluzione, la fisica arriva ad un livello ancora più viscerale, così viscerale da lasciarti senza parole. Io amo la scienza più di ogni altra cosa: da ex umanista dico che la bellezza della fisica è qualcosa che può comunicare all'anima meglio di come farebbe una terzina di Dante.

Ciò che mi muove, ogni giorno, è la scienza. Voglio assolutamente conoscerla meglio, giorno dopo giorno. Non riesco a immaginare un mondo in cui la fisica non fa parte della mia esistenza.

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

Hiroshi: Ho fatto un Test Mensa, test Figure con 164 (SD15), Test ENST20 di cui non ricordo il punteggio, ma sempre tra 158 e 165. Tutte le deviazioni sono sd15. Volevo poi concentrarmi sull'ottenere una certificazione da 170+ perché nella mia visione del mondo del QI non è vero che sei 160 resti 160. Alzando la soglia aerobica del cervello il QI può salire, proprio come accade in palestra.

Purtroppo però il fatto che dovessi lavorare molto e che quando ho chiesto una scholarship per potermi focalizzare sugli studi, fosse più importante lo stato di povertà rispetto alle mie capacità intellettuali mi ha gettato in una profonda crisi, non solo: parlare del proprio QI ti mette in una situazione compromessa, le persone ti dicono che vuoi metterti al di sopra degli altri, che certificare l'intelligenza è una stupidaggine e quindi ho smesso di preoccuparmi di provare altri test più elevati perché non riuscivo a vedere alcun vantaggio raggiungibile. Allo stato attuale voglio riuscire a farmi ammettere in un'università del calibro di Cambridge (in realtà vorrei proprio Cambridge), da quello che ho capito contano molto di più i progetti nel portfolio, piuttosto che un esagerato QI. Quindi nonostante la mia ambizione mi abbia fatto pensare di voler provare la GIGA dopo la 4G alla fine ho perso la ragione dietro lo scopo. Alla fine, intelligenti o meno, abbiamo sempre bisogno di una comunità di cui sentirci parte e da cui sentirci protetti, con cui condividere scopi e visioni.

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.

Hiroshi: Generalmente 162 o 164, non ricordo con precisione. Una volta c'è stato un 151, così come un 172. Mi piace pensare 164, perché la mia ragazza ha fatto un 166 e mi piace dire che abbia qualche punto in più rispetto a me, perché lo trovo divertente e anche molto stimolante.

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

Hiroshi: Ho scritto il mio personale Sentiero Etico nel corso degli ultimi 10 anni, mescolando visioni e filosofie, anche contrastanti tra di loro, dal momento che la società moderna è combinazione lineare di queste filosofie, anche quelle dicotomiche.

La mia etica mi impone di non perdere tempo in sciocchi pensieri, di lavorare duramente per

prendermi ciò che voglio a qualunque costo, essere sincero e mostrare sempre la mia volontà, in ogni occasione. Non mentire e usare la verità come arma, essere sempre fedele a me stesso.

Rifiutare il pregiudizio in ogni sua forma, restare curioso. Imparare da tutti e offrire sempre qualcosa della propria esperienza da insegnare. Ricercare, sperimentare.

Combattere i propri difetti e migliorarsi, porsi degli obiettivi molto ambiziosi, ogni anno raggiungerne almeno la metà. Lanciare sfide all'improbabilità, per trovarsi in una vita sempre in cambiamento. Improbabile chiama improbabile, quindi occasioni diverse, ogni volta.

Vivere nel culto della propria visione. La vita è troppo breve per sacrificarci, dobbiamo vivere a pieno per noi stessi. Se non è possibile, si prova l'impossibile.

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

Hiroshi: In questo momento della mia vita sto studiando per la prima volta con interesse le dinamiche sociali e mi sto approcciando all'intelligenza emotiva. Personalmente ho avuto un background particolarmente severo e selvaggio, per cui non apprezzo degli approcci troppo morbidi, ma credo che dipenda dai tipi di persone. La verità è che non mi piace circondarmi di persone rammollite, anche se la mia natura di curioso mi spinge più a voler capire che a giudicare.

Sono ben lontano dall'aver afferrato la comprensione sociale e cerco di non cadere nella trappola dell'ipocrisia, ma spero tra qualche anno di essere in grado di rispondere a questa domanda. Per ora dico che sono transgender (nato donna, diventato uomo) e quindi le questioni di genere dovrebbero essere il mio punto di riferimento. Probabilmente, però, mi interessa solo discutere delle dimensioni sociali della conoscenza scientifica e di una filosofia che ruoti attorno a questo. Un po' come accadeva nei primi del novecento.

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

Hiroshi: Personalmente, credo che il capitalismo sia qualcosa di non sostenibile. Ma la possibilità di non poter accrescere il proprio patrimonio mi spaventa. Se in futuro ci fosse un pagamento in tempo e servizi, non credo sarei felice. Perché sono pigro e perché costruisco possibilità lavorative soprattutto basate su ottimizzazioni.

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

Hiroshi: Odio la democrazia, quando questa non ha senso di esistere. Vivo in un paese dove le persone non sanno di cosa parlano. Il senso civico è al minimo e la situazione è di profonda crisi. Persone che parlano di terra piatta, di complotti, di non volere i vaccini e quant'altro. Queste persone hanno il mio stesso diritto di votare. Questa democrazia, come diceva Platone, non ha senso ed è una forte degenerazione. Ciascuno ha un peso. Uno non vale uno, in questo contesto.

Ad oggi l'unica filosofia politica a me gradevole è il legalismo cinese, che proviene dal confucianesimo. Da lì la geniocrazia, che vede come suo principio base misurare la cruda intelligenza, dando diritto di voto solo a chi ha un'intelligenza superiore alla media di una certa percentuale, mentre la possibilità di governo è solo per i geni, cioè quelle persone più intelligenti della media in modo notevole. Diciamo 10 e 50% rispettivamente. Si tratterebbe quindi di una democrazia selettiva, che non trascura l'intelligenza emotiva e le capacità di introspezione.

Jacobsen: What metaphysics makes some sense to you, even the most workable sense to you?

Hiroshi: Come il quadrato magico del SATOR, ogni fenomeno metafisico è solo un fenomeno

fisico non ancora spiegato, è solo questione di tempo. Sta alla nostra sensibilità e alla nostra attitudine decidere se Sator si riferisce a una visione cattolica in cui si manifesta il divino (Ego Sum Alpha et Omega, nella lettura decifrata del sator), una traduzione non ufficiale, più che altro ipotetica, come “Sator Abrepo, Opera tenet rotas” cioè il seminatore si diletta, la sua opera continua da sé, o una semplice matrice simmetrica.

Io, come ho detto, ho vissuto prima da umanista, quindi il fatto che solo ora veda la matrice simmetrica mi fa riflettere molto. Nulla dimostra quale sia la vera interpretazione, ma nulla dimostra che la realtà sia univoca.

A ogni modo, quello che vedo con i miei occhi è che la volontà è la più bella metafisica in cui voglio credere. Nelle emozioni c'è la forza dietro il movimento. Mi sembra la cosa più rilevante. La fisica ha il ruolo di spiegare l'inspiegabile, che sia effetto fotoelettrico o abracadabra per noi questo non deve essere limitante. Dopotutto, l'effetto fotoelettrico di oggi era l'abracadabra di ieri.

Jacobsen: What worldview-encompassing philosophical system makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?

Hiroshi: Ad oggi non è stato prodotto un pensiero filosofico adatto ed è per questo motivo che la società è ancora involuta. Se i filosofi fossero un po' più attenti ai processi logici da adottare, anziché forgiare idee sul malcontento, magari avrebbero più valore per me.

Jacobsen: What provides meaning in life for you?

Hiroshi: Ci sono due cose che danno senso alla mia vita. La prima, sicuramente la più importante di tutte per me, è essere riconosciuto come me stesso. La seconda cosa è banale: cercare una spiegazione all'esistenza, come facevano gli antichi filosofi greci. Per fare questo bisogna rompere le barriere del proprio intelletto, cosa tutt'altro che facile, ed è per questo che è mio obiettivo seguire processi logici non lineari, ma trascendenti (nel senso matematico del termine).

Jacobsen: Is meaning externally derived, internally generated, both, or something else?

Hiroshi: Non esiste un interno o un esterno, perché non siamo un sistema chiuso con processi adiabatici.

Jacobsen: Do you believe in an afterlife? If so, why, and what form? If not, why not?

Hiroshi: Proprio in questi ultimi tempi volevo parlare con un frigorifero, credo che campi elettromagnetici e coscienza siano strettamente legati e credo, inoltre, che non ci sia molta differenza tra i nostri processi cognitivi e la computazione di un computer quantistico, quindi mi sono fatto l'idea che c'è una spiegazione a tutta l'eredità filosofica religiosa e letteraria lasciata dai nostri avi. Le forme ricorrenti e i miti sono forse un punto di partenza per la scienza. Quando la sera vado a dormire, penso sempre che quando morirò sarò un'onda elettromagnetica scaricata a terra in tanti piccoli frammenti o che ha la possibilità di viaggiare nel vuoto dell'universo per un tempo molto lungo. Se posso avanzare una speranza mi piacerebbe credere che non esista la reincarnazione, né la morte nel senso epicureo, ma che sia una trasformazione di fase, in cui finalmente potrò esplorare l'universo e farne parte in un'altra forma, purché cosciente. Detesto questo senso di impotenza, vorrei sapere di più.

Jacobsen: What do you make of the mystery and transience of life?

Hiroshi: Mi piacerebbe che Einstein avesse ragione quando dice che Dio non gioca a dadi, ma il problema è che lo fa, almeno a quanto dimostra la disuguaglianza di Bell, però in una delle mie

idee molto fantasiose forse c'è un'altra spiegazione. Dopo i miei studi magistrali, se quest'idea resisterà alle intemperie della conoscenza, cercherò di approfondire e perché no: magari dimostrare.

Jacobsen: What is love to you?

Hiroshi: Quando Platone parla delle anime divise non era andato molto lontano. La persona che amo è il mio opposto, così opposto da essere complementare, è sicuramente più intelligente di me, ma anche più stupida (nel senso simpatico del termine). Si occupa di biologia e riesce non solo a capire ciò che penso, ma nutrire nuovi pensieri. Probabilmente siccome quando penso a noi mi viene in mente la mano sinistra sulla corda di violino e la destra che tiene l'archetto, probabilmente l'amore non è altro che la musica prodotta.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Member, ISI-Society.

[2] Individual Publication Date: March 1, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/hiroshi>; Full Issue Publication Date: May 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 LaRae Bakerink on Tales from Youth, MBA in Management, Curmudgeons, Male Brokers' Temperaments, and Mensa International: Elected Chair, American Mensa; Member, International Board of Directors, Mensa International (1)

2021-03-08

***LaRae Bakerink** is the Elected Chair of American Mensa and a Member of the Executive Committee of the International Board of Directors of Mensa International. She has been a Member of San Diego Mensa since 2001. Bakerink earned a bachelor's degree in Finance and an M.B.A. in Management. She lives in San Diego with her husband, Steve. She discusses: family history; the MBA in Management; a difficult personality; brokers; the temperament you most find with people; and American Mensa.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Superhero movies are very popular now. Let's start on an origin story, if you want to give any, family history, and any tales from youth of particular influence on you.

LaRae Bakerink[1],[2]: My story: as I said before, I was born in Washington, D.C. I'm the oldest child. My father was the middle child of 9. My mother is the oldest child. Well, she was the oldest child, until she found out [Laughing]. Her father was not really her father. Thank you, 23andMe.

Jacobsen: Wow.

Bakerink: Yes, that's a whole other story. I found out who my real grandfather is because I made my mother spit into a tube.

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Bakerink: It is just nice to know. I always did well in school. My parents were pretty strict about it. In fact, if I ever thought about getting a B, I would probably be put on restriction. I started Kindergarten when I was 4. Because I had a high aptitude.

So, they wanted me in early. I went to 3 months of second grade and then skipped up to third grade because I had finished all my books, all my math books, English books, by the third month of second grade.

Then I was shorter, smaller, and, of course, younger than everybody. It made me very introverted. When you're a little kid, and when everyone is a little taller than you, it makes a big difference. I got teased a lot.

But I was pretty good at sports. So, I could, at least, be physical and try and keep up. Then I graduated high school at 16, started college. Discovered my driver's license and freedom [Laughing], college didn't go so well for the first few years.

I think I had a pretty good childhood. It was a lot of fun. I was on swim team. In fact, I trained very competitively for almost 14 years swimming. Then I started out as a marine biologist. That's what I wanted to be when I first started college.

Because San Diego, hello! Scripps Institute of Oceanography and all of that, it's a big deal here. Then I realized there was not a whole lot of money in that. Even though, I love science. Because if you're going to be a researcher or something, then you're going to have to depend on grant

money.

Then I fell into a job, a part-time job, at a stock brokerage firm. I discovered my love of finance. I changed my major to finance. I worked in the stock market for almost 30 years. I was on the Board of the NASDAQ stock market. I was on the Board of National Association of Securities Dealers, which is the regulatory agency for the stock market in the United States.

That was my life. My husband's life, we had our own firm. I always was feeling that I should have done something more with my smarts, but, on the other hand, feel like I've done pretty well with my smarts over the years.

I always did well in school with good grades, loved school. One of the people who I know who actually really loved school. Still enjoy learning, I got married at a very young age and divorced at a very young age because, when you get married at 18, I don't think you're ready.

I met my current husband. We will be married 36 years this year. He and I ran our own brokerage firm for a while. Now, we're retired, except I spend more time working for Mensa than I ever spent working for my company.

Jacobsen: You did an MBA too. What drove you to get the MBA in Management in particular?

Bakerink: Actually, the teacher that I had. She was the management teacher I had while getting my finance degree. I am really good with numbers. They tried to talk me into accounting. I was like, "No, it's not my desire." When I talked to her (the Dr.), she was adamant about having the management capability and being able to work the teams with the finance degree that I had, which would be very beneficial.

She was right. It was a good addition to the finance degree. Just because it gives you a different insight into working with other people, I hated all the team projects. But they're probably one of the best things I ever did.

It helped me to work with them even if I didn't like them, if I didn't trust them, if I felt what I was doing was better than they were. Some people have a problem if they are better than you. It gave me a lot of good insight into how to work with a different variety of people.

I think that really helped me through the brokerage industry through the years because brokers are a breed unto themselves [Laughing]. They're very focused on what they do. They don't pay attention a lot to what is going on around them when they are focused.

I had to find a way to get to them. My husband called me "The Curmudgeon Whisperer."

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Bakerink: Because I could get even our grumpiest brokers to laugh and to smile, and to get them to do what they needed to do.

Jacobsen: If you're dealing with a difficult personality, your quintessential curmudgeon. How do you do it?

Bakerink: This one guy, I knew he really, really liked cats. If he started getting really crabby or demanding, or whatever, I would send him a picture of a cat, or I would joke with him about "I will send you a basket of kittens if you don't behave."

Because he liked cats and was afraid of kittens. He would laugh. Then he would stop being grumpy. We would get down to business. You find out what their passion is and focus on that,

‘Hey, you got this thing going on here. You don’t need to be grumpy. We can do this.’

It is reading people and figuring out the story as to why they’re really mad. Because half of the time, why they say they’re mad is not why they’re mad; they’re angry about a fight that they had with their wife yesterday.

So, they are going to take this out on me. “Did you have a bad day or weekend?” They go, “Oh, yeah, okay.” [Laughing]

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Bakerink: They calm down a bit.

Jacobsen: Are more brokers women or men?

Bakerink: Men, for sure.

Jacobsen: My image of a curmudgeon is a man. I don’t know if this is good or bad, but it’s the image.

Bakerink: The stock market, they’re so set in their ways. A lot of the brokers are brought up in what they call “Bull Pens.” They are trained in a big room, where they have to cold call customers and have a script. They have to tell customers this script over and over and over again.

It gets pounded into them: This is what you have to do. It is hard to get that out of them. When they get out into the real-world and have to socialize with their customers [Laughing] or their colleagues, once you learn where they come from, it becomes easier.

It is like that with anybody. You figure out what it is that drives them that makes it fun to work with them.

Jacobsen: What is the temperament you most find with people? If you cold call people day-in and day-out, in America and presumably outside it too, what is the general temperament over decades of working in that industry?

Bakerink: This is back in the day. It was all before emails. So, they’d get rejected a lot. They have to be tough skinned. Especially cold-calling, you’ll get yelled at. There are people who don’t want to hear from you, who hang up.

You’re given a phone list. You don’t know who you’re calling. It gives them a tough skin, which is a good thing sometimes. I had brokers quit who said, “I lost a customer’s money. I can’t do this anymore.” [Laughing]

So, you can’t have that feeling and do a good job, or to move forward. I think you have to be pretty tough to be a broker and you have to work with that, and figure out what they need to not be so mad all the time.

Jacobsen: Now, you’re working more in Mensa, as American Mensa’s Chair more than any other job you’ve had – or volunteer position. So, what are the tasks and responsibilities in being chief officer?

Bakerink: Number one, I am Chair of American Mensa. I run the meetings, the agenda. I am the face right now of American Mensa. I deal with the press. I probably get a couple hundred emails a day, not just from members, but people from all over. ‘You know, Mensa needs to look at this.’

I get more projects and ideas from people. Some of them a little *crazy*.

Jacobsen: Conspiracy theories?

Bakerink: Conspiracy theories they believe Mensa needs to investigate. Also, I am an ex-officio member of the Mensa Foundation Board, but I have designated a proxy for that. Because I feel I need to concentrate of doing a good job.

I am also on the Executive Committee for the International Board of Directors of Mensa International. So, three positions coming from one. There is a lot of interaction with the membership and the staff. We work on our events trying to recruit new members.

One of the things that I am really proud of that we finally got done is testing in a testing facility Prometric. So, you can take our test. You can go into one of our testing facilities. You can take it online at one of our testing facilities.

Prior to that, when you had gone to a psychiatrist and taken the Stanford-Binet or the Wechsler, you could provide that as prior evidence. But we also have proctors authorized by our national supervisory psychologist that will give the tests that we use for entrance for qualification for Mensa.

Those are usually the third Saturday of the month at either a church or some local community hall, libraries. That sort of thing, because it is a regular test. You need quiet. So, we have about 400 proctors nationwide.

Mensa members who have college degree, a 4-year degree, and then have also gone through and done all of the requirements to do a proctor, being observed, doing a test, observing others do a test, prior to being approved as a proctor.

Then they can give the test to potential candidates. But a lot of my Millennials will say, "I'm not taking a test on a Saturday morning. That's either hangover or Home Depot day."

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Bakerink: Plus, a lot of them are nervous, introverted and most of them don't want to sit down in a classroom setting and take a test. Now that we have it set up with Prometric. They're open 6 a.m. until 10 p.m. 7 days a week.

They can sit you down in a booth in a corner, so you don't have to interact with other people, which makes some of our introverts very happy [Laughing]. With COVID-19, we haven't been able to test.

Some have safety standards, so they can test. So, we don't have to worry about those. But we still have people taking the test and wanting to join. I've worked on that for almost 7 years and finally gotten it to pass because everything was done on paper up until that point, instead of being able to take it at a computer.

You can't take it at home. You have to take it at a center to verify identity and all that kind of stuff. That's something I'm very excited about.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Chair, American Mensa; Member, International Board of Directors (Executive Committee), Mensa International; Ex-Officio Member, Mensa Foundation; Member, San Diego Mensa.

[2] Individual Publication Date: March 1, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/bakerink-1>; Full Issue Publication Date: May 1, 2021: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

Conversation with Antjuan Finch on Separation from Family, Christianity, Autism Spectrum, Leonardo Da Vinci, Jacob Barnett, CAI, and PDIT: Member, CIVIQ Society (2)

2021-03-15

[Antjuan Finch](#) is the [Author](#) of *After Genius: On Creativity and Its Consequences*, *The 3 Sides of Man*, and *Applied Theory*. He created the [Creative Attitudes Inventory](#) (CAT) and the [Public Domain Intelligence Test](#) (PDIT). He discusses: separated from the larger family; a “heroic attitude”; the involvement in the Christian traditions and churches in Indianapolis; the autism spectrum; formal studies; experimental online tests at [IQNAVI.net/IQexams.net](#); Jacob Barnett; geniuses go unrecognized; Leonardo da Vinci; the recent accomplishments; *Creative Attitudes Inventory* (V.1); *Aberrant Salience* (Unusual Thinking), *Conscientiousness* (discipline), and *Poly-mathic Interests*; statistics coming back for the test; *Public Domain Intelligence Test* (PDIT); updates on the statistical findings; strongest points in intelligence; and a universe with a self-testing function.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Why were you mother, brothers, and you separated from the larger family?

Antjuan Finch[1],[2]*: Largely, because my larger was to a sizable degree involved with drugs, crime, and other things that are best to keep away from children. Although, not everyone in my larger family was associated with these things.

Jacobsen: What is this sense of a “heroic attitude” for you?

Finch: I have the disposition to want to solve big problems, help people, or, save the world, in some sense. I think that these are heroic qualities.

Jacobsen: How were your brothers perceiving the involvement in the Christian traditions and churches in Indianapolis?

Finch: Both of my full siblings have somewhat of a disdain for organized religions, at the moment. Although my older brother has still maintained some very spiritual beliefs and practices, I believe. The churches that we went to as kids had extremely long services, with no breaks and very intense, moralistic tirades. The situations really weren’t ideal for restless kids.

Jacobsen: When were you placed on the autism spectrum?

Finch: I remember that my mom, when I was young, sometimes made comments about me being on the autism spectrum, but I don’t think that I was formally diagnosed as being so. I think that, in some ways, my intelligence might mask my autistic traits, and even allow me to compensate for them, in certain situations, which may make me less likely to receive a diagnosis, given that such a diagnosis requires significant impairments in functioning. For an example of how my intelligence may mask my autistic traits, the stilted and overly formal way of communicating that is common among autists, when combined with a wide vocabulary, and clear reasoning ability, may cause someone to appear as sophisticated instead of socially maldeveloped.

Jacobsen: Out of “creative writing, psychometrics, astrophysics, and evolutionary biology,” what were the more interesting part of those individuated formal studies?

Finch: For creative writing, I was exposed to a lot of incredible literature that I likely never

would have read otherwise. For evolutionary biology, it was interesting to see how much the field had developed over time; my autodidactic study in evolutionary theory, for the most, before then, had only involved works that Charles Darwin had written.

Jacobsen: With further experimental online tests at IQNAVI.net/IQexams.net, did you find a community of other higher-scorers to converse and share stories?

Finch: Not really. While I ended up joining several high IQ societies, I never found gained much of a sense of community from any of them, and was hardly active in them.

Jacobsen: Where is Jacob Barnett now?

Finch: I'm not sure, he seems to have somewhat secluded from the public spotlight in recent years.

Jacobsen: Why do most geniuses go unrecognized, while, simultaneously, living in likely "squalor"? Any thoughts on the potential loss to humanity as a result?

Finch: I think that, in some ways, it may take a bit of genius to recognize one before they've been widely regarded as such. But to be more specific, obsessively producing extremely advanced work, creative or otherwise, can easily cause one to miss opportunities to develop the marketable skills and desirable traits which may be useful for becoming well known, and doing things other than what may be needed to just produce more and more creative work — but that may be a somewhat extreme example. Wealth has also historically been concentrated in very few hands, with much more people living in relatively impoverished states than otherwise. Given these notions, it can be inferred that prospective geniuses have been more likely to be born in, and stay in poverty than otherwise. Although, it does appear that, on occasion, a genius might become magnificently rich.

Jacobsen: Why consider Leonardo da Vinci as the greatest genius in history? What was happening with this left-handed Italian gay man?

Finch: Before I answer your question, I must say that Leonardo da Vinci, in all likelihood, was asexual. I can't imagine that even a gay man would make these statements: "Intellectual passion drives out sensuality," and "The act of procreation and anything that has any relation to it is so disgusting that human beings would soon die out if there were no pretty faces and sensuous dispositions." I further address the likelihood of Leonardo being asexual and schizoid in my paper, On the Schizoid Personality, from my Applied Theory compilation.

But on Leonardo's genius: besides his obvious, impressive, polymathic output, which I view as an unmistakable sign of high, general creative ability, he also produced a lot of remarkable work with, by today's standards, remarkably little resources, and, in all likelihood, poor nutrition. Moreover, given the advances in every field of human interest since Leonardo's time, alongside the ungodly increase in the accessibility of information that has happened in recent years, one might expect for even average Americans to be matching Leonardo's creative output, easily. And yet, he's still impressive.

Jacobsen: What are some of the recent accomplishments where more desirable jobs may be available to you?

Finch: Most notably, simply being admitted to Harvard seems to confer a lot of market desirability. Some people have also found my recent test creations and website designs impressive enough to offer me paid work.

Jacobsen: Your Creative Attitudes Inventory (V.1) is a test of 55 questions taking a total of fewer than 15 minutes to complete. You posit three traits comprising creative thinking in Aberrant Salience (Unusual Thinking), Conscientiousness (discipline), and Polymathic Interests. Why develop the test?

Finch: I developed the Creative Attitudes Inventory because the creative ability assessment that I created contained tasks that, due to my lack of programming skills, I'm currently unable to administer online, at least in a manner that I think will provide reliable and meaningful data for me to analyze. The subtests of the Creative Attitudes Inventory were actually originally selected to assess the divergent and convergent validity of the tasks in my non-self-report assessment of creativity.

Jacobsen: Why posit Aberrant Salience (Unusual Thinking), Conscientiousness (discipline), and Polymathic Interests as the core traits for measurement?

Finch: Unusual thinking and Conscientiousness are two of the three facets of my model of creativity. As for why they are included in my model: discipline and proneness for unusual thought are definitive markers of high, general creative ability, as without conscientiousness one would not have the work ethic needed to produce anything of value, or make the most of whatever creative ideas or talents that they do have, and without a high capacity for unusual thought, one could not even think up many novel ideas, to begin with. For more on the justification for the facets in my model of creativity, readers should read my short essay, Preconditions for Genius, from my short book, After Genius.

The third facet of my model, being *g*, intelligence, or pattern recognition, seems to be poorly testable through self-report questionnaires, so it was not included in the set of questionnaires that would eventually be called the Creative Attitudes Inventory.

The novel Polymathic Interests Inventory was included, mainly, because I wanted to see if there was evidence that unusual thinking proneness was positively associated with interests in a wide array of scientific and artistic fields, as well as if conscientiousness moderated the relationship between having an interest in many fields, and the belief that one has actually innovated in some of those fields. The theory here was that much discipline and thoroughness may be needed to convert ideas into innovations, as well as to believe that one has done so, despite their not there not yet being much widespread acceptance that they have.

Jacobsen: What are some of statistics coming back for the test so far?

Finch: Due to some issues with the program that hosts the test, I removed the Creative Attitudes Inventory from my website shortly after posting it, so not enough data was collected on it to produce any meaningful statistics. Although, I recently did an experiment with Shelley Carson on a creativity class at Harvard using the Creativity Attitudes Inventory and other measures of divergent thinking and creative achievement. This experiment also included the Unusual Thinking task that was part of my non-self-report assessment of creativity. I'll receive the data that was collected from this experiment soon, and will post a report on those statistics shortly after.

Jacobsen: For the Public Domain Intelligence Test (PDIT) measuring Crystallized Intelligence (*Gc*) and Fluid Intelligence (*Gf*), what was the inspiration for it? As anyone can see, the basis for the test is derived from the old SATs considered valid for admission to the International High IQ Society of the late Nathan Haselbauer (suicide) and the Triple Nine Society.

Finch: The Public Domain Intelligence Test was developed because I was unable to find a test of

general intelligence that was free, quick, openly accessible, and well-validated, both conceptually and psychometrically. The structure of the test was designed to resemble the second form of the Wechsler Abbreviated Scales of Intelligence (WASI-2). The sentence completion items for the Verbal, Crystallized Intelligence section of the test were selected because they were openly accessible, short in form, and that there is considerable evidence validating the psychometric properties of pre-2005 Verbal SAT forms, as well as considerable evidence suggesting that sentence completion items may provide integrative measures of crystallized intelligence. The matrix reasoning item set for the Nonverbal, Fluid Intelligence section were also selected because they were openly accessible, quickly doable, and was satisfactorily validated, both psychometrically, and as a potential measure of fluid intelligence.

Jacobsen: What are some of the responses to it now? Any updates on the statistical findings?

Finch: At the time of my writing this response, PDIT has received a few thousand test sessions. Moreover, the written and spoken responses that I've received to the test has been quite varied. Many people have told me that the test seems very hard, and some people have told me that the test seems too easy, considering the range of scores that it provides. Quite a lot of people have lied to me directly about the scores they've achieved on the test, and some of those people later confessed to this after they realized that I can see every test session for PDIT, and am given some identifying information about the test's takers. Statistical findings for the test, so far, indicate that FSIQs from the test are highly correlated with WAIS-IV FSIQs, and very highly correlated with WAIS-IV GAIs. These findings also indicate that, compared to WAIS-IV FSIQs, PDIT FSIQs are not inflated. These findings also indicate that PDIT FSIQs are normally distributed, have a standard deviation of 14.85, and are significantly more correlated with PDIT Verbal and Non-verbal scores than the scores from those two sections are with each other, indicating that PDIT FSIQs load on the common factor between its two subtests, which is presumably g, or what tends to be referred to as the general intelligence factor.

Jacobsen: What do you consider your strongest points in intelligence?

Finch: Apparently I'm most skilled at coming up with analogies and elaborating on the similarities between things. Although, I believe that this ability may be more related to creativity than intelligence, but since high intelligence is required for creativity, this ability seems to have a g-loading sufficient to be included in some intelligence tests, such as the WAIS-IV.

Jacobsen: Given the "law of non-contradiction" and the "mechanics of emergence," and a universe with a self-testing function 'implying self-awareness,' 'how might someone become one with God?'

Finch: Become more coherent (constitutionally), creative, and enlightened or insightful.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Member, CIVIQ Society.

[2] Individual Publication Date: March 15, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/finch-2>; Full Issue Publication Date: May 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 Bob Williams on Davide Piffer, Francis Galton, Hans Eysenck, Arthur Jensen, Richard Haier and Rex Jung, Scientists and Artists, Howard Gardner, Robert Sternberg, and Charles Spearman: Retired Nuclear Physicist (3)

2021-03-15

Bob Williams is a Member of the Triple Nine Society, Mensa International, and the International Society for Philosophical Enquiry. He discusses: the more evidenced theories of creativity similar to g or general intelligence as the majority position of researchers in the field of general intelligence; theories of genius; the main figures in these areas of creativity and genius connected to the research on g; personality differences between scientists and artists; conscientiousness; the ability to think; the expected probability of genius at higher and higher cognitive rarities; Howard Gardner; Robert Sternberg; the works of Arthur Jensen building on Charles Spearman; and the questions remaining about genius.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Now, I want to touch on another orbiting topic to intelligence research, which comes from this notion of genius. What are some of the more evidenced theories of creativity similar to g or general intelligence as the majority position of researchers in the field of general intelligence?

Bob Williams[1],[2]*: The evidence lies primarily in neurology. Creativity measurements are not as informative as intelligence measures. We understand g well and have a massive amount of research to support the structure of intelligence, g, the underlying neurology, and finally the genetics picture is coming together. Even in personality, there is a general factor, but if a general factor has emerged from studies of creativity, I have not seen it. Davide Piffer wrote a paper that specifically addressed the question of a general factor of creativity. He made a convincing argument that aspects of creativity were distinct at the descriptive and neurological levels and would, therefore, be unlikely to yield a general factor. Piffer also presented good criticisms of various past studies, particularly with regard to the construct validity of various creativity tests.

Part of the problem is that much of the literature relating creativity and intelligence preceded latent variable analysis. Another part is that creativity is inherently more difficult to measure than intelligence. In intelligence research, we can easily test for the g loading of a category of test items and see if the loading is high enough to justify its use in a battery of test items, such as an IQ test. In creativity measures, the things being measured are sometimes quite removed from the thing we implicitly understand as creativity.

The other aspect of creativity measures is that people do not have the same degree of agreement as to how a creative response should be graded. For example, one common test of creativity is the alternate uses test, in which a person is asked to list as many alternate uses for a common object (brick, paperclip, etc.) as possible in a short period of time. This is essentially a test of fluency (for example, list words beginning with the letter H). Even when used directly (without grading of individual responses) there is a claimed connection between fluency and creativity. When the responses are graded by judges, according to the level of creativity, the results are claimed to be better. It is obvious that this sort of test is not a close match with the things we expect are happening when a person is exhibiting creative output.

The neurology of creativity is where I see real explanatory results. For example, creative brains should show these:

- The inhibitory function is low or can be made low by the executive function. When the brain has a low inhibitory function, it rejects fewer stimuli, creating opportunities for remote associations. While this is good for creative output, it is opposite of the best function for problem solving.
- Some brains presumably have direct connectivity between parts that are usually combined only by passing through multiple nodes. This also increases the opportunity for unrelated ideas or knowledge to become associated.
- The brain is able to enter the default mode network (DMN) and generate ideas there. This is the network most associated with creativity.
- Leaky attention (the opposite of maintaining focus) relates to the inhibitory function.
- The ability to create remote associations relates to all of the creativity factors.

These brain characteristics tell us that, like intelligence, creativity depends on special properties of the brain. Curiously, these properties seem to sometimes be opposite to those we associate with high intelligence. While we do not have a parallel between intelligence and creativity, in the general factor sense, we do have a set of brain features that have a direct impact on creative output.

Jacobsen: Similarly, creative achievement at the highest levels seems to more often than not earn the title of “genius,” wherein minor creative acts and high intelligence do not. In that, a true act of genius appears to require extremes of creativity and of general intelligence. Both of these rare alone, even rarer together at the same levels. What theories of genius appear the most substantiated now?

Williams: Yes. The enigma is how these traits can sometimes all happen in one brain. The various models of genius that I have seen seem to be relatively unchanged over time, suggesting to me that we have not found measurements that lead us to any one over the others. The various models, however, are not that different and are qualitatively in agreement with the things that are seen in Genius. We have good descriptions of geniuses from the distant past that seem consistent with more recent observations, but we do not have much, if anything, in the way of brain studies because the technology to image brains has only been available for a few decades.

Sir Francis Galton listed intelligence, zeal, and persistence. Another component is probably creativity.

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 will be destroyed and not achieve enormous feats of creative genius. When N and P are somewhat elevated they positively impact the individual—at least if he is really a genius. For example, P may cause a person to be seen as aggressive, cold, egocentric, impersonal, impulsive, antisocial, unempathic, tough-minded, and creative... not a pretty picture in terms of attractive personality. This, however, is precisely what we read in the descriptions of the great geniuses of all time.

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

Jacobsen: Who are the main figures in these areas of creativity and genius connected to the research on g?

Williams: The three above (Galton, Eysenck, and Jensen) wrote a good bit about genius and some about creativity. Dean Keith Simonton edited the *Handbook of Genius and Scientific genius: A psychology of science*. I would classify him as more of an author than researcher.

Much of what we have in the literature on genius is descriptive, due to the scarcity of people to study and their distribution over hundreds of years. In *Human Accomplishment: The Pursuit of Excellence in the Arts and Sciences 800 B.C. to 1950*, Charles Murray identified 4002 people as having extraordinary eminence. This is a very reasonable list of genius over the long time range he covered. We are left with a better understanding of what they accomplished than of how they did it. Needless to say, we have no neurological studies of these people.

Today we have researchers who study both intelligence and creativity. The two at the top of my list are neurologists Richard Haier and Rex Jung. Their work resulted in the P-FIT model (described in my second set of questions) and has expanded into a wide range of intelligence and creativity topics. It is my belief that neurological research is most likely to shed additional light on the understanding of what rare conditions produce genius. In the more distant future, geneticists may find ways to understand the underlying genetic traits in true genius.

The neurological characteristics that have been associated with high creativity (see previous answer) include a lowered inhibitory function and long mean path length (networks). Both of these are opposite to the desirable traits for high intelligence. The inhibitory function can be dulled by alcohol or other drugs, precisely not what you want to do before taking a calculus test. Long mean path length is associated with poor network connectivity, possibly related to low tissue integrity (measured by fractional anisotropy) or with lower numbers of connections to hubs. I have not seen anything that attempts to explain how genius incorporates both high intelligence and high creativity. There is, however, the possibility that these rare people have an ability to achieve divergent thinking and remote associations, without the biological factors just mentioned. Piffer has also argued that the focus on divergent thinking may be overemphasized and the association of creativity with intelligence underappreciated.

Jacobsen: What explains some of these personality differences between scientists and artists mentioned in (1)?

Williams: There seems to be numerous domain specific traits, including personality, at work. I doubt that anyone would confuse an artist with an engineer when first meeting them. One personality trait that relates to creativity is Conscientiousness—low for artists and higher for scientists. Trait Openness is the only Big Five trait that relates to intelligence, but this trait also correlates positively with creativity. This suggests that intelligence is not the minor factor claimed by some researchers.

One aspect of creative professions is that they show elevated levels of alcoholism, impacting from 20% to 60% of each. The highest is for actors.

Openness is positively correlated with creative achievement in the arts, but curiously does not predict working memory capacity. Among scientists, intellect is predictive of WMC and achievement (as I would expect). In the long and detailed book *The Cambridge Handbook of the Neuroscience of Creativity* (2018) Rex E. Jung (Editor), Oshin Vartanian (Editor), there is a discussion of how openness and intellect relate to brain regions. As with the many studies of intelligence factors in the brain structure (and properties), neuroscience has produced similar findings for creativity. There are large numbers of structures and measures to consider, but the thing that is impressive is the frequency with which the results are opposite for creativity and intelligence; tissue integrity is one example (high integrity for intelligence, low integrity for creativity). [Tissue integrity is measured by fractional anisotropy. A high FA indicates less radial diffusivity (loss).]

Jacobsen: Does conscientiousness, whether artists or scientists, remain one of the most important traits for the achievement of a true act of genius – to follow-through despite seemingly impossible odds in the moment?

Williams: There is a big story hidden in follow-through and it seems to me to be a flaw in some of the more traditional discussions about creativity. When researchers administer a test, such as a divergent thinking exercise, they are often measuring fluency and then arguing that fluency is related to creativity. The problem is that this measure is about quantity and is completely disconnected from achievement, production, and end result. We see Michelangelo as a genius, not because he imagined the Sistine Chapel ceiling, but because it imagined AND produced it and not that he imagined the David, but because he sculpted the statue. This illustrates the difficulty of dealing with discussions and measures of creativity... the definitions are messy and can be misleading and the measures are often distant from the construct we want to measure.

Yes, Conscientiousness measured as a trait applies to acts of creativity, but in opposite directions for intelligence and creativity. We can see this without measuring creativity directly by simply measuring personality for artists and scientists. Despite the finding that it is low for artists. [I take the finding to be correct from Jung and Vartanian previously cited.]

Jacobsen: Between Mensa International, Intertel, the Triple Nine Society, the Prometheus Society, and the Mega Society, or between the escalating claimed cognitive rarities, what should one expect in regards to the ability to think of the cognitive floor of the membership?

Williams: Since these groups are self-selected, they tend to be atypical of the entry thresholds they represent. One big difference between membership in these is that people who have not been successful in education, profession, and personal relationships seem to be more attracted to them, possibly as a means of signaling their worth, despite failures. My observation from my in-person participation in the groups is that the majority of members are about what you would expect from a random sampling of people above the admission levels, but there remains a disproportionate

number of people who have not shown life success and developed appropriate interpersonal skills. In Mensa, and only that group, I noticed a significant number of morbidly obese members.

Jensen wrote:

I received a letter from someone I had never met, though I knew he was an eminent professor of biophysics. He had read something I wrote concerning IQ as a predictor of achievement, but he was totally unaware of the present work. The coincidence is that my correspondent posed the

very question that is central to my theme. He wrote:

I have felt for a long time that IQ, however defined, is only loosely related to mental achievement. Over the years I have bumped into a fair number of MENSA people. As a group, they seem to be dilettantes seeking titillation but seem unable to think critically or deeply. They have a lot of motivation for intellectual play but little for doing anything worthwhile. One gets the feeling that brains were wasted on them. So, what is it that makes an intelligently productive person?

This is not an uncommon observation, and I have even heard it expressed by members of MENSA. It is one of their self-perceived problems, one for which some have offered theories or rationalizations. The most typical is that they are so gifted that too many subjects attract their intellectual interest and they can never commit themselves to any particular interest. It could also be that individuals drawn toward membership in MENSA are a selective subset of the gifted population, individuals lacking in focus. After all, most highly gifted individuals do not join MENSA. [*Intellectual Talent : Psychometric and Social Issues* (1997), edited by Camilla Persson Benbow & David Lubinski] {My underline added.}

I only belonged to Intertel for 3-4 years, but I went to their annual gatherings every year until I gave up on them (simply due to inactivity in the journal, which lost contributions of new material). I did notice that when I was with the group, in person, there was a much greater maturity of discussion and sobriety than found in Mensa.

As the entrance requirement increases, I have found that there are more people who are interesting, competent in technical fields, and who have become long term friends.

Unfortunately, that increase is accompanied by the subset of obnoxious members setting new records for repulsiveness. I have not seen this same distribution of personalities in my work. As I explained in my first questions, my career was spent with mostly technical people (physics, engineering, and a few miscellaneous science fields). It may happen that the demands of both education and work in the nuclear reactor business acts as a personality filter, producing a different mix of people from those found in high IQ clubs.

Jensen responded to a few text interviews from high IQ groups. His comments are worth reading, not only because of his prominence, but also for his style-choice of words:

Discussions on Genius and Intelligence Interview with Dr. Arthur Jensen. Mega Press, Eastport, New York

Arthur Jensen: Its hard to imagine how a group of high-IQ people with little else in common besides their IQ and probably differing in many other ways perhaps even more than a random sample of the population can do much to effect social change or carry out and large project with a unified aim.

An interview with Dr. Arthur Jensen by Steve Coy

Dr. Arthur Jensen: The interaction of ability level with interests and lifestyle confounds selection. I daresay you will find few Mensa or Mega members with few or no intellectual interests, for example, although there may be people out there in the population who are very bright but have few such interests. There is also self-selection at the top end. How many Nobel Prize winners, or members of the National Academy of Sciences are in any of the high IQ societies? I was struck by the fact that the Berkeley chapter of Mensa, with its many members, had only one

member who was on the faculty of UC Berkeley, although I'm sure some large percentage of them could qualify if they wished to join. And I know a Nobel Prize winner who was invited to join Mensa, but he had no interest in it and declined the invitation. It has been my (untested) impression that if IQ and achievement could be correlated in the whole population, members of HI-IQ societies would be among those who tend to lower the correlation, falling below the regression line (of achievement regressed on IQ). Most conventional IQ tests have a general knowledge-achievement component which makes the test an amalgam of both ability and achievement and particularly skews the high end of the IQ distribution.

Jacobsen: Have there been efforts to calculate the expected probability of genius at higher and higher cognitive rarities?

Williams: In the numerous articles I have read about genius, I have not encountered an estimate of the probability of a person being born with the rare combination of genes that lead to genius. There are some obvious problems. One is defining where to draw the line between genius and not genius. As long as you are dealing with the most distinguished individuals (at the level of Einstein, Bach, and Picasso) there is no problem. But when you want to count, who do you count and who do you skip? Perhaps the 4002 listed in *Human Accomplishment* is about as good as one can do, largely because they were identified by an objective and quantifiable method. [The worldwide number comes out to fewer than 1.5 per year.] Then things become quite muddy... we might argue that the production of genius has been a variable over time. There is reason to believe that mean intelligence (at least in developed nations) has been a variable. Dutton and Woodley discussed this in *At Our Wits' End: Why We're Becoming Less Intelligent*. They also speculated that we are producing fewer and fewer geniuses, due mostly to the decline in mean intelligence, and that this will have a profound impact on the progression of mankind as it relates to innovation. My personal feeling is that this analysis may be overstated because we have entered a new paradigm, based on powerful computer resources and artificial intelligence that will undoubtedly change how people innovate and carry out cognitive tasks.

In the distant future, geneticists may be able to calculate the probability of a rare set of genetic variants appearing in a population. As of today, they have finally found 1,200 single nucleotide polymorphisms associated with intelligence, but these account for only about a 10% effect size. It may be even more difficult to find the variants necessary for the other traits, making the problem overwhelming until a powerful new approach becomes available.

Jacobsen: Now, the next triplet tie to ideas proposed about intelligence (covered a bit in the previous two sessions) and genius as laid out above, how do the works of Howard Gardner attempt to address genius? How do these efforts succeed? How do they fail?

Williams: Gardner was interested in creativity and occasionally mentioned creativity in connection with genius. He may have produced significant works relating to genius, but they have not come to my attention. He did discuss the aspects of personality that are often associated with genius and which are well known to relate to the typical non-social and sometimes abrasive behaviors of the people we all know for their monumental works. He also wrote *Creating Minds* (1993) in which he did a detailed description of seven geniuses, each selected to exemplify one of his multiple intelligences. The irony of this is that his model is based on individual examples of what he claimed were each a different kind of intelligence, but he based his model on people well outside of the range of "normal," while appealing to those normal people to accept his abnormal model. [The seven people selected: T. S. Eliot, Albert Einstein, Pablo Picasso,

Igor Stravinsky, Martha Graham, Mahatma Gandhi, and Sigmund Freud.]

Gardner is in a category that is highly regarded by the general public and not by many serious intelligence researchers. The multiple intelligences model is apparently loved by those who see it as “fair.” Researchers know that there is nothing fair about Mother Nature.

Jacobsen: How do the works of Robert Sternberg attempt to address genius? How do these efforts succeed? How do they fail?

Williams: Unlike Gardner, Sternberg was more involved in matters relating to genius. He was, for example, the editor of the *Handbook of Creativity* (Cambridge), which included some discussion of genius. The problem is that, like Gardner, Sternberg had a personal invention on the line and was inclined to make that (the Triarchic Theory) the centerpiece of whatever he wrote. The theory was not sound, as demonstrated by Linda Gottfredson, so that carries over to how I see his comments. Per my prior comments, the net observations of genius from all sources remain descriptive and do not tell us much about the underlying genetics and neurology of genius. It’s a case of *we know it when we see it*, but we can’t explain it from the biological perspective.

Jacobsen: How do the works of Arthur Jensen building on Charles Spearman attempt to address genius? How do these efforts succeed? How do they fail?

Williams: Jensen’s comments on genius strike me as being as good as any that can be found. He believed that the *necessary, but not sufficient* traits combine in genius at maximum values and that they have a multiplicative effect. I bought the book *Intellectual Talent : Psychometric and Social Issues* (1997), edited by Camilla Persson Benbow & David Lubinski, just to read the last chapter by Jensen. He described genius as ability at the upper end of a J-curve, which can be thought of as a logarithmic increase. In *Human Accomplishment*, Murray also addressed the extreme nature of genius but called it the Lotka Curve. Both signify that almost all points relating to high achievement group together, while a few are so far from the rest that they exist in a stratospheric space.

Jacobsen: What are the questions remaining about genius? In particular, what are the unknown, though potentially somewhat known, relations between intelligence, personality, and creativity, and genius?

Williams: We cannot describe or even effectively study the genius brain or genome. There simply are not enough such brains to find and explore. There also seems to be a lack of interest in this among neurologists who have the technology to probe a brain. The only person I know who has imaged various atypical high achievers is Roberto Colom. But the instances I am aware of relate to sports figures and some creative artists. I would most like to see someone do a comprehensive study of David Lynch, as an example of the most creative level of the arts (cinema). There are various Nobel laureates (physics and chemistry) who would seem to me to be examples of the top minds in science, but I don’t think they are being studied. One thing that concerns me about such a project is the age of the person being studied. I would think the best age would be in the 25 to 35 year old range because the brain is typically functioning at its best then. Would Lynch be too old? Most likely the effort that would be required for such a project would be unattractive to many researchers.

The limited information that we have about Einstein’s brain at least tells us that his brain was highly atypical, as compared to the brains that have been studied in modern times. It would be interesting to see if any of his special properties (brain width, elevated glial cell fraction, and a

few Brodmann Area size anomalies) can be found in other people and whether they show special cognitive abilities.

The other thing that I consider to be not fully resolved is the relationship between intelligence and creativity. The measurements that produce small correlations were done by correlating such things as the alternate uses test against IQ. Related to the appropriateness of the measures is whether there is a difference between artistic creativity and scientific creativity. Both allow for exploration (try this, then that) but I think that scientific creativity has to be significantly related to knowledge and understanding of the thing being studied.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Retired Nuclear Physicist.

[2] Individual Publication Date: March 15, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/williams-3>;
Full Issue Publication Date: May 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 Michael Baker on Blue Collar Labour, Geniuses, Deism, Collective Intelligence, and His Dog: Member, CIVIQ Society (1)

2021-03-15

Michael Baker is a Member of the CivIQ Society, SPIQR, EPIDA, ISI-S, Logiq, IQuadrivium, EPIQ, and IIS. He has sat on numerous executive boards, given more than 100 educational presentations and keynotes, represented the Pennsylvania Department of Education in sharing updates on the Classrooms for the Future program to the US Congress, and been recognized by the National School Board Association as a 20 to Watch in Education. He discusses: growing up; a sense of an extended self; the family background; the experience with peers and school-mates; some professional certifications; the purpose of intelligence tests; high intelligence discovered; 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; work experiences and jobs; particular job path; the gifted and geniuses; God; science; the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations); the range of the scores; ethical philosophy; social philosophy; economic philosophy; political philosophy; metaphysics; philosophical system; meaning in life; meaning externally derived, internally generated; an afterlife; the mystery and transience of life; and love.

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

Michael Baker[1],[2]*: Growing up, my family was made up of steelworkers, construction workers, coal miners, and laborers. I was drilled on the idea of working smart not hard. My family didn't hide their faults and frequently modeled how to be a better person. All of my family encouraged me to be something different.

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

Baker: Each day, I follow in the footsteps of my family's encouragement. Although far from perfect, I hope to set an example for the next generation. This is what gives me purpose.

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

Baker: I spent some of my youth in the middle class and another in poverty. The plight of the steel mills in Western Pennsylvania impacted a lot of local families in this way. We were not an academically focused family, but curious and happy. Religion never played a true role in my upbringing. Although I've always felt myself a deist, formal religion was never ingrained in me.

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

Baker: I was quiet but curious. I would have never stood out. I think I was in second grade when we were first given a large group aptitude test. Although I was an amazingly normal student, the school took interest in me after receiving my score. I was placed in the advanced classes and started to be exposed to a lot of new experiences. I found my best friends through these classes. My classmates were deep and knew so much more than me. Because we were a small school, I stayed with most of the dozen or fewer students throughout high school. My friends

didn't ask if I would go to college. They asked what I was planning on majoring in and where would I go. Being from a family that didn't have any previous college students, my peers gave me the drive to chase a dream I didn't know I had. I am proof that your circle of friends can have a greater impact on your life than even your family.

Jacobsen: What have been some professional certifications, qualifications, and trainings earned by you?

Baker: I have undergraduate degrees in Elementary and Early Childhood Education and a minor in Music with emphases in Math and Science. I received my Master's Degree in Curriculum and Technology and just recently I finished some post-graduate work in Computational Thinking.

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

Baker: They gave me opportunities when nobody seemed to notice me.

Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?

Baker: In my youth, the only real test I took was a group test called the OLSAT. I think I was in 7th grade. I missed 1 on the test and outscored all of the gifted students. When I first started college, I intended to be an engineer. I took an aptitude test on mechanical ability and was one of a handful of students who receive the 99th percentile. When I took my first psychology course, our professor gave us the Ravens Progressive Matrices test and he told me privately I received the highest score he has ever had in his classes. To this day, I have no idea what 'my number' really is. I know I have some natural talents, but am ok with the mystery of my ranking!

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.

Baker: Intellect is only one piece of the equation. Social and emotional intelligence help to harness support and collective intelligence. Many people smarter than me can lack humility and openness to different ideas. I try to categorize problems into quantitative and qualitative buckets. In much of science and mathematics, quantitative solutions can be expressed in a binary way. In the humanities and society, we see more qualitative problems. The solutions can be infinite and require relationships, empathy, and popularity to ignite the wisdom of the crowds. Being smart will always make a larger impact when you are likable. Innovations only need to be driven by quantitative solutions.

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

Baker: People like Rosa Parks, Grace Hopper, Upton Sinclair, or anyone else that breaks the functional fixedness society establishes over time. They are people that conquer qualitatively problems with lasting impact.

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

Baker: A genius changes the world and leaves his/her footprints for future generations to follow.

Jacobsen: Is profound intelligence necessary for genius?

Baker: No. Henry Ford was considered to have average intelligence and Andy Worhol was considered dull. The very idea the reader knows these names speak volumes about their impact.

Jacobsen: What have been some work experiences and jobs held by you?

Baker: For the majority of my work career, I have had the honor to teach elementary students. First computers and about 6 years ago, I began teaching STEM. As a youth, I worked in construction, the steel industry, labor, and a number of side jobs. The entire time, my family reminded me these were only temporary until I started my career.

Jacobsen: Why pursue this particular job path?

Baker: You have the greatest impact as a teacher on younger students.

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

Baker: The first myth would be that they are easy to spot. I have grown to understand the dunning-kruger effect. Many people focus attention on confidence and accolades when deciding whom to place their trust. I have found passion and empathy to better ingredients in the crowd I prefer to follow.

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

Baker: I feel comfortable in calling myself a deist. If I am wrong, I chalk that up to my human imperfection. I do respect the importance of all religions. In many ways, religion solves a lot of qualitative problems caused when groups lack faith.

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

Baker: Science is life. I understand so little but can learn so much from just listening to those that are curious.

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

Baker: My lowest score came in second grade on the Stanford Ability Test 127. This is the test that changed my trajectory in life. The OLSAT was 143. The Ravens was 150+. I really enjoy the tests created by Ivan Ivec and have several of my performances listed on his site. My favorite test I ever took was the SLSE by Jonathan Wai. I felt my 150+ score was an accomplishment. Although I don't share my results with anyone in my direct life, I enjoy seeing my ability to push myself and think deeper.

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.

Baker: Since college, I typically range between 147-157 on tests I take.

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

Baker: The Golden Rule exists in almost every religion for a reason. Collective intelligence is proven to be the most consistent path to long-term success. This is why my philosophy is to be nice and try to empathize with everyone you meet.

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

Baker: Concepts like the Diffusion of Innovation and the Tragedy of the Commons have been very useful in understanding why some things succeed while others fail.

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

Baker: Money doesn't really exist. All economies are based on trust and faith. Be careful when trust and faith are fractured.

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

Baker: *e pluribus unum* – Out of many one. In the US, our founding fathers understood the importance of group decisions and diversity of power. I'm not so sure the US always remembers its roots. This concerns me for the future.

Jacobsen: What metaphysics makes some sense to you, even the most workable sense to you?

Baker: Things are the way they are until we say otherwise. =)

Jacobsen: What worldview-encompassing philosophical system makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?

Baker: I've always been a believer in collective intelligence. This concept only works when you have leadership that can focus on the qualitative needs of the group without personal gain or bias. Movements that promote elitism gather strong support from the group but fail to spread beyond the entitled. Our future is together. This would be the antithesis of an Orwellian view. A society that promotes every individual's purpose will always be stronger than a group that attempts to define how each person should live their lives.

Jacobsen: What provides meaning in life for you?

Baker: Helping others

Jacobsen: Is meaning externally derived, internally generated, both, or something else?

Baker: I guess I enjoy the Oxytocin boost, but I like to think I make the world a little better each day.

Jacobsen: Do you believe in an afterlife? If so, why, and what form? If not, why not?

Baker: I don't think life is a line, line segment, or ray in time. You focus on what you can at each moment and work towards goals for the future. Neural pruning does a nice job of helping us forget and re-invent the past. I guess the afterlife is created from the waves you make that help carry the future voyagers forward on this pale blue dot.

Jacobsen: What do you make of the mystery and transience of life?

Baker: It's a story you read and write as you go. There is always something exciting only a page away!

Jacobsen: What is love to you?

Baker: My family – including my dog.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Member, CivIQ Society; Member, SPIQR; Member, EPIDA; Member, ISI-S; Member, Logiq; Member, IQuadrivium; Member, EPIQ; Member, IIS.

[2] Individual Publication Date: March 15, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/baker-1>;
Full Issue Publication Date: May 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.

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 (3)

2021-03-15

***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 identification of the gifted students in Norway; Norwegian education; Norway improving its education; early childhood education; Mensa Norway; age limits and provisions for the youngest members of Mensa Norway; the upper limit of the measurements of the Mensa Norway proctored and accepted tests; Mensa Norway and the high-range test community; e of the barriers to the coordination and cooperation of the high-range communities with Mensa International or Mensa Norway and the consideration of the high-range community.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: In terms of the identification of the gifted students in Norway, what are the ways in which to spot them?

Erik Haereid[1]*: Norway is an egalitarian society, where the Law of Jante rules. It's a lot about suppressing each other, unless the common voice allows the single individual to shine. (I love my people, but I dislike this trait.) That happens with a few, who are marked as ideals. Concerning intelligence, we talk about Magnus Carlsen, who looks good, is young, eccentric and the world's best in chess. But there are more than 100.000 persons in Norway with Mensa entrance-IQ-level and higher. The main problem is not to spot them, but wanting to keep focusing on them.

Until the society internalizes that there is no threat by providing gifted students an opportunity to evolve, like the society lets many of the cross-country skiers and other athletes do, it will suppress gifted people. It's about changing views, from feeling personal threat to accept that one can profit on nurturing intelligent and gifted children and students. We have to see the benefits. The benefits by top-athletes are clear to us; people start jogging and feel happy, without comparing themselves like in a competition with those athletes. People have to do the same with gifted people. It's about respect, about that some are smarter or more gifted in some areas than themselves, and about that they don't lose worth because of that; on the contrary.

Tor Arne Jørgensen[2]*: Based on the task of “discovering” these most capable students, the general knowledge in our own country of Norway is at best very limited within the field of orientation. However, it should be said that some progress is being made and a few but obvious tell-tale signs can be found, that in turn is viewed as both highlighted as clear indicators, and representative to reveal of subject matter accordingly:

1. The search for older friends/adults whom can meet them more intellectually.
2. Constantly searching for new information and learning.
3. Extended vocabulary, and early understanding of literacy, etc...
4. Stagnating school teaching bores these students, as they constantly need new and innovative teachings that again can enable the teacher to capture their brilliant intellects.

5. The imprint of the apparent cliché coated notation of a “class clown” is often used about these students, whereby one prejudices oneself in the fear of not standing out as the clever student that everyone wants to pick on.
6. Lastly, the overly recognizable designation of «Drop-out» whereby the system fails to catch these students dropping out from schools altogether.

Eivind Olsen[3],[4]: Parents often “know”, but at the same time, parents can also be blinded by the feeling that *their* kid is special. Teachers will also “know”, but there’s not always resources to test the kids. Testing of kids normally happen if either the parents are willing to pay for it at a psychologist, or if the kid is “acting out” in class. There’s no widespread testing so many go undetected.

Jacobsen: How does Norway educate them?

Haereid: Like the others.

Jørgensen: Firstly, Norway does almost nothing to educate these gifted students. Will by that proclaim my statement for the purpose as to address the primary school education system in Norway, by way of exemplifying a purpose directed status quo, as to point out its direct relevance based on which has the greatest impact on these students due to their relatively long education, spanning from early childhood to early adolescence. My personal experiences are by that notation, that the Norwegian schools seem to be knowledge-oriented impaired when it comes to the theme about gifted students, with reference to their innate teaching requirements to get an adapted, as well as purpose-oriented, by implicit targeted schooling. The Norwegian education systems extremely lack knowledge, and extremely lack commitment in order to focus on these students is by that, nothing short of horrible.

I have addressed this issue before in my article in the religious high IQ magazine; Deus Vult, whereby I pointed out a tremendous skewed distribution of resources, according to the learning of weak students who receive full coverage of teacher staffing, and sharpened knowledge tools that follow their specially adapted educational courses from kindergarten level up to and out of high school level. This follow-up system does not include these gifted students, not in the least, at best these gifted students are transferred to a school level above their original school level, or, as in most cases left to fend for themselves, because as the school management always says: “These school-savvy are so self-driven”. When I took my practical pedagogical education (PPU) at the University of Notodden in the South-East of Norway, a fellow student group in pedagogy did a research assignment, that dealt with these gifted students and looked for what type of school programs that was purpose intended and directed at gifted students at these schools. Use of method, was to seek out what type of general knowledge there was to be found in some selected schools in central Norway.

Their findings corresponded to what I expected them to find with regards to my daily profession as a teacher, that these schools had no knowledge of what their obligations were, nor as to what they could do to properly guide these gifted students in their educational course. The Norwegian Directorate of Education (UDIR) has just recently taken up a separate section, where these gifted students appear with vague concretes in accordance with what the primary and lower secondary schools themselves must commit to in accordance with the gifted student educational program and the rights that follow these programs.

In terms of educating these gifted students who represent around 10% of the total number of students in Norway, the Norwegian schools violate these mandatory rights of the gifted students daily! I hope that in the future I can have the opportunity to shed some light on this enormous problem in order to help these gifted students achieving their full potential on an equal footing with regards to the learning weak students at the other end of the intelligence spectrum. This is principle-based on the human rights act, that all children are entitled to the same education according to their inherent abilities. We must therefore now, establish equality before the law for all students, weak and strong!

Olsen: The teachers in the regular school system often don't have time, resources or knowledge to handle gifted children. When they do, though, they frequently end up giving the kids more tasks, which might almost be seen as some form of punishment. "Oh, you're done already? Here, solve these equations as well." In some cases, kids have been allowed to skip a year. Gifted children are not legally guaranteed to get individually adjusted education, that seems to be reserved for the ones struggling in the other end of the pond.

There has been talks about opening up private schools for gifted children, but so far that hasn't happened either. It seems easy enough to open a private school if it's based on religion or sports though, but not when it's based on intellectual giftedness/potential.

Jacobsen: How could Norway improve its education of them?

Haereid: First, accepting the gifted ones, then providing additional environments that give them the necessary freedom to use their abilities. It's more about a cultural acceptance of extra provisions, than removing the children or students from the others.

It's about making them feel good, to take charge of themselves and the society, and mix it to a social and common advantage. Creating egocentric capitalists and opportunists is not wanted. I guess this is one possible consequence the authorities are afraid of by making too severe divisions into an already steady egalitarian educational and welfare-system, which already functions quite well concerning the economy.

Jørgensen: Here I must first point out by directing focus on some of the issues mentioned above about the various components that include, the point-by-point concrete references of previously exemplified paragraphs, that this is just one of many ways to recognize that there is an actual problem that must be dutifully addressed according to its severity. But before all this can be started, a serious policy must be properly place, whereby The Norwegian Directorate of Education (UDIR), must have its direct guidelines presented by key political actors, so the way forward is to then properly place the impoder [sic] of the case promoted by proposals and implementation by and for these implementation statutes. Next, the articles of association must be made subjects to the Education Act with a direct reference to immediate measures for these gifted students.

But sadly with regards to the educational policy about these gifted students in schools today whereby an in-depth continuing debate may be presented in its entirety, one experiences that going further into a complementary political debate at the present time may seem futile for now. Will by that notion rather present an expectant hope, that the correct political bodies can now have its final awakening surrounding the debate about gifted students as to the ongoing neglect and ineffective schooling at the expense of negligent involvement on the part of key political actors within school policy, whereby an ongoing skewed distribution is based on prevailing school policy surrounding the Norwegian gifted students in todays schooling programs.

Olsen: It would help if gifted children were legally entitled to individually adjusted education.

Jacobsen: What are some of the things that can help with early childhood education of the profoundly gifted, arguably the most sensitive ability category and exceptional ability category due to significant and obvious mentation differences from same-age peers?

Haereid: I am not sure to which degree one should split very young humans from each other. Everyone needs friends, and to feel socially connected. But assimilation is about using what one has, to everyone's advantage. It's not only about how to exploit giftedness, but how to use it for mankind's best. It's not a lack of motivation or to find the right path that is the main problem for the gifted child. The challenge is to provide circumstances that make this motivation endure.

To deny a profoundly gifted child its opportunities is as devastating as deny that child a normal social contact. Children need to play and have fun together. If parents and the adult society force prodigies to nurture their gift, it could end as catastrophic as forcing them to be normal.

As a system, one could give gifted children the opportunity to use their abilities, as in separated classes and with special teachers, some hours during the week, and at the same time imprint to the other children that this is not bad for them. I think this has to do with focusing on the other children's abilities as well. The problem occurs when some define some children better than others, and not by defining some as good at something and others at other things.

Jørgensen: Since there are no clear guidelines within Norwegian public education, hereby understood as the Norwegian Directorate of Education (UDIR) and their exercise of diligence. The Directorate of Education is perceived as then of an weakening confidence, both in terms of idealistic and innovative innovations within the mentioned topic. Consequently, this is justified on the basis of their deficient appropriate indicators, which are indicatively strongly attached within their subsequent specific declarations minted directly at these gifted students and their God-given right to equal education. Thus promoted, as well as desirably presented, to be consolidated in accordance with the same principled statutes as to what their counterpart receives, hereby referring to the special education law's statutory directives within Norwegian schools regarding student base recipients of special education.

Summed up, an explicit repeal of targeted legislation must be clarified on a point-by-point basis in the Education Act, where scholastic clearing implicators are given with the applicable indicative ratifications regarding; subject material, earmarked for state support by newly acquired competent pedagogical personnel who in turn can carry out targeted pedagogical activities, by and for gifted pupils in Norwegian schools with the assurance of equal education by «all» students hereby enshrined in the Norwegian Education Act.

Olsen: Personally, I believe that broader testing of all the pupils (not just of the "troublemakers") and following up on the results would be an improvement. Sure, it would require more resources initially but I think it would pay off eventually.

Jacobsen: How does Mensa Norway deal with these issues?

Haereid: Eivind is the best man to answer this.

Jørgensen: This is best answered by Mr Olsen.

Olsen: We have our gifted children resource group that are working on this. As I mentioned previously, we've sent answers on a hearing regarding a suggested new law for education. And we

have initiated a process to bring more information about gifted children to the schools and teachers, with one major point being that they shouldn't assume that every gifted child will be fine on their own, "after all, they're gifted so they'll figure it out by themselves".

Jacobsen: What are the age limits and provisions for the youngest members of Mensa Norway?

Haereid: Eivind...

Jørgensen: Do not know.

Olsen: The only qualifications needed to become a member initially is to have taken a valid intelligence test showing them to be in the top 2 %, and to pay the membership fee. There are no other eligibility requirements, such as age limits. That being said, we don't have a very large percentage of non-adult members. This gives us the "chicken and egg"-problem; it can be tricky to provide for the social aspect when there's not that many members in your own age group. There are other organisations that are focusing more on providing a social environment for the gifted children, such as Lykkelige Barn ("Happy children", <https://www.lykkeligebarn.no/>). We're more than happy to inform people about them, even if we're not formally affiliated with them.

Jacobsen: What is the upper limit of the measurements of the Mensa Norway proctored and accepted tests, so the range of scores with the appropriate standard deviation?

Haereid: I don't know.

Jørgensen: Again best answered by the Mensa Norway leader.

Olsen: The proctored test we provide has an upper limit of "IQ 135 or higher, at SD 15". This is sufficient for our use, and for what most people would need. As for the other accepted tests: it depends. There are several, but we don't have a complete list. Accepting (or not) external tests is the prerogative of our test psychologist.

I believe the normal WISC and WAIS tests go up to 160, with SD 15 as well.

Jacobsen: How can Mensa Norway and the high-range test community coordinate or work together more in some early steps of cooperation if not done at this time?

Haereid: My impression is that Mensa Norway is skeptical to this environment, not at least because they don't rely on the authenticity of the tests, the norms, if the testees cooperate with someone and so on. It's a homage to the cemented psychometric accepted tools, and a corresponding contempt for tests aspiring to measure intelligence, e.g. the amateur tests made by people who, some of them, scores among the highest on Mensa-accepted tests (like CFIT and WAIS).

One step is to create stricter IQ-norms and tests in the HR-environment. That could be done by constituting a leadership, an instance inside HR that put stars, like Michelin, on tests concerning their validity and reliability, and establishing common norms on those best tests (let's say with 1, 2 or 3 stars). Then we could exclude the bad tests and every norm made by single creators.

A second step is to evolve some kind of control as to untimed tests. I think these tests are valuable because they measure something more than the timed "easy" ones. All proctored and accepted tests are timed. IQexams.net is a place that strives for something like this; they combine timed and untimed tests, and stretch for uniform norms.

I think a cooperation would be groundbreaking, and a step towards acceptance of more types of

IQ-tests aiming to measure intelligence. Maybe the psychometricians, the psychologists, would disagree, because of the so far unstable construction of the HR-tests. But I think such a cooperation could benefit the whole IQ-environment in the long run.

Jørgensen: In the hope of experiencing some kind of early coexistence between Mensa Norway and the high-range community. Then a more sober lying policy must be in place first according to high-range communities within, whereby the implementations of body's intentions depend on creating stability, as well as the correctness of their individual-based leading figurants with subsequent targeted infinities.

Only when this is in place, then one can look over to the "other" side to put it that way, in the sense of being beyond one's own statute. The engraving species functional tasks are then understood out of its prominent being, where entrusted to its declaring mandate that a possible cooperation can be produced according to its organist functionalists consisting constructs.

Olsen: That's a difficult question to answer, as there doesn't really seem to be much of an active high-range IQ community in Norway. Perhaps the best suggestion I can give is the obvious one: join Mensa Norway, and put in some effort in the areas you wish. We're more than happy to support initiatives that align with our constitutional goals.

Jacobsen: What seem like some of the barriers to the coordination and cooperation of the high-range communities with Mensa International or Mensa Norway, in particular, if taking into account many members of the high-range communities remain members of Mensa International via local or national representatives or chapters?

Haereid: Attaining more mutual respect. To gain respect you have to listen and look. And the first issue is as mentioned about the tests' credibility.

Jørgensen: Well the foremost barrier concepts between their polarized thiographic discrepancy hereby understood as Mensa International on one side, and the high-range communities on the other side. Will by that, start by addressing the explicitly construct with regards to their metro-nome autocratic forums, whereby it is presented within a presumed alienated statute surrounded by its self-exalted status to which the contaminating paradox is implied. The assessment of its legislative conditions of one's identity is therefore produced through the consideration of its leading discrepancy consequently as a basis for the question formulated constructs. What does this mean, well simply explained, one must first clarify the grounds of factualization by the extent of which a common unionization is indeed feasible.

Secondly, hereby promotively understood by and for the leading homonymous fortifications and if it can again be proven realizable through a unification of the pole oriented structures regarding the conglomerate respectalizing and their processes, hereby promoted through their tentative extracts as to a possible positive outcome of respectable unionization between Mensa International and the high-range community. As for the outcome of unification of these polarized opponents, well one can only hope for a positive result in the end.

Olsen: For Norway, I think the problem is as mentioned in the previous answer: there just doesn't seem to be any active high-range community here outside of Mensa Norway. If one such community were to exist, I might have had a more informative answer. As for the international scene, I don't know whether there has been attempts at contact or why that didn't come to fruition.

Jacobsen: What would make the consideration of the high-range community more serious

within the regular mainstream testing community of Mensa International and others? How could Norway be a leader in this?

Haereid: Creating a leadership, common norms, “Michelin” stars on tests depending of factors that make a test as best as possible, timed or untimed. One problem is that “everyone” creates tests, and make norms, and there are no or just a little supervision or control. The statistical measures are not sufficient. But there are huge differences between the tests, and some authors are more into psychometrics than others. There should be some kind of qualification mark on the tests.

I think the Swedish guy Hans Sjöberg has started a good job here (creator of IQExams.net). The HR community has to establish some common rules, and in cooperation with Mensa or professional psychometricians that want and believe in a future HR-environment with more serious tests gathered under an umbrella.

Jørgensen: Firstly, I guess that from Mensa International point of view with reference of recognition of its overall standard towards the high-range community, is hereby executive exemplary shown accordingly by the fact that the high-range communities is not perceived as a matter of nonsense, but could rather be considered hereby understood as a type of «social camaraderie», whereby means through common interests can lift the impletory impressions outwardly for the common good.

This can only be done by clarifying the «awareness of responsibility” by the high-range communities’ own standards through the equality of a uniform expression brought forward out of respect by one’s own reformatted forum. Only if this proves to be feasible, then the road can be laid further, where mutual understanding and recognition receive the necessary main focus that in turn may seem like the foundation of a hereby understood unison format.

Secondly, regarding Mensa Norway’s possibilities of lead a conglomerate of different online communities towards a conciliatory unison forum. Well if one can hereby look at the stamp of professionalism at its central core, with the understandable purpose of agreeing on common political values, where mutual respect, test correlations and their subsequent implicit functions fulfilled by allowing itself to come into play. Furthermore, to create a new platform that can also act as an intermediary between Mensa International and the high-range community, whereby the best of both worlds can create a new foundation that in turn can be distributed back outwards onto both sides by reasons as to strengthen the grassroots movement by preeminent purpose as to recruit on further, then we will bear witness of the proper consolidation.

Olsen: I’m not sure. We can’t make use of / accept the various high-range IQ tests until they’re accepted by our test psychologists (both nationally and internationally), and that’s probably not going to happen without a solid foundation, proper norming, etc.

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.

He did his military duty in His Majesty The King's Guard ([Drilltroppen](#)).

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.

He earned an M.Sc. degree in Statistics and Actuarial Sciences in 1991, and worked as an actuary novice/actuary from 1987 to 1995 in several Norwegian Insurance companies. He was the Academic Director (1998-2000) of insurance at the [BI Norwegian Business School](#) (1998-2000), Manager (1997-1998) of business insurance, life insurance, and pensions and formerly Actuary (1996-1997) at [Nordea](#) in Oslo Area, Norway, a self-employed Actuary Consultant (1996-1997), an Insurance Broker (1995-1996) at Assurance Centeret, Actuary (1991-1995) at [Alfa Livsforsikring](#), novice Actuary (1987-1990) at [UNI Forsikring](#).

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 was 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.

[2] Tor Arne Jørgensen is a member of 50+ high IQ societies, including World Genius Directory, NOUS High IQ Society, 6N High IQ Society just to name a few. He has several IQ scores above 160+ sd15 among high range tests like Gift/Gene Verbal, Gift/Gene Numerical of Iakovos Koukas and Lexiq of Soulios.

Tor Arne was also in 2019, nominated for the World Genius Directory 2019 Genius of the Year – Europe. He is the only Norwegian to ever have achieved this honor. He has also been a contributor to the Genius Journal Logicon, in addition to being the creator of toriqtests.com, where he is the designer of now eleven HR-tests of both verbal/numerical variant.

His further interests are related to intelligence, creativity, education developing regarding gifted students. Tor Arne has an bachelor's degree in history and a degree in Practical education, he works as a teacher within the following subjects: History, Religion, and Social Studies.

[3] Eivind Olsen is the current chair of Mensa Norway. He has scored "135 or higher" (SD15) on the test used by Mensa Norway. He has also previously been tested with WISC-R and Raven's. He recently took the MOCA test and aced it. When he's not busy herding cats, he works in IT. He sometimes spends time with family and friends.

Eivind Olsen is a member of Mensa Norway since 2014, having filled various roles since then (chair of Mensa Bergen regional group, national test coordinator, deputy board member, and now chair).

He was born in Bergen, Norway, in 1976, but has lived in a few other places in Norway, including military service in the far north of the country.

Since he got bored at school and didn't have any real idea what he wanted to do, he took vocational school where he studied electronics repair. He has worked in a different field ever since (IT operations).

He is currently residing in Bergen, Norway, with his significant other, 2+2 offspring, 2 cats and a turtle.

[4] Individual Publication Date: March 15, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/norway-3>;
Full Issue Publication Date: May 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 Dr. Ricardo Rosselló Nevares on Ph.D. in Bioengineering, Science, Being the Governor of Puerto Rico (2017-2019), and Resignation and Lessons Learned: Former Governor, Puerto Rico (2)

2021-03-15

***Ricardo Rosselló Nevares** holds a PhD in Bioengineering and Biotechnology. He graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) with a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry and Biomedical Engineering with a concentration in Developmental Economics. Rosselló continued his academic studies at the University of Michigan, where he completed a master's degree and a PhD in Bioengineering and Biotechnology. After finalizing his doctoral studies, he completed post-doctoral studies in neuroscience at Duke University, in North Carolina, where he also served as an investigator. Dr. Rossello was a tenure track assistant professor for the University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus and Metropolitan University, teaching courses in medicine, immunology, and biochemistry. Dr. Rossello's scientific background and training also makes him an expert in important developing areas such as genetic manipulation and engineering, stem cells, viral manipulation, cancer, tissue engineering and smart materials. He discusses: moving past a Ph.D. into becoming governor of Puerto Rico and resigning from the position.*

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: So, you finished your education, you are away from your parents, you get your Ph.D. in bioengineering. Most people think, “Okay, this is a great capstone. I can get going with a straight tenure track job, do some research, and coast into retirement.” More things have happened!

Dr. Ricardo Rosselló[1],[2]*: Yes.

Jacobsen: What is the thought process following from the Ph.D.? Because these are the highest levels of education attainment that any national system provides. So, what was the thinking for you, once that was accomplished?

Rosselló: I love science. Although, I struggle: There's this strict analytical side and then this emerging observational type of new complexity being observed. I enjoy both of them. I think they are at odds at some points. I'd say: when I was done with my Ph.D., I thought that I wanted to continue an academic career – just move forward.

Then I stumbled upon this idea right after my Ph.D. to try a startup. It was very exciting. I must admit. It was new for me. Ultimately, it was not successful. I think the idea was fairly good at the time. Now, you can get all this information without that.

It was a way of extracting more information out of public opinion polling being had at that time. I stayed. I gave myself a year to try that. It didn't quite work. I sold my part in the company. I sort of need to reconnect with the pure science part of it.

I went to Duke to do a post-doc and get some grants, and practice before I applied to an academic position. Focusing on bioengineering principles, I focused on neuroscience, particularly this phenomena of the vocal learning pathway.

To this, it shows the beauty that I was speaking about before. There are all these connections. There's even an explanation for evolution, and so forth, but there are some traits that skip some

phylogeny. Vocal learning is one of them.

To briefly define it, not to make it about this, though, I find it interesting. Humans are vocal learning. Someone tells us something often enough; eventually, you'll spit it out. Our closest relatives are not. If you go back, bats are vocal learners. Whales are vocal learners. Songbirds are vocal learners. But close phylogeny to them are not vocal learners.

So, how did this property from really similar brains evolve? There's many theories. We were looking into them a lot. It is this concept of emergence. Evolution keeps tinkering, tinkering, tinkering, and then all of the sudden finds a way. Vocal learning was a very interesting stepping stone for me to comprehend all of this.

Because I don't think I'll ever be able to tap into this question. Obviously, to keep the curiosity juices flowing, the concept of consciousness is really the most complex version of these complexities that emerge. I did that for a while. I was in the States all throughout.

I finished it. I went and applied for an academic position in Puerto Rico. I got it. There's another parallel track, which is something that impassions me. It is the civil rights situation in Puerto Rico. Basically, to reduce it crudely, we are a part of the United States, but not an equal part.

We are a colonial territory. I was passionately linked to that. My family was linked to that. Up until that point, I was really engaged in politics whatsoever, but that issue in particular, to this day, sparks emotion and passion.

So when I got to Puerto Rico, naturally, worlds collide, I start getting involved in this question of how Puerto Rico, from our view, can become a state. My preferred solution is Puerto Rico becoming a state. The tough solution would be becoming something different than what we are not.

Ultimately, we have a say in what happens to the people of Puerto Rico. Then, as I got involved in it, I started seeing all the problems in the island. I started looking around at political cycles. My brain, using my scientific preparation, started seeing that really every political cycle that came and went; there were these promises. The promises were, essentially, the same, even from opposite ends of the political spectrum. For instance, everyone wants a better economy and everyone wants a better education.

The devil is in the details on how it goes. But based on how limited the public discussion is, you could argue there are more ways to get that, but you could argue there are more inaccuracies. Seeing that, unless, we broke with that way of doing things.

Things were going to be the same. Using Einstein's old adage, 'Madness is defined by people who do the same experiments and expect different results.' Not thinking about jumping into politics, I said, "What seems to me, there are complex problems in Puerto Rico. Nobody is touching them."

If I veer off, take a hold of me, I will try to come back. In the case of Puerto Rico, it had a fiscal and economic collapse. That not only wasn't like anything seen, barring Greece, in the world. It is a precautionary tale for countries moving forward and states if we're looking at the United States.

It is complex. It is not just going to be saved by the moxy of somebody saying, "We need more jobs. I'm going to create more jobs." We really need to dig in deep and question, "How are we going to do this?"

I said, “Let me set up a framework, so whoever runs can buy into it.” The framework was as follows. Let’s start preparing a long-term plan for Puerto Rico, that’s based on a 4-year path identifying the root cause problems.

People say, “The economy is a problem.” Sure, but what is the root of the problem? It is a symptom of other things occurring. Let’s land on these root problems, the second one was: Let’s see if we can go elsewhere, once we identify those problems, in the world, and see what are the best practices.

Even though, the idiosyncratic behaviour is different in the government structures. We can learn something from it, at the principle levee. Some of the guys and girls, and I, went to different countries. We went to Singapore, for example.

There, we studied a few something. Something called the T Government. What is called Urban Redevelopment Authority, which is really cool, we’re talking about how everywhere else infrastructure is falling down.

In Singapore, those guys solved it. They solved it 50 years ago. It is a long-term problem. You need long-term institutions to solve that, not those that change on the whims of politics every four years.

We went to Estonia to see, at the time, e-government. They were at the forefront at the time. We went to Finland to seen the education system to get best practices. We decided to do something, which was the turning point for me in running for office.

It was civic engagement. We went. The idea was: Let’s present what we think are the root-cause problems, and how they connect to what they feel everyday, let’s present what some other places are doing to tackle those problems, and let’s, maybe, present what we can do in Puerto Rico to see if it fits or not.

It was more a call for papers saying, “Hey, look at these things. Why don’t you help us find proposals for the island?” We did. I think it was very successful. At that point, when I decided to really go ahead and run for office, I was running against a guy who was a two-time congressman incumbent, clearly the leader of the party.

But I said, the crystallization moment, “I think this is a critical moment in the history of Puerto Rico. I think there are a lot of things that need to be done. A lot of those things may be hard to explain. But they need to do anyways.”

I don’t think anybody else will buy into this plan for Puerto Rico that we were doing. Long story short, I, through the moxy of that and engaging citizens, was able to squeak out a victory in the primaries by about 2%. I was able to squeak out a victory in the general election by about the same margin.

So, but what I had, which nobody else did before, was a great starting point to start executing reforms, I made everybody in our party sign a document saying that they would support the reforms. Otherwise, they would be kicked out of the party.

The problem: Not a lot of people read them, but they signed them because it was the thing to do. The first part of the administration, we were successful in enacting reform. We were able to push forward some external entities that have said that we were able to do more reform in 100 days than the previous 16 years combined.

It was, essentially, because we had the willpower before rather than arriving over there and starting to figure out what we wanted to do. It started moving along under the most challenging of circumstances. Puerto Rico, at that point, had a little under \$300,000,000 in the bank. To give a sense that pays for two payrolls, for about a month's worth of payrolls in Puerto Rico.

We have to figure out how get more money. We have to figure out how to kickstart the economy. At the same time, with our colonial history with the United States, six months before my administration; there was a fiscal oversight board, which was imposed in Puerto Rico.

So, lots of haggling, lots get done, by the end of Summer, as we were moving along, a black swan or a black elephant event occurs. We get struck, by not one but, two major hurricanes in Puerto Rico.

The first one was September 6, 2017. It was Hurricane Irma. We were able to bounce back quickly from that one. We were able to rescue 5,000 people from the neighbouring islands to give them support, help, and so forth.

The next was Hurricane Maria, which was, by *all* accounts, a 500- or 1,000-year storm. The strength of it, breadth of it, the complete devastation that it cost. It really set us back. As this thing was unfolding, I felt I had to work on three parallel tracks.

One, the immediate response, people were going to be dying, struggling for their lives. How do we stabilize that element? How could we provide food? How could we provide all these things? That lasted about 2 months, that period.

A typical storm lasts, maybe, a day. For us, it lasted two days. We had no electricity in any parts of the island. No way to communicate with anybody. Roads were clogged or broken down. Different to if this occurs in Vancouver or in Florida, neighbouring parts can come to the aid.

Neighbouring parts were disconnected by a sea. So, it took longer for them to get to Puerto Rico. That was the first phase. The second phase: How do we restore normalcy or a new normal? How do we recover from it?

That meant: When do we start schools? When does everybody have electricity again? The third phase, in my mind, the most exciting phase: the rebuild, how do we take this awful act of nature and try to turn it into something that we can build from?

The truth of matter is we now, or then, have the opportunity to rebuild effectively, to get a lot of federal funds more than ever, and redo our energy grid, redo our education system. That happened when we were getting to the normalization phase.

We went through a second phase of fundamental reforms on energy, on insurance, on poverty, on education, and so forth, to leverage the rebuilding and embed it into this new opportunity. I saw Puerto Rico. Some might find it crude. But we have a blank canvas now.

Pace-wise, instead of building Puerto Rico little by little, we can take a fell swoop at things and fix them. As things are moving forward, we're stabilizing, reducing the size of government, making some social reform changes.

We abolished – or I had to abolish – conversion therapies in Puerto Rico because the Congress didn't want to do it. So, I had to do it via executive order. We made equal pay for equal work for women. A lot was happening at the same time.

There was a sort of under-layer of resent and anger for, maybe, things I did, but also because of

the environment. Some people didn't have energy for a year. That's just ludicrous to think about in the 21st-century.

That was the situation through it all. With the impetus of trying to do reforms, I think I created a lot of enemies. I did an energy reform that would shift energy towards renewables. The petroleum companies were not too happy. Let's put it that way.

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Rosselló: Similar to a lot of things, coming through to the Summer of '19, some communications that I had with my government officials, close government officials, had inappropriate language. Of course, I regret using it.

Filtered out, all of the sudden, there was this perfect storm of things happening. Two months before, polls came out saying I would, essentially, win fairly easily if there was a re-election. Two months later, I had to take the determination to resign because of two things.

Number one, I was concerned about the safety of my family because there is a lot of emotion. I don't blame anyone. It is just what happens. I realized, even if I stayed, I couldn't do what I was supposed to do.

I did not have the wherewithal to execute the changes that I wanted to. So, if I stayed, I was, essentially, holding the island hostage for two more years. When push came to shove, obviously, after that, there were very unflattering things.

Obviously, part of my effort is correcting some of the record that were said. I made the decision, stayed about a week after – or 10 days approximately – to make the transition to give the opportunity for Puerto Rico to move forward.

Since then, I have stayed away. My mentality, I wanted to removed myself from the equation. Challenges still remain. Hopefully, things can move forward. It has been an interesting life. Obviously, during this process, I've reconnected, somewhat, with academia as well – doing some other things.

One of the things that I want to do based on my experience: share those experiences and tackle some of the mistakes I made, so other people can learn from them. Hopefully, Puerto Rico can be a cautionary tale for other jurisdictions of how these things unravel very quickly if you're not paying attention to them.

That's a longwinded – sorry if I overextended – account of what happened. There's many other ways to spiral this. Of course, I will answer any questions coming to mind. That's, essentially, an overview of what went along.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Former Governor, Puerto Rico.

[2] Individual Publication Date: March 15, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/rossello-2>;
Full Issue Publication Date: May 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 Donald Wayne Stoner on Family, Life, Love, and Reality: Member, Epimetheus Society

2021-03-22

Donald Wayne Stoner is an Author, a Physicist, and a Software Engineer. He is a Member of the Epimetheus Society and One-in-a-Thousand Society. He discusses: growing up; family legacy; the rest of the family; experience with peers and schoolmates; professional certifications, qualifications, and trainings; some work experiences; job path; important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses; myths that pervade the cultures of the world; treatment of geniuses; the greatest geniuses in history; purpose of intelligence tests; high intelligence; some of the tests taken and scores earned; the range of the scores; a genius from a profoundly intelligent person; the God concept; science; ethical philosophy; social philosophy; economic philosophy; political philosophy; metaphysics; worldview-encompassing philosophical system; the mystery and transcendence of life; meaning in life; meaning; an afterlife; and love.

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

Donald Wayne Stoner[1],[2]*: How detailed a response would you like? There have been quite a few books written by and about my ancestors. My grandfather's book of family stories is here:

http://dstoner.net/Science_Speaks/oneman.html

For a very brief outline of what part of my family has been up to:

My Dad was a Caltech Mechanical Engineer who never stopped adding to his education. Our house was a playground of books and odd equipment. My Mom was a school teacher who took a crash course in physics and electronics during WWII, in order to get a good summer job.

They met at Oak Ridge, TN, while they were both working on the Manhattan project:

<https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Stoner-640>

My Paternal Grandfather was a Mathematics and Astronomy Professor, inventor, and author:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Stoner

His father, "C.C." was a Civil War soldier, then a Judge, then served on the Kansas assembly. More:

<https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Stoner-635>

The "Stoner" line carried the surname "Steiner" before we emigrated from Switzerland to the Colony of Pennsylvania, probably in 1738. The fellow who made the move was Johannes John Steiner (in local records, there is a double "n" in "Johannes"). He lived from 1673 to 1758. The Swiss records:

https://archive.org/stream/listswissemigrant01fausrich/listswissemigrant01fausrich_djvu.txt

use a single "n" in "Johanes." The intent of the surname-change was, probably, so we would blend in better. That worked until about 1968 when the meaning of "Stoner" changed.

We were descended from Ashkenazim Jews (Ashkenazim being Yiddish for "German), who

have family records dating back to the early 1400s. For the details, work back from here:

<https://www.geni.com/people/Peter-Stoner/6000000034847136199>

C.C.'s wife was the daughter of a well-known evangelist, Peter Winebrenner:

<https://www-personal.umich.edu/~bobwolfe/gen/pn/p8667.htm>

Who was the nephew of the preacher John Winebrenner, whose name many churches still bear:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Winebrenner

Jacobsen: I presume this family legacy provided a sense of an extended self.

Stoner: Indeed it did. Of course, I'm focusing on the highlights. It wasn't all perfect. For example, C.C. short for "Christian Cowen," Cowen being his middle name, and his mother's maiden name), didn't have much good to say about his parents.

Jacobsen: What about the rest of the family?

Stoner: I've mentioned some examples: Engineer, teacher, technician, scientist, inventor, author, soldier, judge, politician, evangelist, and preacher. Add to that: consultant, programmer, farmer, jeweler, lawyer, contractor, homesteader, pitch scraper, artist, musician, and you have a start at it. Most of them came to the eastern "U.S." from various parts of Europe. Most worked their way west by wagons or trains.

If you let me get started, I'll probably overload you with my own stories. For example, at least presently, all of my children and grandchildren have Cherokee mitochondria (which is always completely from the mother's side).

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

Stoner: Not very pleasant, at least in grade school; but I won't waste any time complaining about that. Occasionally I had an outstanding teacher, and that made a great deal of difference. My third grade teacher suggested that my Mom teach me algebra at home. My Mom did that for a while, then switched to getting me books and materials for studying electronics. My Grandfather gave me a book on how to build simple calculating devices and computers. A 10th grade math teacher took the class to study a now-antique drum-memory computer at the local community college. I wrote a binary program that ran on it, and was immediately hooked. A 12th grade physics teacher started an after-school physics club and taught us some relativity and quantum mechanics. He also entered some of us in a state-wide (California) physics competition for which I received very little recognition outside of my physics class. At graduation, when various student's names and accomplishments were listed, the last announcement was, "and one of these students placed fifth in a state-wide physics competition." I turned to my "assigned walking partner" (I didn't know enough girls to line one up for myself) and told her "that was me." I doubt she believed me. The hard-core nerds thought I was cool, but I wasn't usually respected by many of the other students.

College was better. The students who had made trouble were all gone. I majored in physics (and also math and chemistry during the first few semesters). I also took every computer class I could squeeze in. The local community college had an IBM system 360, which impressed me enough that I started building a computer of my own in my bedroom. My dad helped me run down parts for it. As much of it as I ever finished appeared to work correctly. (I still have it on a shelf in my garage, right next to many other complete and working computers which I have designed and

built since then. Electronics has advanced so rapidly, that my first attempt became obsolete before it was completed. My most recent addition is thousands of times smaller, thousands of times faster, thousands of times cheaper, and indescribably more useful.)

One of the requirements for a degree in physics was a “bone-head” electronics class. I sat through the first lecture and asked the professor if I could just take the final. He smiled at me as said he’d like for me to look over some notes first. He gave me a thick stack of pre-Xerox copies and I took them home and started looking them over. My immediate reaction was that I had made a serious mistake. I was already learning new stuff in the first ten pages. I decided to stick it out anyway, and worked my way through the stack a couple of times, until I thought I understood what it said.

It had taken about two weeks, so I was a little worried that he might ask me why it took so long. He didn’t ask; he just smiled again and gave me the test. There were five problems. The first one was a shock. I had learned to use differential equations in my physics classes, but I had no idea that they could be applied to electronic circuits as well. I looked at the other four problems; they were even harder. After some experimenting, I figured out how to apply the equations to the first problem. It worked, and I experienced a bit of hope. The second problem was a little harder; but it eventually gave up its secrets and I had its solution as well. The third problem stopped me. I wrote about a page of notes explaining how I would set up the problem, but explained that I had no idea how to work the math. The last two problems were hopeless. I gave up, turned the test in, and explained to the professor that I had not done as well as I had hoped.

He smiled again and asked what I would like to do for the lab part of the class. Seeing a possible opportunity, I told him about the computer I was building, and asked if figuring out how to read and write data into, and back out of, its core memory would be a good enough project. He agreed that it would be an acceptable substitute. I had the use of a well-equipped electronics lab for the whole semester! I managed to get enough of it working that I was able to write up a paper to turn in, which explained how the memory worked. He agreed this met the lab requirements.

During that semester I had repeatedly asked him how I had done on the test. All I could get out of him was, “I’m sure you passed,” and the same smile. It wasn’t until the last day of class, when I was cleaning up my bench in the lab, and the rest of the students were going over their finals with the professor that I figured out that I had just had a brilliant practical joke played on me. Years later, when I compared notes with my friends who had received degrees in electrical engineering, I learned I was better prepared than they were.

When it came time to graduate, my “grad check” reported that I was one general education unit shy of graduation. This was due to my having had a math class “waved.” (I had taken it at a different college; they had waved the requirement but hadn’t transferred the units. I hadn’t bothered to do the math and hadn’t realized that this could become a problem.)

Since I had planned on leaving school and starting my life at that point, that’s what I did. A friend (who, unlike myself, was now a degreed physicist) asked if he should look for a job for me. I told him I thought I would be happy just doing fun stuff; but to keep my options open, I suggested that if a really cool job came up, maybe he should give me a call to check to see if I was hungry.

Jacobsen: What have been some professional certifications, qualifications, and trainings earned by you.

Stoner: Pretty close to noting. My inventions (mostly applications of A.I. to embedded-system computers) eventually earned me a pair of patents which seemed to impress potential employers; but I didn't go back to finish my degree until a "real" publisher decided to pick up one of my books. Since it was a controversial book, heavily relating to science, I thought a degree in physics might look better than nothing next to my name.

By that time, one of my old professors was the head of the physics department, and he didn't see a problem, so I retook the offending math class (a quick summer course) and they mailed me a signed piece of paper that purported to be a degree in physics. No employer ever seemed to care very much about it, but it was, technically, a bit of certification. My book was published, and I started to be regarded (and

occasionally quoted) as an "authority" in many of the different technical fields which I had addressed. The book's controversial nature gained me at least as much notoriety as fame.

Jacobsen: What have been some work experiences and jobs held by you?

Stoner: Roughly in order: draftsman, aerospace electronics designer, [college fits in here] musician, sound system designer, ditch digger, optical disc engineer, programmer, inventor, embedded system consultant, author, lecturer, toy electronics engineer, semi retired, retired. This list reminds me of the spread of occupations covered by various members of my extended family.

Jacobsen: Why on earth did you pursue this particular job path?

Stoner: There was no consistent strategy: I've always just done whatever I thought was most needed (in different situations) at each time. Originally I worked for my Dad's engineering company, doing whatever he needed at the time. But during college, I became interested in a local church-startup, which had caught my interest. By the end of college, I was doing more volunteer work for the church than studying. This included performing music and maintaining sound equipment for churches and evangelical groups of musicians.

I didn't really have all that much use for money, until I asked a drop-dead gorgeous young lady (with a similar family background to my own) to marry me. I hadn't warned her that I was thinking in those terms, so she was kind of shocked (understatement) when I asked her. Since, at the very least, I was expecting her to ask if I had any plans to get a real job, so I could support her, I was also kind of shocked (literal clinical "shock" would be a more accurate description) when she immediately and enthusiastically accepted. (In case, you hadn't already guessed. She's part Cherokee, on her mother's side, straight up the female lineage — as are all of my grand kids, since my son's have not yet produced any grand kids as of this writing.)

I started working on an early power-line carrier invention of a friend of the family who was an electrician. He had a contract to install some underground conduit which would ultimately use this invention, but what he needed immediately was to get some ditches dug. It was a job, and it would cover the immediate bills while I finished his invention.

Unfortunately, that friend died before we finished either the job or the invention. My bride to be went through with the wedding anyway, and we were off to what could have been a very bad start.

Fortunately, one morning, the phone rang. It was my "physicist" friend from college. He asked me if I was hungry. I answered, truthfully, that I actually was hungry. Having received my go-ahead, the next item on his agenda was that he had found that "really cool job" and wondered if I

could please come in and apply for it. I did; and I immediately became a member of the team that was in the process of developing the “optical” disc. (These were later called CDs DVDs and a few other more familiar names). While I was there, microprocessors first hit the market. I was the only member of the team who had electronics, computer, and programming experience, so I became a paid participant in a new and wildly growing profession. For details, see:

http://blamld.com/DiscoVision/DiscoVision_History.htm<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DiscoVision>

As a relevant aside, Kevin Langdon’s L.A.I.T. came out while I was still working there. That company had intelligent management who, consequently, knew how to pick out intelligent engineers (even those who had questionable education and work experience). Kevin’s test was an immediate hit with all the engineers, who began copying it and passing it around. We were having so much fun with it, that it probably cost the project a day or two of lost work. I played with it long enough to acquire the reputation of being up to Langdon’s standards, which meant something even in that highly cerebral environment.

When the project was completed. All of the managers and engineers found work elsewhere. I soon found myself with large base of clients who all needed consulting help in the new field of embedded-systems microprocessor engineering.

Jacobsen: What are some of the more important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses?

Stoner: There are only two really important categories:

1) Learning to survive: No one is expecting you; they have probably never met anyone like you before; they may not even really believe you exist. Furthermore, they are as different from you as you are from them; you may see them daily, but it may be difficult to comprehend how different they might be. Those other people will do unexpected things, and you can’t let your surprise show. The easiest way to tick people off is to let any implied “contrast” in abilities slip. You either have to master patience or become a hermit. Either path is a “short drive” to becoming “crazy.” For details, see: “The Outsiders”:

<https://prometheussociety.org/wp/articles/the-outsiders/>

I was lucky in this category. My extended family has always been like me and have understood me. I also fell into many professional circles in which I felt quite “at home.”

2) Learning to be useful: The “Peter Parker principle” (popularized by Spider-Man) says, “With great power comes great responsibility.” The proverb dates back to earlier times, and different contexts, but the general message is that we all owe something to the rest of society. Being a hermit is, arguably, a waste of our entire existence; but trying to help others is risky at best. The average person can’t tell the difference between a “prophet from God,” and a “heretic from the Devil.” Both are likely to get themselves crucified. There is a risk anytime you can “see” things which other people can’t.

Erwin Schro:dinger’s “cat” and Fred Hoyle’s “big bang” were both terms used to deride the sources of those ideas. More experiments eventually vindicated both ideas. But that vindication took many years. Those who take a stand, do so at their own risk. Those who don’t, risk the consequences of shirking their responsibility.

Again, I have been acceptably lucky. I have been in the wrong place at the right time, with sufficient frequency, to have made what difference I can; and have certainly earned my fair share of

both derision and respect.

Jacobsen: Those myths that pervade the cultures of the world. What are those myths? What truths dispel them?

Stoner: I can make an enemy anytime I want to by identifying any one of those myths. I've certainly tried often enough to do this. Some pastors think my book "A New Look at an Old Earth" contains God's Holy Truth. Others consider it the Devil's own heresy:

<http://web.archive.org/web/20170606063247/http://answers.org/newlook/index.htm>

<https://www.amazon.com/Earth-Resolving-Conflict-Between-Science/dp/1565075951>

"Truths" do not normally dispel "myths." Otherwise, Schroedinger and Hoyle's "truths" would have won the day. When we are lucky, additional "evidence" will eventually prevail, as it eventually did with quantum mechanics and big-bang cosmology.

Jacobsen: When you think of the ways in which the geniuses of the past have either been mocked, vilified, and condemned if not liked, 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 at all.

Stoner: People like being told they're right; they don't like being told they're wrong. Converting those who are wrong may be difficult or impossible. We all face different audiences; We have different abilities; We each choose our battles; And we get whatever results we get.

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

Stoner: That would, obviously, be whoever's thoughts matched whatever I happen to be thinking at the moment. [sarcasm warning required?] Seriously, I'm in no position to rank the greatness of any minds which are greater than my own. Instead, I'll answer an easier question: I'll identify some men who have actually caused me to change my thinking: [or you could simply ask a follow-up question ...]

Albert Einstein: Convinced me that my classical concepts of space and time were completely wrong.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theory_of_relativity

John Wheeler: Convinced me that my classical understanding of [the] relationship between "time," "causality," and "human observation" was impossible.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wheeler%27s_delayed-choice_experiment

C.S. Lewis: Convinced me that it was impossible for valid human thought to be produced in a causal environment.

Chapter 3: https://www.amazon.com/Miracles-C-S-Lewis/dp/0060653019/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=miracles+lewis&qid=1609788881&s=books&sr=1-1

Roger Penrose: Convinced me that (and showed me how) "uncaused" human thought could "cause" physical events.

Chapter 6: <https://www.amazon.com/Shadows-Mind-Missing-Science-Consciousness/dp/0195106466>

Thomas Sowell: Convinced me that differences in human conclusions (e.g. liberal and conservative) result from fundamentally different world views.

https://www.amazon.com/Conflict-Visions-Ideological-Political-Struggles/dp/0465002056/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=conflict+of+visions&qid=1609788987&s=books&sr=1-1

Donald Johanson: Convinced me (with his detailed photos and descriptions) that neither Dawkins, Gould, nor my church had evolutionary “jumps” straight.

https://www.amazon.com/Lucy-Language-Revised-Updated-Expanded/dp/0743280644/ref=sr_1_5?dchild=1&keywords=johanson+lucy&qid=1609789059&s=books&sr=1-5

Bill Watterson: Convinced me that sometimes I just need to relax and enjoy the ride.

https://www.amazon.com/Complete-Calvin-Hobbes-Bill-Watterson/dp/1449433251/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=bill+watterson&qid=1610415995&sr=8-1

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

Stoner: Mostly no purpose. They generally tend to cause more trouble than good. However, there is at least one exception.

Once, one of my daughters was having trouble quickly sorting guys who were or weren’t “mentally challenged.” (Not really too surprising.) I remembered Langdon’s L.A.I.T. and went looking for it on the internet. Instead, I found Hoeflin’s Power Test. I printed a few copies for my daughter and kept one for myself (to make myself an “answer key”). My daughter decided against using it, but I had been having enough trouble at work (not always understanding or being understood) that I decided to send off my answers (with a check) and see how I’d do. I had kept track of my rate of answering the problems, and how often I had found an error in those answers; from this information, I had calculated that there were probably still two wrong answers left, at the time I mailed it. Dr. Hoeflin scored me with four misses. I didn’t like that, but it was still a good enough score to get into some societies. I joined a couple of them and actually made a few cool internet friends that way. That gave me a chance to try arguing some of my ideas with some people who were prepared to give me at least as hard a time as I could give them. Eventually, I decided the exercise was a learning one, and well worth doing. (This is the one exception noted above.) Over the next few months I located the two mistakes I was expecting to find. Much later I noticed that another problem had multiple possible answers. I wrote to Dr. Hoeflin explaining this, but wasn’t really expecting the answer I didn’t receive. Recently, I noticed that the problem in question had been changed on the copy of that test which is still on the internet. I don’t know if there was a connection or not. In any case, attempting to measure high-end intelligence is, at best, a “black art.”

Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?

Stoner: My mom told me she was watching me the first time I got a chance to play with my big sister’s blocks after that sister had finished. I was wondering if it would be possible to build “a tower” with them.

(It looked like it might be.) Well it was, but I remember being too clumsy to get the height I’d hoped for. Years later, when my mom told me about it, she also explained how it compared with

what she had read

in child development books. But, of course, you can never trust a mother bragging about her own kids. Besides, she also told me that my sisters were all geniuses. I was sure that couldn't be correct — except that, since then, I've watched my sisters grow up. In hindsight, it appears that you also can't trust a brother complaining about his own sisters.

There were other clues: I was singled out as an artist in kindergarten; I've mentioned my 3rd grade teacher suggesting my mom teach me algebra. I had the best score at my jr. high school on a math placement test. There was the state physics competition, and the professor who handed me the effective equivalent of an advanced electrical engineering degree as a practical joke. Those around me often seem to have figured it out quite a bit faster than I ever did. What may have first clued me in was when the L.A.I.T. showed up at the lab where I was working — when I saw some of the actual problems. They were all very hard; but most of them had clear solutions.

A friend of mine once rescued a baby bird who was being pecked to death by a flock of adult birds. While he was trying to figure out what to feed it, he was informed that his young pet was actually a hawk. Maybe the way some of my peers treated me, early on, makes more sense than I could have guessed at the time. I did end up with more than my share of "life's prizes," which normal people tend to want to keep for themselves.

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

Stoner: My strategy for not acting creepy and ticking people off includes not publishing that kind of information. If anyone cares enough to do their own research, my raw score on the H.P.T. was 32; The other details can be found here: <http://miyaguchi.4sigma.org/index.html> (I personally don't endorse any high-end normings; I strongly suspect all are inflated; otherwise no one would like those tests.)

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

Stoner: I haven't taken all that many of them, and their scores have differed greatly from each other. The lowest I've ever scored was under 120 (above average but not "gifted"), and the highest was on the H.P.T.

Jacobsen: What differentiates a genius from a profoundly intelligent person? Is profound intelligence necessary for genius?

Stoner: I'm not even sure what those two terms mean anymore. In the 1600s, Shakespeare's plays and the King James Bible kind of canonized the English language. Before that, spelling was kind of free-for-all, and it was difficult to read works which preceded one's own time by more than fifty years. With "political-correctness," we're sliding back into that morass again; words no longer have stable meanings. The I.Q. categories used to be: ≥ 140 : genius, ≥ 160 : high genius, ≥ 180 : highest genius, ≥ 200 : unmeasurable genius. Today there doesn't appear to be any universally agreed-upon definition for either of your terms. Examples:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4XMIhCfp3Q>

<https://wondergressive.com/the-profound-intelligence-and-intuition-of-elephants/>

I'm guessing that if you defined those two terms for me, I would simply use your definitions as

the answer to your own question. [or questions]

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

Stoner: Yes, quite a few: I happen to be a “biblical” Christian (although I’m widely regarded to be something of a heretic, probably because I also study science and history before I make decisions about what that Bible means). For example, I believe that the first chapter of Genesis needs to be understood in the context of both 5000-year-old Sumerian writing and the best information we have from current cosmology.

I wrote a book on the age of the earth explaining how this works:

<http://web.archive.org/web/20170606063247/http://answers.org/newlook/index.htm>

<https://www.amazon.com/Earth-Resolving-Conflict-Between-Science/dp/1565075951>

I have also posted a short web page explaining the remainder of Genesis, in the context of ancient Sumerian language and history:

http://www.dstoner.net/Genesis_Context/Context.html

Pastors and others who can be persuaded to change their minds often think my writings could save many Christians’ credibility from self-destruction. Those who are unwilling, or unable, to change their beliefs might actually consider “me” to be a threat to Christianity itself (as if that were possible). Unfortunately, most of the latter’s beliefs appear to be grounded in the science and philosophy of about A.D. 1500-1700. I believe that combining modern understanding with the language and history in which the biblical writings were originally created is a much better approach.

It is my belief that “the Church” has been too slow ditching the ideas of Descartes and Newton, in favor of those of Einstein and Wheeler. Secular philosophers also seem to show the same reluctance to change, but in their case, it’s more easily understood: Not only is it true that modern physics: (general relativity, the Bell experiment, the big bang, ...) give back all the ground that God supposedly yielded during the so-called “enlightenment” (circa 1600-1800), it’s also true that modern science doesn’t really even make sense, until we discard many of the philosophical structures which were created under naturalistic, causal, Newtonian mechanics. In one form or another, God” is back, whether or not either camp is willing to recognize “Him” in his real-world embodiment. For more detail, see my online book: Who Designed God?:

http://www.dstoner.net/Philosophy_Religion/WDG.html

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

Stoner: Quite heavily. Science is, arguably, inseparable from my worldview. I am, after all, (finally) a “degreed physicist;” (although that is not actually a significant fraction of my scientific education. My chemistry and other science classes didn’t really make that much difference either.)

It started with my home environment: When I was in about the third grade, my dad started a local science club. This meant we always had plenty of interesting scientific equipment scattered around the house. This, coupled with a remarkable collection of readily available science books and other reference materials, got me started on many unsupervised projects of questionable safety. Mixing this kind of activity in with toy trucks and Monopoly games kept science a very

real part of my early world. At about the same time, my dad also started taking me to the “Alumni” lectures at Caltech every year until he died. After that, my wife’s uncle, also a Caltech graduate, filled that gap by taking me to those lectures.

For another significant contribution: About forty years ago I was asked to teach a class on the first chapter of Genesis at the church I then attended. That first chapter addresses the history of the universe in approximately the same order in which the 500-579 section of a Dewey Decimal system Library is arranged. This coincidence made it convenient to organize my research by simply reading through that section of the local county library in its natural physical order.

Although I had formal training in physics, chemistry, and mathematics (and the one college biology class), and had been an avid reader of all kinds of scientific material, I realized I was still pretty ignorant of most of what I might need to know for the class. I really needed to fill in the holes.

Time was limited: (I had exactly eight full-time weeks budgeted). To help keep the task manageable, I mostly skipped over the physics and chemistry sections, figuring I was probably sufficiently well-informed there. I also skipped 580-599 just because those parts weren’t sufficiently relevant. To further thin the load: I used Isaac Asimov, as a guide. Dr. Asimov was still alive and writing at the time. He had already written so many books that he had some kind of introductory layman’s guide, spaced maybe about one for every ten or twenty running feet of books — all through the whole science section. Each of his books would introduce me to the key names and events in each division. I would start reading his book, then some of the more significant books, which he had mentioned. Next I would “chain” my way outward, using that additional information, until the authors were all beginning to repeat each other. I would also “judge books by their covers;” skipping over old, scientifically-dated books, among others.

Toward the end of those weeks, I was starting to notice that the authors in one section often appeared to be unaware of what authors in other sections had written. For one example, the geologists appeared not to have read what the astronomers had written about how the early earth lost its original atmosphere; otherwise, they would have had only one theory, instead of two, to explain how this had happened. I used this single theory in my own book (mentioned and linked in the previous question) which I wrote after teaching this class (to document my research and to make it available others). Here is a brief web page which includes the one single theory I had accepted:

http://www.dstoner.net/Math_Science/Solar.html

After teaching the class and writing the controversial book, I received quite an extreme range of reactions (including being vilified and revered). I’ve been invited to speak and debate; I’ve also been “negatively featured” in the works of many who disagree with me. Although I’ve never actually been kicked out of a church, I don’t always feel completely welcome in every one.

This blended approach to science and theology is actually a continuation of my family legacy. My grandfather, Peter Stoner, wrote a book which was similar in many ways but was directed to a different (nearly exactly opposite, in fact) target audience:

Science Speaks

<http://sciencespeaks.dstoner.net/>

<https://www.amazon.com/Science-Speaks-Peter-W-Stoner/dp/0802476309>

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

Stoner: For most of us, the concepts of “right” and “wrong” seem to be, more or less, universally understood. The “Golden Rule” states: “Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you.” This rule is generally regarded to be the best summary of what morality requires. It was taught by Kung Fu Tzu (in the Sayings of Confucius 5:12), the Buddha (in the Dhammapada #129), Jesus (in Matthew 7:12, and Luke 6:31), and by many others. This Rule is not unique to any particular culture or religion; it is something which nearly everyone seems to understand.

Even so, the claim is often made that the terms “right” and “wrong” have no absolute meanings. “The Trolley Problem” is one of many exercises which are designed to support this claim; it forces a person to decide between two choices – both of which are obviously “wrong.” The two options are deliberately balanced to make the choice difficult; the specific options which are normally given in The Trolley Problem are: killing five helpless people by inaction (letting a runaway trolley crush them) or: taking action and killing one helpless person (switching the trolley onto a different track). When presented with these two options, most people will choose to save the five by actively killing the one – but some will argue that inaction is the better choice. Does this prove that moral standards differ – and that morality is, therefore, not really absolute?

In real life, people seldom encounter such extreme choices. They usually consider it their moral responsibility to look far enough ahead to anticipate situations where only bad options remain; once identified, they try to avoid those situations by disarming potential problems while other options are still available.

But this example is still an interesting way to explore what could happen in a situation where very small differences in judgment can produce opposite choices. Those differences can actually be as small as different life experiences. A medical doctor who has worked under wartime triage conditions, for example, may find it easier to make rapid life-and-death decisions (based on mere numbers) than a Hollywood stuntman – who might need to see convincing proof that the five aren’t just stunt dummies before he “takes action” to murder the one real actor.

For more detail, see Chapter Thirteen: The Weird Nature of Morality, here:

http://www.dstoner.net/Philosophy_Religion/WDG2017.01.10.pdf

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

Stoner: My first choice would definitely be living like a hermit. But “God” doesn’t leave me alone when I try it. “He” even enlisted help (in the form of the aforementioned jaw-dropping, nerd-kissing babe). She tends to make sure I live my “social” life by a philosophy which I would, by my own selfish nature, naturally avoid. I do not consider this to be an “error,” even though it is outside of my comfort zone; it is an acceptable compromise in the direction of social (and moral) responsibility.

When possible, I prefer to fulfill my social responsibilities by doing quiet, secluded research, from which others are likely to benefit.

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

Stoner: Ever since we left the hunter-gatherer phase of our existence, and then moved past the “traditional” nomadic/village existence, there have really only been two choices (or possibly three, counting the various attempted combinations): 1) Capitalism: Let it all take care of itself,

and accept the consequences (for better and for worse) which Charles Darwin promised. 2) Socialism: Have someone take care of it all by force, and accept the consequences (so far, always a disaster, but the idea always promises hope): the mutant degradation, also promised by Darwin's thesis — if not properly implemented anywhere in nature.

I'm solidly with Darwin on this one. Darwin's other stuff appears to work as advertised with two notable (but presently irrelevant) exceptions:

A) The first living cell: http://www.dstoner.net/Math_Science/cell1.html

B) Punctuated equilibrium: http://www.dstoner.net/Philosophy_Religion/SurMom.html

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

Stoner: I am of the opinion that humans are barely capable of governing themselves, and completely incapable of governing each other. Winston Churchill probably had it straight: "Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others." Here's the problem: If we start with the two economic systems (remembering that economics is a major part of what government must control), we have to try to strike some kind of balance between 1) Capitalism: self-regulating (but inherently ruthless), and 2) Socialism: idealistic (but requiring ruthless enforcement).

Darwin sorts out the errors in the former (at the expense of the less fit), but even if those who became the "masters" (over the rest of us) were sufficiently "omniscient" to know who should get the STM32F413 microprocessors, and who should make do, the best they could, with the STM32F103s, both producers and consumers will still lose their motivation to improve the system. (This example was deliberately chosen to be obscure, to emphasize the inherent difficulty in managing an entire technical economy.)

When you remove "survival pressure" from a system, the individuals don't remain the same, they will still "mutate" randomly — and random mutations are seldom an improvement. If you make sure all "voters" are taken care of, by giving them a "living wage," you will soon find that the majority of those voters will become incapable of supporting themselves. (It is extremely unlikely that many people will bother to study the differences between STM32F103s and STM32F413s without there being a significant reward in return for their efforts.) "Darwin" offers to fix this problem for us (with his bloody teeth and claws), but do we really want his "help?" On the other hand, what if we can't even "survive" without that help?

What kind of "balance" could possibly keep everyone both happy (satisfied) and motivated (dissatisfied) at the same time? When worded this way, the problem becomes obvious: Any workable system must provide satisfaction to those who are productive and dissatisfaction to those who are not. Otherwise, productivity quickly "devolves." Historic examples are ubiquitous. Counterexamples, ephemeral.

Jacobsen: What metaphysics makes some sense to you, even the most workable sense to you?

Stoner: As a very young child, my default presumption was that matter was all there was. I had blocks, and other toys which also had wheels, levers and gears; I understood how these worked, and simply presumed that all other things worked essentially the same way. Then one day (all I remember for sure is that it was before my fourth birthday), I had caught myself staring out through my own eyes, at nothing in particular, and noticed how very strange it was that I could perceive the world around me, and how odd it was that I was aware of my own existence. In this

case, there was obviously something very different about the “device” involved; it wasn’t just more complex; it seemed to operate on a completely different principle. (Half a century later, I would learn that scientists call this “The Hard Problem.”)

I was in college — building my own computer, one transistor at a time — before I had completely rejected the idea that an electronic computer could actually “think.” I finally understood “electronics” well enough that I simply knew better. For more detail, See Who Designed God? Chapter 8:

http://www.dstoner.net/Philosophy_Religion/WDG2017.01.10.pdf

At that time, it would be fair to say I’d stopped being a mind-matter “monist,” and was firmly in the “dualist” camp.

This was before my education in physics included very much detail about relativity or quantum mechanics, partly because I was less than halfway to a mere B.S., but mostly because much of the really cool stuff hadn’t been discovered yet. My reading eventually brought me up to date. There were four men in, particular, (mentioned and linked above) who, together, forced my last step: Albert Einstein, John Wheeler, C.S. Lewis, and Roger Penrose. Together, these four finally convinced me that “mind” was the “primordial substance” and that “matter” was the “illusion.”

This makes me a “mind-monist.” Philosophers call this position, “Berkeleyan idealism.”

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/berkeley/>

It often requires the “Bell experiment” to convince a skeptic to accept the truth of John Wheeler’s “Delayed-choice experiment.,” but, arguably, all of the evidence is actually present in Wheeler’s earlier and simpler version of this same odd piece of evidence. Wheeler’s Wikipedia page is linked above; the experiment is also summarized here pp.208-213:

https://www.amazon.com/Search-Schr%C3%B6dingers-Cat-Quantum-Physics/dp/0553342533/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=john+gribbin+schrodinger%27s+cat&qid=1610233653&sr=8-1

Jacobsen: What worldview-encompassing philosophical system makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?

Stoner: Here’s the very short explanation “Berkeleyan idealism,” rephrased in the language of Wheeler’s experiment: “The “physical universe” doesn’t assume an “actual” form until after “observers” have chosen in what manner they will observe it; “reality” delays making all of it’s “choices” until after the “mind” of an “observer” has made “his/her/its” choice.

This is what George Berkeley (1685-1753) decided, hundreds of years ago, without the benefit of the evidence from Wheeler’s experiments. At that time, most philosophers could easily dismiss his suggestion. But since that evidence became available, this became about the only way I could make any sense out of the universe. Explaining this realization in detail is the central theme of my online book, Who Designed God?:

http://www.dstoner.net/Philosophy_Religion/WDG.html

After Wheeler forced me to drop my naturalistic prejudices, and permitted me to consider stranger options, I was able to understand how that time, and space, might “exist” in “intangible form” — as mathematical properties which are self-existent and only statistically constrained.

The final missing piece was the understanding that the “catalyst” which triggers the “solidification” of these mathematical properties (physicists call this “collapse of the wave function”) was “observation” by a “mind” (a “human” mind in every experimental write-up I have ever read, however, I am unconvinced that Erwin Schrödinger himself was necessary to determine the fate of his “cat;” I suspect the cat was capable of performing his or her own observations.)

In any case, the experiments tell us that a “mind’s” act of “observation” determines the outcome of a “physical” experiment. Further, every bit of the “physical matter” from which the experimental apparatus is constructed, comprise nothing more than statistical mathematical properties, which do not become permanent either, until they are observed by a “mind.”

This oddness extends to the space and time (in which matter exists). They are, themselves, “bent” in odd ways to accommodate whichever “observer” happens to be looking at them at the moment. (This even goes as far as “simultaneously” accommodating two observers with very different coexisting frames of reference.)

Add to this the fact that statistical “mathematics” themselves are arguably more like “mental” concepts than they are like “physical” things, and it becomes hard to think of anything as being “physical.”

Much of this will sound like patent nonsense to anyone who hasn’t “served time” in a quantum physics lab, as it would to any properly educated person living during the “enlightenment,” but it’s still a much better approximation of the true all-encompassing philosophical system which calls the shots in our universe.

However, this is not the only “possible,” way to resolve the evidence. It is just the “least complex” way. There are other equally absurd-sounding models which otherwise-lucid people propose to avoid the conclusion I have reached. One involves the universe constantly experiencing “infinitely” many bifurcations, to accommodate all possible observations which any sentient being might ever make. This requires a literally-infinitely more complex universe; but some consider this preferable to allowing that “mind” might have cosmic qualities. Here is a quite serious presentation of one such theory: See pp.236ff:

https://www.amazon.com/Search-Schr%C3%B6dingers-Cat-Quantum-Physics/dp/0553342533/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=john+gribbin+schrodinger%27s+cat&qid=1610233653&sr=8-1

Those, like myself, who take the “cosmic-mind” path, have other issues to consider — such as deciding what to make of a few ancient passages from 2000-year-old biblical Greek:

In the beginning was the “logos” (Logic, thought, mind), and the “Logos” was with/at Theos (God), and Theos was the Logos. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. -John’s Gospel 1:1-3

Or:

He is before all things and in him all things “hold together.” (consist) -Paul’s letter to the Colossian church 1:17

These bits of ancient religion sound suspiciously like the sort of universal mind-monism which is presently haunting the world’s physics laboratories. Men, having once driven “the gods” from their realm (back during the “enlightenment”), are naturally somewhat reluctant to welcome back anything which sounds even faintly like them — or worse yet, anything like “Him” (capitalized

and singular).

I've chosen to go with the traditional religious understanding followed by my family historically: Originally Jewish, then Christian..

Jacobsen: What do you make of the mystery and transience of life?

Stoner: That is a very interesting question. Here are some more related questions: Why is it a "mystery" that life is so short? How long is life really supposed to last? Why is it that we all seem to sense that this life is *not* what it is supposed to be? Maybe what is truly strange isn't that life is "brief," it's our firm conviction that this obvious and observable "fact" is somehow "wrong."

These question could all be answered with the same simple suggestion: "This life" isn't "real life." It's just "a test." As we all seem to sense: "Real life" must be something which is more real and lasts much longer.

Jacobsen: What provides meaning in life for you?

Stoner: If you mean: "Why are we here?" "What is life all about?" "What is the purpose of existence?" ... then this question can easily be answered in the context of the answer suggested for the previous question:

If this "life" is just "a test," then the only things which are really "meaningful" are the "choices" we make. Those, alone, determine who we "really are." Nothing else will be "graded."

(This shouldn't surprise us: According to Wheeler, those "choices" are exactly what shapes all of "reality.")

Jacobsen: Is meaning externally derived, internally generated, both, or something else?

Stoner: People often ask whether "truth" is externally derived or internally generated. Both are really the same question: Are our "minds" alone and in charge? Or do they act within a system of greater definitions?

I'm pretty sure that logic, and therefore mathematical truth, and therefore quantum mechanical truth, make up a greater reality within which my own thoughts can, rightly, be judged to be objectively true or errant. I have a similar opinion about the absolute-nature of the "morality" of my "choices."

Jacobsen: Do you believe in an afterlife? If so, why, and what form? If not, why not?

Stoner: I do believe in an afterlife. The long explanation for "why" can be found in my online book "Who designed God?":

http://www.dstoner.net/Philosophy_Religion/WDG.html

It requires a fair sized fraction of that book to nail this question down. I'll try a shorter answer here. The argument is not easy to follow, so I'll begin with a simple warm-up problem: Is logic itself valid? There are two ways we might attempt to answer this question:

1) We could construct a "logical" proof that "logic" was valid.

This, unfortunately, would involve a circular (and therefore be an invalid) argument.

Or:

2) We could construct an “illogical” or “alogical” proof.

In which case we would be making an “invalid” argument right from the beginning. It would seem there can be no valid way to prove the validity of logic itself. But should we accept it anyway? Again we have two choices:

A) We can simply reject logic, in which case we are now finished with all logical arguments (including this one).

Or:

B) We can accept logic, in which case we must accept the consequence that logic is “primordial” (in the

sense that it cannot be tested by other things, but that it is a first principle by which all other ideas are tested). That would make it an “uncaused” “first cause” from which all other valid reasoning emerges.

That was the “easy” first step. Next, can our thoughts really be trusted? To answer this we must know how they are “caused.” If they are “caused” at all, do we cause them ourselves? Or do non-sentient forces cause them? If our thoughts are merely the last “domino” to fall, in a long chain of causes, then we might have good reason to distrust them. In my book, “Who Designed God?” I took several chapters to develop this idea properly:

Chapter 5: Quantum Mechanics

Chapter 6: From Quantum Mechanics to Brain

Chapter 7: From Brain to Mind

Chapter 8: Mind, Logic, and Mathematics

Chapter 9: Can Logic be Trusted?

http://dstoner.net/Philosophy_Religion/Who15old.pdf

Here, I’ll just touch a few key points:

As I explain (in an argument borrowed from C.S. Lewis) in chapter 9 (of my book), two different (actually opposite) meanings of the word “because” tend to confuse our thinking about causality. The more causality (because[CAUSE]) encroaches upon the process of our logic and reasoning, the less reason we have to trust the basis for that reasoning (because[FOUNDATIONS]). When causality finally becomes absolute, our grounds for believing our conclusions disappears completely. This is the sense in which because[CAUSE] and because[FOUNDATIONS] are opposites. They are mutually exclusive in our thought processes. When a person has a mechanical reason to say something (for example, because[CAUSE] they are prejudiced, or because[CAUSE] they are drunk, etc.) we believe we are justified in disregarding any “authority” their opinions might otherwise have carried. For more Detail, see: C.S. Lewis, Miracles, Chapter 3:

https://www.amazon.com/Miracles-C-S-Lewis/dp/0060653019/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=miracles+lewis&qid=1609788881&s=books&sr=1-1

Next, Physicist Roger Penrose (co-author of Stephen Hawking’s paper on black holes), structures within our brain’s cells. He has teamed up with Stuart Hameroff to present very convincing experimental evidence that consciousness itself is a quantum-mechanical property. See: pp. 348ff:

<https://www.amazon.com/Shadows-Mind-Missing-Science-Consciousness/dp/0195106466>

Quantum mechanics breaks us free from the causal chain which would, effectively, have eliminated our ability to choose and robbed our thoughts of having independent meaning.

Returning to our choice above:

A) We can simply reject logic, in which case we are now finished with all logical arguments (including this one).

Or:

B) We can accept logic, in which case we must accept the consequence that logic is “primordial”

The “A” path rejects truth and logic. The only way we can continue to follow the “B” path is if our thoughts are “uncaused causes” instead of merely “caused” events. If we are sticking with a belief in logic and in our own ability to make choices, then we must conclude that our thoughts are not “caused” by matter. But if so, then it follows that they cannot be “uncaused” (though death) by the absence of, or by the failure-to-function of matter. That does not mean that there is nothing which can “uncause” them, but it wouldn’t be mere physical death. This argument is obviously contingent on truth and logic being accepted, but if they aren’t, then no questions have “answers.” So, it about as strong an argument as I am able to raise in defense of any logical concept. Accept it or reject it as you choose. I also have an opinion about “why” there “should” be an afterlife: It’s what we all sense is missing from this present life. It’s where and when everything will finally make sense.

Jacobsen: What is love to you?

Stoner: “To me?” There’s more to this than “my opinion.” My wife knows (objectively) what “love” is, and what love requires from me. So do I. In real life, “love” is effectively a verb. It’s what we do. Our acts can be either selfish or selfless. If my actions don’t line up with what love requires, It won’t fly. “Love” is what we should do in any situation. Love’s opposite is what we must learn to avoid. Darwin’s world optimizes Whatever works pragmatically best for each individual. Whatever sort of “god” designed this world, he/she/it (all three are technically wrong) obviously put “Darwin” in charge of maintaining survive-ability over the long term, (with wildly shifting climates and environments). Would such a “god” then need to be completely uncaring? Maybe, but if so, then why would we (also a result of that same creation) be designed to feel so strongly that “Darwin’s” path is “morally wrong?” My answer to this question is the same as for many of the previous questions: This isn’t “real life.” It’s a test to see how we will react to the different situations in which we each find ourselves, and what “choices” we will make. Some of us live in Communist China, some in Beverly Hills, some in the Congo or in Bangladesh. Some of us are holding our breaths, waiting to see what our own country might soon become. Is Darwinian Capitalism “good?” Certainly not. Is Communism an improvement? Certainly not (especially if humans are put in charge of either). What should we do personally? In every case, under any government, we must try to be the solution instead of the problem. We must look out for others with as much sincerity as we look out for ourselves. (The responsibility is our own. No human government can or will take care of that for us.) “True life’s” rewards cannot depend on human governments either. I recommend that everyone make all of their choices as wisely as possible. Slightly edited from my web page: Extraordinary evidence exists everywhere:

The big bang (something from nothing);

the first cell (complex life from non-life);

punctuated evolution (information accumulation exceeding the population-mutation rate);

sentience (awareness from nano-electro-mechanics);

The very existence of logic and morality (an obvious is/ought causality reversal).

These require no more proof than that we observe them to exist.

Theories to explain this extraordinary evidence can rightly be debated.

Such theories necessarily make extraordinary claims.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Member, Epimetheus Society; Member, One-in-a-Thousand Society.

[2] Individual Publication Date: March 22, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/stoner>; Full Issue Publication Date: May 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 Paul Cooijmans on Glia Society, Games, Tests, Puzzles, Thoth, Policy, and Absolute Freedom of Speech: Administrator, Glia Society (4)

2021-03-22

Paul Cooijmans is an Independent Psychometitor and Administrator of the Glia Society, and Administrator of the Giga Society. He discusses: animated presentation of the Glia Society; three-part polyphonic piece; a palindromic “crab” canon; mind games; Glia Society crossword; the memory game; the Mastermind game; tests, puzzles and games; domain and aesthetic; community; active is the publication; absolute freedom of speech; heated exchanges; the general impression from the more active members of Thoth; the “value” of the “golden opportunity” of Thoth; the major themes of the publications; the policy of Thoth; the frequency of Thoth; annoying moments; parts of the copy section have been altered in the history of Thoth description; italics and bold; unusual font colours, font sizes, font changes, font types; most common font colours, font sizes, font changes, and font types; “the mark of bad authors”; the single most read/viewed article in the history of Thoth; infrequent errors of copy; frequent errors of copy; and further disclaimers or caveats.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: For those with an interest in an animated presentation of the Glia Society, they can see the website (The Glia Society, n.d.a; Cooijmans, 2016). Why the creation of an animated presentation?

Paul Cooijmans^{[1],[2]*}: At that time, in 2003-2004, I was taking a web design course, and one of the assignments was to make an animation in “Flash”. I made one that I could actually use. Later I converted it to video. To avoid confusion, I should explain that I took a programming course at the same school in 2002.

Jacobsen: With the “three-part polyphonic piece consisting of three canons using the same theme — a theme beginning with four notes based in pitch and duration on the letters Glia Society in a fairly trivial way — in three different manners,” what has been the feedback if any on the music and the animated presentation? (Cooijmans, n.d.a)

Cooijmans: I do not remember any feedback at the moment.

Jacobsen: Why have a palindromic “crab” canon? (Ibid.)

Cooijmans: Crab canons have fascinated me since the 1980s when I learnt how to write them in counterpoint class at the conservatory. One thing about them is that you do not hear that it is a canon. Another thing is that every note of the theme has to function in at least two different situations: in the top voice and in the bottom voice. That requirement creates a synergy, wherein the whole is more than the sum of parts. Double functions are key to understanding life and the universe. This is also dealt with in my favourite book, “Gödel, Escher, Bach” by Douglas R. Hofstadter. Many phenomena in nature, and many works of genius are, “under the hood”, akin to crab canons. If you learn how to write a crab canon, you understand more of reality and advance to a higher level of creative functioning.

Jacobsen: The mind games section has four parts: [Glia Society crossword](#), [Memory game](#), [Mastermind](#), and [More tests, puzzles and games](#). (Cooijmans, n.d.b). What has been the feedback on this section of the Glia Society webpages? Why create this particular section?

Cooijmans: Very little feedback on the crosswords. A little feedback on the memory game and mastermind. The reaction speed test has drawn much more feedback. Someone sent me collected data on it and asked to make a statistical report, which I did. But I fear that its meaning is limited because one's score on the test may be affected by the hardware of one's electronic computer, in particular the graphics card or "on-board" graphics. Also, simple reaction time is only one elementary cognitive task with a limited "g"-loading. For a better picture, one needs to test other tasks related to working memory, perceptual threshold, and decision time. And the hardware should be the same for all candidates, so this is not something you should be doing on your own computer with software. It takes standard equipment in a laboratory setting. I see no way to do that with high-range test candidates, because (1) I do not have the equipment and facilities and (2) said candidates are living all over the world so it is not doable to get them to travel thousands of kilometres to a particular location. For the same reason, supervised tests, valuable as they may be, are not usable for high-range purposes, unfortunately. I tried for years because I really like supervised tests and the in-person psychological examination, but could not get more than a small handful of people to travel here to take them.

The creation of this section, too, was part of the web design course I took.

Jacobsen: For the Glia Society crossword, what percent of people get all the answers correct? (Cooijmans, n.d.c)

Cooijmans: I have no idea, no one has ever sent me their answers, and that would also be superfluous because the solutions are given on the crossword itself. Hm, perhaps I should remove them to make it harder.

Jacobsen: For the memory game (Cooijmans, 2003), what was the inspiration for creating it?

Cooijmans: Also the web design course, and I chose to make games that had something to do with intelligence.

Jacobsen: What purpose does the Mastermind game or activity serve? (Cooijmans, n.d.d)

Cooijmans: The same answer as the previous about the memory game, I would say. Regarding the web design course, I might add that the institute where I took this course also housed a bodyguard school and a stewardess academy. Both, on two separate occasions, appeared in a television program during that period because of students who complained about having been ripped off. The episode about the stewardess academy came from a studio full of aspiring stewardesses in their professional attire. My novel "Field of eternal integrity" briefly mentions this stewardess academy.

Perhaps it is interesting to tell a bit more about the web college: When I started there, it was still allowed to smoke in the canteen, but at some point they forbade that, and from then on we were always sitting outside, often in the cold, on the terrace of the building during lunch breaks, overlooking the impressive garden. Several students were chain-smokers, so they could not have lunch indoors any more. One of the students was an astrologer who had worked as a brothel manager before. He was doing the course because he was planning to create an astrology-based dating program. I do not know if he succeeded eventually. For a short period I assisted in the project as a programmer, and he invited me home for dinner, which consisted of paprika filled with meatloaf prepared by his twenty years younger girlfriend. A few other programmers were involved too, including one of our teachers. The astrologer insisted that the dating program allow matches between people with a twenty-year age gap, like he had with his fiancée. Whenever a

match was found, the candidate would be notified instantly on one's mobile telephone. This was futuristic at the time, in the early 2000s, when not nearly everyone had a mobile phone yet, and long before smart phones became common. He was ahead of his time, also having been one of the first sex telephone line operators in the 1980s.

Not all of the students were knowledgeable regarding informatics; this was revealed when the teacher instructed us to make a web site and bring it along on a compact disk so he could see it. "What?! Does a whole web site fit on a compact disk?!" remarked one web designer-to-be. This person was taking the course for the second time, and would not show up any more after the first few lessons. For clarity, the web sites we made were in the order of a few hundred kilobytes, while a compact disk could hold 700 megabytes, so several hundred of those sites. But the astrol-oger took file-size-blindness to a new level when he tried to share with us the full documentation of a certain corporate developer's network by electronic mail; he really could not understand why that e-mail had failed to sent after he attached the complete set of compact disks totalling several gigabytes. For information, the upper limit of an e-mail attachment was in the order of a few megabytes at the time, so he had exceeded it by a factor of thousand. Attaching compact disks to an e-mail message would be a remarkable feat even today, if I am correct.

Later on in the course, one of the participants brought a Universal Serial Bus stick of 200 megabytes with him to show his work, instead of a compact disk; this was the first time I saw a U.S.B. stick. This person worked at a fish store and was making a web site for it. On that occasion he printed a page from his site, containing a recipe for plaice. Then he looked around where the printer was, but could not find it. The teacher informed him that the printer was located in the school's office, where they were probably wondering what to do with the recipe. In the years after the course, I sometimes used the building of the web college as a target when training for a marathon or longer distance. It was 35 kilometres up and down there from my house, mostly along the canal.

Jacobsen: The "[More tests, puzzles and games](#)" link leads to "I.Q. Tests for the High Range" (Cooijmans, n.d.e). A page with one of the most quotable phrases in the high-range testing environment, "A megalomaniac's Waterloo," which I love dearly. Individuals with an interest in further explorations into the high-range testing world can explore the website and the rich resources from there. Actually, this leads to some short side questions if I may, please. Some comment on the old nature of many of the high-IQ society web domains and web pages within them. When I examined 84 of them formally, or more informally, this appears true. Many are defunct. Others are extant, but inactive. Others are merely directories or listings of individuals who qualify for the societies. Some have a modest level of activity. A few are decades old, active, and well-run. Yours, happily, qualify for the lattermost, Glia Society and Giga Society. For the domain and aesthetics of the Glia Society, or the entirety of the lifework for you, as presented online, why this particular design?

Cooijmans: Regarding web design, I am for accessibility and not bothering visitors with unneeded distractions or intrusions like pop-ups, side-bars, or frequent changes of the site that send people looking for things they could find blindly in the previous design version. Do notice that the text on the site is actually legible, and not illegibly tiny as "professional" web designers insist on. In the past I had advertisements appear on my web sites, but I removed them after it became compulsory to ask visitors permission to store the advertisement-related cookies on their electronic computers. I do not want to harass people with that.

In this respect I want to mention it is nowadays rare to get honest advertising on your web site. I have been contacted countless times by people who wanted to “advertise” on my sites, but invariably it concerned sneaky text links disguised as normal content, not recognizable as advertising, to deceive the search engines and make the advertiser’s web sites seem popular. This is unethical and spoils the Internet. They call this “search engine optimization”; one of the cesspools of modern-day “marketing”.

Jacobsen: Why keep this domain and aesthetic into 2021?

Cooijmans: Because of its extreme beauty and accessibility, and to avoid forcing visitors to waste time and attention by learning to navigate something new all the time. As we say here, “what you do not want done to you, do not do that to others” (this rhymes in Netherlandic). I avoid all those things that make me run away from other web sites.

Jacobsen: What have been the feedback on those aforementioned levels regarding it? I should add. In the first part of the interview, you stated:

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... 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). (Jacobsen, 2020).

So, the original intent changed into the online, where the intent was the non-digital community the whole time, as a reminder to newer readers to this Glia Society series of interviews.

Cooijmans: I do not understand what is meant with “those aforementioned levels” and with “it”. Also I do not remember saying anything about a non-digital community. I said “it was not the aim to construct a digitally-based community” in response to a question about the Glia Society being a digital community. But that does logically not equate to saying “the aim was to construct a non-digital community”. The feedback in the period before going online (if that is the question) was hugely positive. This is also logical, as membership in those days involved regular mail correspondence and paying for a paper journal sent by mail, and I imagine that negatively inclined people would not be willing to go through all that trouble just to be negative about the society. You could not join an I.Q. society on a whim then, as you can now with everything going via the Internet.

Jacobsen: We have talked about the journal *Thoth* before, a bit.^[3] It is a digital publication available to members alone. “It guarantees absolute freedom of speech and has no editorial changes or censorship of any kind. *Thoth* is filled with members’ submissions, and occasionally contains material by others.” (Cooijmans, n.d.f) What makes “no editorial changes or censorship of any kind” a benefit to the Glia Society community? How active is the publication?

Cooijmans: “No editorial changes or censorship of any kind” is a benefit because it allows members (and possible non-members who submit copy) to express their ideas without interference. Anyone who has ever had an incompetent or corrupt editor destroy one’s work will recognize the value of that. The publication is quite active in some periods, and less active in others. It varies, and with the advent of Internet fora, the importance of a journal has gone down. It is no longer the only communication medium of the society.

Jacobsen: The policy section of the public website states:

Thoth is meant to be a verbatim, uncensored, unedited publication forum for Glia Society members' materials of almost any kind, and as such offers an almost unique and golden opportunity to who understand the value of such. So, actually to very few.

Copy for Thoth is published without alterations and as close as possible to what the author wrote or created (insofar as electronic word processing allows this; some formatting changes are inevitable). Notice that this means that one's possible errors too remain uncorrected; to write correctly is the author's task. Please check copy for errors repeatedly and meticulously before submission. Do not just rely on a software spelling checker.

Notice that the previous paragraph implies one needs to put one's name and the possible title of one's submission in one's copy. Leaving these out implies that the copy is anonymous and/or has no title. For clarity; this means that the name and title must be in the submission itself, not just in an accompanying note. The previous sentence follows from the fact that copy is not altered, implying that the author's name and title are not added if one does not put them in oneself.

It is recommended to put one's address in one's copy so that readers can respond directly to the author if they wish. Remarks to the Administrator about copy are not passed on to the author. (Ibid.)

With absolute freedom of speech, have there been any issues internal to the Glia Society community or *Thoth* itself?

Cooijmans: The main issue I remember is the publication, in instalments, of a novel by a member. A number of other members objected to its contents, which they found too violent and explicit. There was discussion on it on the electronic mail forum of the society, but no official measures were taken. The novel's author was not online oneself, which made discussing the topic difficult. Arguments were, "I can not show the journal to my family with this content in it", which was countered by "but the journal is members-only so you are not supposed to show it to your family anyway".

Jacobsen: Have there been any significantly heated exchanges in such fora based on absolute freedom of speech?

Cooijmans: The one I just mentioned, about the novel.

Jacobsen: What is the general impression from the more active members of *Thoth*, in terms of submissions/publications in it, of the quality of the submissions if any feedback at that level?

Cooijmans: There are two types of submissions: From ambitious members who send a lot of material to promote their work and themselves, and from members who send copy to contribute toward a high-quality publication. Both are welcome and fit the goals of an I.Q. society.

Jacobsen: To the aforementioned "very few" from the block quote, what is the "value" of the "golden opportunity"? (Ibid.)

Cooijmans: The value is in the rare chance to publish one's work uncensored and verbatim.

Jacobsen: What are the major themes of the publications? What is the most common type of submission, e.g., articles, interviews, etc.?

Cooijmans: Articles are the most common type of submission I think. Other types are poems,

short stories, photos, things like that. I have no idea how to describe the major themes of the publications, I do not think in themes myself, in fact I have sometimes turned down participation in activities with prescribed themes. It can be said that the articles and other submissions in *Thoth* often reveal a way of looking at or experiencing the world that is typical of highly intelligent persons.

Jacobsen: Has the policy of *Thoth* ever changed?

Cooijmans: No.

Jacobsen: The copy section of the public website states:

Copy can be submitted at any time and will appear in the next issue. Please try to get it right at once and not send corrections or corrected versions to already submitted copy. Thoth appears whenever a minimum amount of copy is available. Obviously, there is no “deadline”; the time to send copy is when that copy is ready.

The best file formats for copy are .txt, .rtf, .odt, and .doc. Send the copy in any one of those formats; there is absolutely no need send the copy in more than one of those formats simultaneously. Do not send copy as .pdf; that is a read-only format and can not be edited or inserted into another document without corruption of white space and layout.

To avoid loss of quality, possible images should best be (also) sent separately, for instance as attachments, rather than inserted into a word processor document. Displaying text in image form is extremely unwise as it increases file size in the order of a hundredfold.

Be sparing with layout features like italic and bold, and especially sparing with underlined, font colours, font size changes, font changes and so on. Keep in mind that underlined nowadays means “this is a hyper reference”, and dozens of readers will click on it only to discover it is not. Be informed that the excessive use of layout features is the mark of bad authors.

To obtain an impression of how copy looks, one may consult this [Thoth copy template](#).

It is possible to submit copy even if one is not a member but has material one thinks is of interest to the Glia Society members. Copy should be sent to [the Administrator](#); indicate in an accompanying note that the submitted material is copy, to avoid confusion between personal correspondence and copy. (Ibid.)

What has been the frequency of *Thoth* issues per year? How many per year? How much does this rate vary? What is the range?

Cooijmans: In the first few years it was eight times per year, then it went down to six and remained at that for over two decades. About a year ago I reduced it to “whenever there is copy”, but in practice it has mostly appeared every two months still. The size of an issue has gone down a few years ago, when I stopped filling it up with my own material when there was little copy. The size now reflects how much copy there is.

Jacobsen: Have there been any particularly annoying moments of corrected versions sent an inordinate amount of times to you? In that, there were a large number of corrected versions sent to you. Is it a fair time to recount these potential historical moments?

Cooijmans: I remember one person who had a habit of sending corrected versions to almost everything said person submitted. This was annoying because I tend to work ahead in producing the journal, so every correction caused unneeded (“double”) work. A typical example of a situation

where a lazy person, who postpones his work until the last moment, has an advantage over a conscientious person who wants to get things done.

Jacobsen: Have many parts of the copy section have been altered in the history of *Thoth* description, based on adaptations and difficulties faced in the midst of production of it?

Cooijmans: Eight parts, it seems. The matter is always, how explicit and emphatic do you have to phrase something to get through to people who are persistently not “getting” it?

Jacobsen: What textual circumstances justify the use of italics and bold to you?

Cooijmans: In technical texts, when there are requirements or conventions to italicize or embolden things et cetera, it is justified to do so, and the best (or easiest) way to reproduce this in a journal is probably in image form, or in a tag-based markup language like H.T.M.L. or X.M.L. But in more informal prose, articles, columns and so on, when one’s writing has to be included in a publication edited by another person, it is plain antisocial to make heavy use of text layout features. Let me explain, for the sake of readers who have not experienced this hell first-hand: A submission that includes such layout as bold, italic, font changes and more tends to come in the form of a word processor document. The editor has to insert (or paste) this into the target document. Almost invariably, the layout is corrupted in this process, especially if the author’s and editor’s word processors are not of the exact same brand and version (which they never are, trust me; everyone’s computer system is different from everyone else’s!)

Repairing this corrupted version is usually so laborious, if possible at all, that it is more convenient to reduce the submission to plain text and redo the layout from scratch. Depending on the submission’s length and the use of layout, this is a tedious task because one has to scan with eagle eyes over the original and reproduce every layout feature one sees, with the risk of overlooking something. And then imagine the joy when the author sends a corrected version after one has already gone through this mountain of labour...

That is why it is generally best to submit copy as plain text. Unfortunately, many do not know these days what “plain text” is. They think that a text in a word processor document can be plain text, but this is not so. It contains hidden layout codes. Plain text is the output of text editors like Notepad.

Jacobsen: What contexts in submissions would justify unusual font colours, font sizes, font changes, font types, and so on?

Cooijmans: Almost the same answer as the previous question, except that these features are even much worse to deal with. For instance, most people do not realize that when they specify a certain font family, readers who do not happen to have that font installed on their system will see the text in a replacement font and it will look different. And this is the rule rather than the exception because, again, everyone’s computer system is different from everyone else’s. There are as good as no fonts that can be relied upon to be present on a random other person’s computer.

And yes, you can include a font in the eventual portable document format publication (popularly known as “P.D.F.”) with the “archive” option, but that increases file size. Is an individual copy submitter so important that you want to do that?

Jacobsen: What are the most common font colours, font sizes, font changes, and font types?

Cooijmans: In principal I use the font Verdana in *Thoth*, and make the size so that the number of characters on a line, excluding spaces, does not exceed 70. Legibility is about the number of

characters on a line, not about actual font size. You have to count them to get it right; otherwise the inexperienced amateur editor will choose a childishly big font, while the graphically inclined visual artist will gravitate toward the illegibly tiny (such people never actually read what they publish, they only look at the “big picture” and care not about the poor eyes of the readers).

The colour is black, except for warnings, which are strong red, or #CC0000 in hexadecimal code; incidentally, this was also the colour of the bow tie of the pianist who used to play in the hall of the institute where I took that web design course. On Saturdays, the day of my course, they were always showing around potential students and their parents, and a pianist was sitting there playing all day on a grand piano to create an attractive atmosphere to reel in new customers. Not infrequently, some of my fellow students expressed their secret desire to slowly strangulate afore-said musician. The piano did not bother me much though, being used to the cacophony of a music conservatory, where I sometimes sat practising in a study room with the noise of trombones, tubas, trumpets, and sopranos coming from neighbouring rooms so that it was hard to tell if my guitar made any sound at all. When all rooms were occupied, guitarists would sometimes practise in corridors or on the halfway-plateaus of staircases in between floors.

In Christmas time, a Christmas tree was placed in the hall of the web college, with a device attached to it that played pacifying Christmas melodies incessantly. This would not be turned off when the pianist came; he just had to hammer the keys a bit harder, and some students could then be observed making movements as if wringing a wet towel. The lessons lasted all day on Saturday, and many students came from remote parts of the country, some having to travel over 200 kilometres. This had to do with the fairly aggressive marketing by the (locally) somewhat notorious family who ran the institute. Incidentally, a course there would cost a bit over 4000 euros, but if you paid within two weeks you got a discount of almost 1000 euros, and under certain conditions you could take a second course for free.

Ideally, font family never changes. If someone submits copy with some marked and apparently intended layout, I try to copy or reproduce that, which is mostly more work than starting from plain text and applying the default Thoth layout.

While writing the above I realized that the following warning is in place: The default Thoth layout referred to here is applied after reducing a submission to plain text, as explained before. So, there is no point in trying to apply or imitate this default layout oneself in one’s submission; that self-applied layout will be removed anyway.

Jacobsen: Why are “the excessive use of layout features... the mark of bad authors”? (Ibid.)

Cooijmans: If you are an author of text, your task is to express yourself in words, in language, verbally. Layout is non-verbal, it is visual expression. If you find yourself needing things like italic, bold, colours, and font changes, that means you are failing to express yourself in words; that is, you are failing as an author of text. To overcome this, you should force yourself to avoid all layout and write purely in language, exerting yourself to express what you want to say in words. A good method is to use a text editor instead of a word processor; advanced text editors have spell checking, incidentally, so that is feasible. I always write in a text editor (Notepad++), never in a word processor. The advice contained in this paragraph will help more than one writer toward a Nobel prize in literature. (Editor, italicize that last sentence please.)

Jacobsen: If I may ask, or if the information may be divulged, what has been the single most read/viewed article in the history of *Thoth*? What was its content, theme? Who was its author?

What seems like the reason for the responsiveness to the publication?

Cooijmans: We have not done a formal counting, but the novel “Die Wohnungenparkdämmerung” by Barney Vincelette springs to mind. A highly idiosyncratic tale of culture clash, and controversial because of the violence occurring in it.

Jacobsen: On the frequent errors of copy, you state:

Although the above instructions should suffice, for extra redundancy here is a list of typical errors in submitting copy to make absolutely certain that the reader understands what is meant:

Submitting copy in .pdf format;

Leaving out the title of the piece;

Leaving out the author name;

Leaving out contact information (if applicable);

Withholding (not sending) copy that is ready, thinking that copy can only be submitted shortly before a “deadline”;

Sending corrections or corrected versions to already submitted copy;

Using excessive layout features like bold, italic, font colours, font size changes and so on;

Sending copy in several file formats simultaneously;

Submitting copy inside a message that also contains (non-copy) correspondence without very meticulously distinguishing the copy from the correspondence. (Ibid.)

What are the infrequent errors of copy?

Cooijmans: A few infrequent errors: Sending “original” essays that have really been constructed by copying and pasting from existing online news articles; sending esoteric “decodings” of hidden patterns in certain texts, works of art, or historical events; imitating the default layout of Thoth in one’s submission. The last is superfluous because I reduce the submission to plain text anyway and then apply the default layout. I know I already stated that a few answers ago, but these layout matters in word processing are so poorly understood that it is warranted to repeat this once more here, just for extra redundancy.

Jacobsen: What are frequent errors of copy, correspondence clarification, and future copy? Where you see an error in the copy, it’s pointed out by a Glia Society member or the Administrator. Yet, future submissions continue to contain the same kind of copy error by the same author.

Cooijmans: The repeated sending of corrected versions to already submitted copy is an example of that.

Jacobsen: The disclaimer states, “Everything published in Thoth is for the exclusive responsibility of the author. If you have comments on things you read in Thoth, respond to the author or in Thoth.” Are there any further disclaimers or caveats to the current disclaimer needing stating here – minutiae or common misunderstandings beyond the general statement?

Cooijmans: Not really, but it could be noted here that responding in Thoth to another’s article has become a bit old-fashioned, now that things can be discussed easier and quicker on Internet-based fora.

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Appendix I: Footnotes

- [1] Administrator, Giga Society; Administrator, Glia Society.
- [2] Individual Publication Date: March 22, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/cooijmans-4>; Full Issue Publication Date: May 1, 2021: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.
- [3] “The Glia Society: The journal “Thoth”” states:

Thoth is named after the Egyptian moon god, who weighed the hearts of the deceased to determine if they would be admitted to the hereafter or, if the examination was failed, torn apart by a monster. Thoth is also the name used by the future Grail Society member.

Cooijmans (n.d.f).

*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. Ricardo Rosselló Nevares on Democratic Participation, Colonialism, and Former President Donald J. Trump: Former Governor, Puerto Rico (3)

2021-03-22

Ricardo Rosselló Nevares holds a PhD in Bioengineering and Biotechnology. He graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) with a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry and Biomedical Engineering with a concentration in Developmental Economics. Rosselló continued his academic studies at the University of Michigan, where he completed a master's degree and a PhD in Bioengineering and Biotechnology. After finalizing his doctoral studies, he completed post-doctoral studies in neuroscience at Duke University, in North Carolina, where he also served as an investigator. Dr. Rosselló was a tenure track assistant professor for the University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus and Metropolitan University, teaching courses in medicine, immunology, and biochemistry. Dr. Rosselló's scientific background and training also makes him an expert in important developing areas such as genetic manipulation and engineering, stem cells, viral manipulation, cancer, tissue engineering and smart materials. He discusses: the moves made forward in the 2010s; and the Trump Administration.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Another aspect, I think the big cautionary note is vigilance about no matter how good things are; for instance, the approval ratings two months prior to then needing to resign. Maybe, not hypervigilance, but certainly vigilance.

When it comes to the people of Puerto Rico, a big thing is a 500+-year colonial history. So, that's a major issue. Well over 90% of the population wants equal status with other states. In other words, they want equal democratic participation for themselves, for democratic self-governance.

What have been some of the moves made forward in the 2010s that you consider the most significant, whether in the office or not?

Dr. Ricardo Rosselló[1],[2]*: The way I try to tell this story. There is a 500-year story of Puerto Rico. There is a 50-year story of Puerto Rico. Then there is a 5-year story, approximately, of Puerto Rico after that. We are a colonial territory.

We have been a colonial territory all of our existence. The first 400, some of Spain and Italy, after with the Hispanic-American War were transferred to the United States. So, never has Puerto Rico been an independent company or a full partner of another country.

It is something to really keep in mind. It is an inevitable part of our culture because it's been embedded into it for all of our existence. The second part, the 50 years, how government mismanagement based on these differences, because Puerto Rico as a colonial territory got some government 'freebies,' let's put it that way.

It became a tax haven for big corporations. Bondholders would not have to pay taxes on bonds that they bought in Puerto Rico. So, that was pretty active. It is an hour-long talk. How those mismanagements got us to the place where \$72 billion (USD) in debt in the bond markets, about \$50 billion in debt for unfunded pension liabilities, then the last 5 years, it has been a crosshair of how it crashed.

In my view, it crashed in 2014, when we didn't pay our first issuance of bonds. It, essentially,

removed us from the market or in the short-term from getting any money back, getting an oversight board. I'm sure all of the things that you have seen.

How do you get those things started and get some transformational reform and structural reform? Unfortunately, there's no fell swoop here. Everything, as with a lot of things, before it gets better, it's going to have its cracks.

Through it all, my thesis has been, "Hey, granted, there's been government mismanagement. There have been all these things. There's been corruption. But really, the root of all of this is that we're a colonial territory."

Citizens of Puerto Rico get a 1/4th of the same citizens in places like Florida. You only have to get a flight. That's it! It's not even complicated. All you have to do is make that transfer. That's one of the reasons people leaving Puerto Rico.

My thesis is that we have been needing to solve this problem. One thing I did prior to my administration was spearheading a first plebiscite that rejected colonial status. We won the plebiscite. Even though, the party lost. That was in 2012.

When I took office, I, immediately, established a plebiscite for the three alternatives – statehood, independence, or free associated states – to keep moving this agenda. Statehood won significantly, but a lot of the opposition members boycotted the event.

The only reason that you boycott an event like that is that you don't have a chance to win. This year, before I left office, I established another plebiscite that would run concurrent to the election. That way, the idea behind it is, "Listen, if we do it the same day as the election, you can't boycott it. You are going to vote for your candidates. You can't boycott this."

The first argument is in the past ten years. We have three distinct events, where the will of the people of Puerto Rico has said, "We don't want to be a colonial territory. We want to be an independent state." The next is, "How will the United States act?"

I thought it was improbable, but it crystallized. Since I was in office, I started working with Mayor Bowser, which is the mayor of Washington, D.C., to create this coalition saying, "You guys want to become a state. We want to become a state. It's different, constitutionally different, but we are, essentially, equal partners in this."

Interestingly, both jurisdictions have a focus that minorities are a majority. In Washington, D.C., black people are a majority. In Puerto Rico, Hispanics and Latinos are, obviously, a majority. So, we started doing that.

For the first time, there's a narrative over here in the States that democrats would stand to benefit, not only on their story, which is, "Let's give equal rights to all Americans," but also politically. Sometimes, I know, it is the ugly part of it.

I think that's also a reason why some Republicans were opposing statehood. They thought that Puerto Rico would become a democratic state and would cost them two seats in the Senate. Now, for the first time, you have a democratic president and a democratic House.

With recent events, you have, by the smallest of margins, a democratic Senate. So, there is a 2-year window in my view. If these things are going to happen, they can crystallize now. There needs to be a push. There needs to be a push from all parties.

From a global perspective, there has never been a clear path because of what has been said, because what is at stake, to have Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C., become states. I'm hopeful that those things will happen and, again, I put my little grain of sand in that process.

I'll still be [Laughing] pulling for that and helping as citizens or behind the scenes as much as I can, because I really think it is the single biggest difference that Puerto Rico has relative to any of the other states. It is the single different driver – the data is alarming.

Before, you would say, "Hey, so, Puerto Rico is the poorest state, twice as much as Mississippi or West Virginia." Now, there's more Puerto Ricans on the mainland than on the island. You can take what they represent as a state or as an economy, or health-wise, or crime-wise, and compare it to Puerto Rico.

The difference is staggering. I think there is an opportunity to do that and things will, hopefully, move along in the next 20 months or so.

Jacobsen: So, I want to touch on some of the recent political histories as well. This is the 500-year, 50-year, or 5-year. This is the 4-year-and-one-month or even a few weeks. For many years back, for many African-Americans, many black Americans, it was an interesting era with the Trump Administration.

Rosselló: [Laughing].

Jacobsen: As a Canadian, it was also interesting to watch from a distance. Probably, less fun in the midst of it, depending on your ethnic identity and political leaning in the United States.

Rosselló: [Laughing].

Jacobsen: Within January, the anti-science, the conspiracy theories, came to a head along with the ethnic nationalism, via the white nationalist form of it being stoked to a riot or an insurrection on the Capitol, on the Capitol building in particular.

As we all saw, one colleague posted about the QAnon Shaman. These sorts of things. From opinions and attitudes from Puerto Rico, what were the Trump years like for them? What was the reaction on social media and in the news to the insurrection on the 6th (Jan.)?

Rosselló: I can speak to this on many levels. First level is the quantitative level, I had access to public opinion polls. I can clearly share that sense with you. Essentially, President Trump had about a 100% approval rating in Puerto Rico. 10% for and 80% (or so) against. Not very different from the rest of the States.

Even though, the quantity was different. That 100% was staunch supporters. They were people that would take up the fight. Let's put it that way. I think he wasn't viewed as someone who did good by Puerto Rico.

I had the opportunity of interacting with him. I had this sort of question posed to me, which was, "I'm in a territory. I completely depend on the President allowing these funds to flow to Puerto Rico, so we can get FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), the military, and everybody, to help in this moment.

There are people attacking him. I am a democrat. I was never really quite understood how Trump – I shouldn't say that. I didn't expect Trump to win. The election days in Puerto Rico were the same as in the United States.

At 1:00 a.m., I was still in a press conference. Someone said, “Hey, he won, it seems there might be an outside chance Trump becomes president.” My answer was completely dismissive, “Hillary is going to win. I’ll be working within her,” etc.

Then the results came in. The position I was in, I was like, “Do I trash the president just because everybody doesn’t like him and then risk the people of Puerto Rico not getting anything or do I have to play ball with him?”

Even though, I’m going to get attacked and scrutinized because I sat down with the man. I welcomed him to the island. I spent time with him. The position was very clear, very obvious, “I can’t put 3,000,000 people at risk because I will get a headline if I say, ‘This guy is x, y, or z.’”

So, my decision was that while, at the same time, the mayor of San Juan – who was also an opponent of mine – was heavily critical of Trump. She would get all of the headlines, all of the news stories. I was try to get to sit down with this man who doesn’t have the biggest of attention spans and is very much a “you’re with me or against me” type of persona.

I think I, for the first couple of months, was able to manage. Little has been said. But in the beginning, we were going to get nothing, zero. I was able to move that to \$19.9 billion (USD). It was a bipartisan effort. Maybe, another time, we can go through that story. It is an interesting one.

I think, obviously, this is my opinion; the man is flawed. I don’t think he cared about policy. I tried to talk to him about policy: didn’t care, didn’t even try to hide the fact that he didn’t care. But I think a lot of people underestimated him, as well.

I have never a met a person with better political, raw political, instincts than him. I think that needs to be part of the story. That is why, and in some ways, Trump represents what is going on, this divisiveness. This is why some people see him as the saviour.

Even though, it is a lower number of people. Some see him as the son of Satan. In some ways – and apologies for getting into this, I think explains a little bit what is going on. The two side, in my view, keep on getting more extreme sometimes.

There are no bridges. There are very few bridges left. I think that’s going to be Joe Biden’s big challenge now. How does he rebuild some of those bridges? How do we get to a point where we can completely disagree on politics, but we don’t have to want to kill the other opposition guy?

In many ways, my fear with Trump is that he was a manifestation of that divisiveness. He, of course, poured gas into the fire, but we’re dealing with Puerto Rico. In the beginning, he was – I can say, I want to give him his due – trying to, but then his White House, apparently, disconnected.

As the years went along, people left. He got himself more in isolation. We could not connect with him anymore. Progress stopped occurring for Puerto Rico. That got me into several media battles with him as well.

So, I think he is going to be seen poorly. Again, on a policy basis, I think it’s accurate. On an execution basis, it was underwhelming. But again, I think there’s a lot to dissect. Instead of saying, “Let’s wipe the slate clean and move forward and heal,” we really need to think about what the hell got us into this situation in the first place.

Why is this happening? How can we start mending this? Otherwise, my fear, Scott: If the prevailing attitude is going to be from the new side, “Hey, you have to heal with us because we say you have to heal with us.” It won’t work out. I hope it does, but I don’t think it will.

I think there needs to be patience, time to heal, and time to understand the phenomena that was this presidency.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Former Governor, Puerto Rico.

[2] Individual Publication Date: March 22, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/rossello-3>;
Full Issue Publication Date: May 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 Gareth Rees on Genius and Philosophy: Member, Canadian High IQ Society (2)

2021-04-01

***Gareth Rees** is a Member of the Canadian High IQ Society. He discusses: 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; job path; the more important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses; God; science; the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations); the range of the scores; ethical philosophy; social philosophy; economic philosophy; political philosophy; metaphysics; theology; worldview-encompassing philosophical system; meaning in life; meaning; an afterlife; the mystery and transience of life; and love.*

Scott Douglas 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.

Gareth Rees[1],[2]*: I do not have a great answer for this. Negative reactions that lead to death likely threatened then current paradigms, positions of power or monetary inflows. Those mocked were probably poor communicators or their surrounding kind were of low mean intelligence, making it difficult to be understood. Reasons for the opposite ends of those reactions are usually the witnessing of whatever groundbreaking production. Seeing is believing, and in such cases, it is simply novelty (not seen before). It is a simple rule of deviating from the norm. Deviating enough results in getting noticed and that is sometimes inevitable. It can also get more complex than what I have mentioned though. There is also the social dynamics side of this phenomena but that is not as important. People simply enjoy having role models or heroes, there might be an aspect of divinity therein. The element of rarity is another ingredient for such reactions.

Not wanting to be in the spotlight is probably due to most geniuses being introverts. If nothing or little is gained from it or they find the attention off-putting then perhaps it is the way the media is framing such events. The media can be obnoxious, so I am not surprised.

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

Rees: I believe I have answered this before. The ones that are also mystics are my favorites. Tesla, Einstein, and Newton are my favorites. There are so many geniuses that have lived as enough time has passed despite their rarity. Another one was possibly Walter Pitts, but he was destroyed by a certain someone's irrationality and might not have been a genius but just one with an IQ >170 SD15.

There's also Archimedes, Maxwell, Ramanujan, and da Vinci that I admire.

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

Rees: One must accept that a genius is more than one identified by IQ. This would best be answered on a case-by-case basis. A high caliber genius such as Ramanujan is extremely difficult to explain. He supposedly did not quite have the distasteful personality that has been most common. Such a personality is not static anyway, or at least is dependent on mood, therefore diet, health, social life, status, resources etc. States of mind change from minute to minute, hour to

hour, day to day, week to week and so on. If Ramanujan truly received most of his insights in his dreams, then that is some very powerful unconscious noesis. It is almost as if he was given the knowledge as he claimed. This is extremely disturbing from an artificial intelligence standpoint. It implies a limit, but one can hope his interpretation of dreams are simply coincidental. In other words, Ramanujan was of divine being. More than just IQ, more than just being creative and more than just being in states of high creative output. It would take a super intelligence to deconstruct the algorithms of intelligence that he possessed.

There have been other models of genius that have been extended. Paul Cooijmans has two very well explained definitions that are necessary to grasp the concept. Starting from Eysenck, Paul has reiterated intelligence, associative horizon, and conscientiousness. I would like to add that conscientiousness is required to produce work over extended periods of time, it is not quite necessary to come up with the ideas required for the work. Conscientiousness also aids in learning, but it is not necessary to keep an interest in whatever one's subject is.

Another important detail is awareness as outlined by Paul Cooijmans. From my understanding, being in a genius state, awareness is increased. This is highly important because not many discuss or reference it. I think this is probably the most common situation for one's mind required for extreme breakthroughs. High awareness is not sustainable though. It requires a certain brain wiring/structure which is not neurotypical, and on top of that the amplification of awareness is regulated by dopamine/serotonin. Dopamine is the neurochemical driver of mania. There is some research that suggests being in a state of flow leads to genius, but this is something different that is not even that rare. Genius is the rarest of all. We can even stream a synthetic version which is by the pharmaceutical product, Adderall. This is something that is relatively new, released in 1996.

To sum it up, a profoundly intelligent person is much less complex than a genius. A profoundly intelligent person can be identified by IQ alone, if one defines an arbitrary classification as such. 160 SD15 is quite commonly used for this category, but that is just a score achieved on one test. Enough tests need to be taken to qualify one at that level.

It is usually said that Mensa accepts those in the top 2%, but really, they accept a score of 130 (should be 130.8) SD15 which leads to members not actually requiring an IQ within the top 2%. Paul has also mentioned this. This goes for any high IQ society though, including his own, Glia.

There's more to be said about this distinction but this should suffice. Genius is extremely rare. It requires training of the mind, the necessary genes for the unique brain wiring and reception to neurochemistry. It requires intelligence and optimal personality characteristics. It requires time and isolation. It requires passion and conscientiousness. It requires luck of being born in the right era for whatever that genius is wired to do. It requires being in delicate states which are not sustained, but not all geniuses seem to require this. They are often molded by harsh environments, sometimes involving the death of a parent at an early age. A profound intellect mostly just requires a healthy upbringing. It also doesn't hurt to have mentors and a strong intellectual social network or more.

Jacobsen: Is profound intelligence necessary for genius?

Rees: If 160 SD15 is a level of profound intelligence, then no, it is not.

Jacobsen: What have been some work experiences and jobs held by you?

Rees: Factory worker, door-to-door sales, IT support worker and software specialist. There are

more but they are not anything special.

Jacobsen: Why pursue this particular job path?

Rees: I work best when I am at a computer. That will never change.

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?

Rees: The fact that the word “genius” is overused, and still used as an IQ classification, whether that arbitrary cut-off is 140, 150 or 160 SD15. It is not important; it is just annoying. The researchers know the distinction, so no harm done really.

Harm can come from expectations though, so really if parents think their child is destined for greatness just by evidence of an IQ score, they are likely to be disappointed while at the same time torturing their child.

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

Rees: Sure, if I were God and had to please both sides, I would design it so intentional belief with heart was enough to make it so. If one believes in God, then God exists for them in their reality. If they do not think God exists, then there is no existence of God for them. If one wanted to live in an afterlife and did not want it to be heaven, that would be granted too, from God though. This is quite like the CTMU by Chris Langan.

Other than that, I do not care much for it. Some people seem to require it; The need for support or a framework. Provided they are not trying to influence others too strongly then it is mostly harmless. The biggest problems seem to come from wars caused by religion, but there would be wars regardless I would think.

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

Rees: I am typing on a computer and use electronics daily, and mostly listen to electronic music. The result of science is the biggest aid to my life bar none.

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

Rees: My scores worth mentioning are as follows:

DynamiQ (1st attempt) 150 SD15

FIQure (1st attempt) 150 SD15

WARP (avg of 1st/2nd) 149 SD15

LexIQ 152 SD15

CIT5 152 SD15

PIGS3 154 SD15

VAULT 162 SD15

GIFT III N 158 SD15

GIFT IV V 156 SD15

GIFT III V 160 SD15

GENE III V 146 SD15

GET (avg of 1st/2nd) 147.5 SD15

Verbatim 148 SD15

VerbiQ 150 SD15

Vortex 151 SD15

SymbolIQ 158 SD15

WIT 148 SD15

Spark 142 SD15

Logica Stella 140 SD15

W-Test 148 SD15

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.

Rees: My scores range from 115 SD 15 to ~160 SD15. My outlier scores are on homogeneous tests, so they aren't that meaningful. My attempts are also quite brief as I am not that persistent. I am not the kind of person that is able to work on a test for months on end as I end up getting bored.

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

Rees: That is private for now. I will make it public later.

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

Rees: I do not really understand the importance of a social philosophy. People will do what they want to do, given whatever constraints they wish to abide by.

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

Rees: This is dependent on the citizenry. Different systems work for different people, so I am not sure I would subscribe to one. I would divide the people up and optimize to tailor to their benefit and thus the system.

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

Rees: Same deal as above. Since not one works for everyone, it is best to divide people up. Existing philosophies could have their complexity increased as an alternative, but that's messy, time consuming and might not work.

Jacobsen: What metaphysics makes some sense to you, even the most workable sense to you?

Rees: My own of course. More detail on that later through other means of communication. I have a negative outlook on the utility of metaphysics. It is hard to transform it into meaningful use for everyone. Making a framework isomorphic to sensory experience is not only very difficult, but not even really necessary.

Jacobsen: What is theology to you? Is this an important part of life for you?

Rees: Theology is an interesting development. People long for an answer and the popular one has seemed to be an easy way to deal with the inception of reality. It is not that important to me.

Jacobsen: What worldview-encompassing philosophical system makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?

Rees: That intelligence rules all and determines the future.

Jacobsen: What provides meaning in life for you?

Rees: Positive sensory experiences. Being on the computer, being with a woman or exercising. Daydreaming. I am a slave to dopamine as is everyone that is free enough to benefit from it.

Jacobsen: Is meaning externally derived, internally generated, both, or something else?

Rees: Meaning is determined by level of investment, which can be associated with low to high level attribution and time. It is obviously external mapped then internally processed, executed by a continuous process we call consciousness/awareness.

Jacobsen: Do you believe in an afterlife? If so, why, and what form? If not, why not?

Rees: An afterlife could be fun. I would not mind one. I also would not say I believe in it since it implies uncertainty. If it is a possibility then cool, sign me up.

Jacobsen: What do you make of the mystery and transience of life?

Rees: I have no idea. Life just is. If there is a higher order of being then it is not going to be easy to reach.

Jacobsen: What is love to you?

Rees: A neurological, biological, and chemical process. It is a synergy of many things from awareness of the object, the experience, impact, and evolutionary bind that forms the bond. Pretty faces or beauty gives us dopamine. We cannot escape this constraint, but would we want to? The rest that follows is more complex, but the gist is that love serves as trust and survival for our species.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Member, Canadian High IQ Society.

[2] Individual Publication Date: April 1, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/rees-2>; Full Issue Publication Date: May 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 Master Chef Craig Shelton on Science, Food, Farming, and Finance: Founder, Aeon Hospitality (2)

2021-04-01

Chef Craig Shelton has over 40 years of experience in science-based cooking and teaching in the hospitality business. He trained in eight of the world's greatest restaurants, including "El Bulli", "Jamin"; "Ma Maison", "L'Auberge de l'Ill", "Le Pré Catelan", "Bouley", "Le Bernardin", and "La Côte Basque. Chef Shelton has earned countless awards as Chef-Owner of his own restaurants including a James Beard Best Chef medal, NY Times 4-Stars ratings on four separate occasions, a 5-Star Forbes rating, the Relais & Châteaux Grand Chef title; and Number One Top Restaurant in America in 2004 from GQ. Mr. Shelton is also an instructor at Princeton University in the Princeton Environmental Institute, where he teaches a freshman seminar on the interrelationships between public policy, agriculture, diet-related disease and anthropogenic climate change. Mr. Shelton began his expertise in this area while an undergraduate of Yale where he earned his degree in Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry. He is a co-founder of the think tank, Princeton Center for Food Studies, the founder of King's Row Coffee, and a co-founder of Aeon Holistic Agriculture, Inc. He is recognized as a consummate business consultant with specialization in macro finance. He is known for his ability to generate excitement in his cooks and instill in them the drive toward excellence by connecting all aspects of gastronomy to the larger intellectual landscape – chemistry, ecology, literature, art and human physiology. His great passions are reading and ocean sailing. His full C.V. can be seen [here](#). More about [Aeon Hospitality](#), [Mountainville Manor](#), [Aeon Holistic Agriculture](#), [Kings Row Coffee](#), and [Princeton Studies Food](#) (in the hyperlinks provided). He discusses: science; Aeon Hospitality; financial consulting; awards; and restaurant models.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: So, we were cut short due to time constraints yesterday around the subject matter, which you've devoted 20+ to 35+ years of your life depending on the metric. This is around culinary arts and business, and the biophysics infused into those, not everyone will do them. Because they take common sense and folk knowledge from centuries past into the current style of culinary art. When, in fact, the science may have some evidence contrary to what is considered wisdom from days past. Let's talk a little more.

Master Chef Craig Shelton[1],[2]*: What is interesting too, there is so much pent-up demand. When you've allowed an entire century to pass, and have almost isolated a discipline like the culinary arts, you've isolated it from any and all advances made in the rest of the intellectual world.

Once that pin is pricked, it's an intellectual prophylactic. Then there's an explosion. So, it really came in the moment with El Bulli, so, it didn't just like a light switch happen that one day; no one is willing to embrace or talk about or allow reading about kitchen science, then it became a little bit allowed.

It was like an absolute immersion. It went from nothing to everything seemingly in the top kitchens. It was laboratory-type equipment. People are pushing this thing on steroids. It was quite an extraordinary thing to witness. A deficit has built up over centuries, this intellectual deficit.

When the levy broke, it was quite a flood. It was really quite a beautiful thing to witness. To be in that picture for a while, to see it, it was important.

Jacobsen: Why the name Aeon Hospitality?

Shelton: So often, people and companies are consulting companies, economists. I did not use that because I wanted to emphasize an intellectual position rather than a personality. Most hospitality comes to a brand of a personality.

I was a very reserved, very quiet, very brainy human being. Then all of the sudden, it is my turn to be a sous chef. In those days, back in the mid- to late-80s of the last century, there was this presumption of a larger than life personality. I had to manufacture one, adopt my style.

It took a certain effort to get into producing a persona that I felt was required for the task. I think part of this explosion, which kept some out of the discipline. I think it levels off rather quickly. Then the notion of chefs was not so thoughtful.

It suddenly allowed for a much broader type of presentation.

Jacobsen: How do you build financial consulting into the expertise you have around hospitality and running restaurants?

Shelton: It is a question that deserves a question. In the sense, when you say, “Financial,” there is a whole suite of disciplines in finance. There’s expertise in raising money. There’s expertise in managing money.

The kind of expertise that would come into play when you’re running a restaurant have to do with general knowledge. It’s odd the industry has no exposure to financial concepts, time value of money, pricing of risk.

The most basic fundamentals of the entire body of knowledge in our world. But it is most useful for people in understanding the basics: What do you mean by “present value”? What do you mean by “these things”? What do you mean by “return on”? What is the function of a business?

How many thousands of times a manager said to me, “Craig, how can you say this project is upside down when it profits?” They don’t understand the difference between an operating profit and a return on investment, even something as simple as that.

It completely can change the way people can understand their job, the management of labour. So, it’s kind of like this. You have studied a lot of high-range people. You become more – I’m sure – learned in a range of subject matters, which is quite expansive.

Here’s this person who experiences a similar thing, which he chose to stay current, he is reading the *Harvard Business Review* vigorously each month. Every year, these kinds of journals publish lists of the most important business books ever written.

You start reading some of the stuff. There’s absolutely no limit to how much it could improve your business, how much it improves your life, your inner life and relationships in life. What you find, in a lot of industries, this is a long-time standing observation.

Entrepreneurs are too busy to work on improving their business, more lives suffer, even more tragic on the lives on their employees who dramatically suffer for it. The businesses suffer for it. They are underperforming.

I have read so much. I have real-world experience, as I have CPAs in my companies, MBAs in my companies, who helped me along; I tried to get mentors for me, from an early age. One of my business partners was very, very, very, successful as a United States developer.

He allowed me to be his mentor, and an understudy of how he runs successful companies. Like you, when I was young, my restaurant was in the middle of the world's most important pharmaceutical center, New Jersey.

One of the centers for telecommunications was there and for business products, e.g., insurance, financial services. So, the people who come to my restaurant every single day for 25 years are some of the best minds in the business world, in the entire world, I befriended many of them.

They were absolutely generous in sharing their insights with me. I was extremely fortunate in that way.

Jacobsen: You've had a number of awards. "#1 Top Restaurant in America" in 2004 from *GQ*, a 5-star *Forbes* rating, a number of distinguished titles or accolades for performance in your relevant area. What do you attribute most of the success at the highest to now?

How do you integrate that into more improvements still in the performance of a restaurant, of the consulting, while still keeping your feet on the ground while acknowledging individual and collective excellence either under the individual or business name?

Shelton: One of my taglines is "I never witnessed a business in my life ever working harder than us." Every restaurant, generally, which I have seen fail, is people weren't thinking deeply enough, certainly not deeply often enough.

Jacobsen: In what way?

Shelton: In every way, business models, the business model was broken 150 years ago, but there was more demand than supply. If you had 25 days, I could start talking and never repeat myself and not run out of new topics.

I'll give you the simplest example. Every restaurant in the world punishes good customers and rewards bad customers. All of the incentives in restaurants reward things that lead to bankruptcy and punishes things leading to financial success.

Jacobsen: Is this where the restaurant models were broken 150 years ago?

Shelton: Yes, if you used to own a restaurant in Italy or France, you most likely inherited it from your father, who inherited it from his. Your pricing model did not need to include capitalization expenses, because you inherited it tax-free.

Secondly, who were your workers, all these family enterprises didn't have to account for labour. It was your family. You didn't need to pay for all the labour and made profits if you will. Overhead was generally diminished because there weren't a lot of insurance costs, of marketing going on, etc.

These things were negligible to many of their costs. Primarily, it had not yet gone through the artificial asset inflation process of the 20th century in British banking and in Europe. So, what I observed early on, the fact of three macros in business.

The cost of the materials on the plate or on the glass if you're drinking. Then you have labour, which is the second macro. The third is all the single line items. We call this overhead in business. It could be 500 things all related to this.

At any rate, the point is: If you think about it, if you do the thought experiments, you understand the labour or the overhead costs are, actually, fixed costs. That is, if you filled your restaurants

with 100 diners, and if each dish sold might be a chicken dish, on one given night in the suburbs with a single seating (they're not turning the tables in America in the suburbs), you're selling chicken at 20\$ per person.

On some other arbitrary night, it happens the same number of people, 100 people, came in and ordered the most expensive item. Let's say the rack of lamb at 50\$ a plate, would there be a penny's difference in the labour between those items? The answer is "No."

Would there be a penny's difference in the overhead? The answer is "No." Those things have to be considered fixed. The only variable thing is the cost of goods. There is not a single restaurant in the world pricing to that reality.

No one says, "I have a million dollars a year of the combination of labour and overhead. I have 100,000 customers in the year. Therefore, my pricing model should be $1,000,000/100,000$ equals 10\$ at fixed cost plus the variable cost, whatever it is that they choose to eat, plus some amount of profit.

There is not a single restaurant in the world, outside of my own clients, which have even the awareness of this. Then what happens, they are coached by the finance community into this faulty way of thinking, which is the way you price everything.

You only worry about the cost of goods. A 5\$ cost of goods for this dish, mark it up times 3 for 15\$. A 10\$ cost of goods goes to 30\$. A 15\$ dish goes to 45\$, and so forth. Then they're told, "If you subtract the cost of goods from the retail price, then you get gross margin."

In those cases, 15 minus 5 is 10, 30 minus 10 is 20, 45 minus 10 is 35. Now, we're going to allocate a fixed percentage of the gross margin to account for labour in each of these cases, which is – let's say – 50% of gross margin.

So, that'd be 5\$, 10\$, and 15\$. The overhead may be 40% of those margins: 4\$, 8\$, and 12\$. That is a mathematical representation. It seems to tell you. In the case of the first dish, you are making 1\$ on the first, 2\$ on the second, 3\$ on the third.

It is like mainstream economics, but it excludes banks, credit, and money from their formulas describing the new economy. It may be beautiful mathematics. It may be stunningly beautiful mathematics. But does it have any relationship whatsoever to reality?

The answer in both cases is "no." Hence, the almost perfect failure of prediction in economics. They resort to calling things black swans, as in unpredictable, rather than realizing the models are based on false assumptions.

Why did you exclude this money from the banking sector, when it's the single largest source of money? Perhaps, 50:1 or 100:1 depending on the nation. Economics entirely omitted it. It is a similar kind of situation in restaurants.

The reality: Once you understand, it doesn't matter what the customer orders once the labour and the overhead is fixed. "I am not making money on the chicken dish. I am losing 12\$ on a dish, which I sell for 15\$. I am overcharging the customer." Not knowing this, not understanding things such as what the true cost of using your purveyors as your source of interim credit rather than using the financial institution for credit.

These are multimillion-dollar mistakes. I can keep going on, and on, and on, where the first assumptions, almost everything held to be true in the hospitality industry, are absolutely wrong. So,

there's lots of opportunity if you can get someone into a place of willingness to do something generally uncomfortable in our industry, which is this thing called "thinking."

When you have mispriced your entire array of goods, it comes down to this: Not understanding, every restaurateur has been brainwashed into believing that they have one business, which is to sell food and beverage; the reality is quite different.

The reality: You have two different businesses under one roof, not even in the same industry. You manufacture food. You merely retail beverage. When you manufacture, you have to include the *pro rata* cost, fixed costs, per product or per customer.

In addition to the variable cost, now, the beverage component is purely discretionary. It's purely incremental. Therefore, it should be priced as no proportion of the fixed costs in it. What ends up happening, in most restaurants, if you do the forensics correctly, you realize.

They are losing about 75% on the totality of their food sales. If you took away all the beverages, you would see that they are losing the food part at about a 75% loss. That's the reason that they have to mark up their beverages for an average of 4 times. That's how they stay alive.

It is two mistakes trying to cancel each other out. You are gouging on the beverage side because you are mispricing on the food side. It is not that they are overcharging or undercharging. They are doing both. You are overcharging on the expensive items.

You are dramatically undercharging on the cheaper items. You are turning your generic customers, unwittingly, with your improper use of math. You turn them into customers who lose money on the food side and aren't even aware of it.

This terrible so-called solution is to gouge everybody on their beverage purchases, which especially punishes the people who want the finer things, e.g., the nicer bottles of wine or the nicer drinks. They really get gouged. That's one small example.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Founder, Aeon Hospitality.

[2] Individual Publication Date: April 1, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/shelton-2>; Full Issue Publication Date: May 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 Dr. Ricardo Rosselló Nevares on the American Social and Political Framework, and Puerto Rico and the Coronavirus: Former Governor, Puerto Rico (4)

2021-04-01

Ricardo Rosselló Nevares holds a PhD in Bioengineering and Biotechnology. He graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) with a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry and Biomedical Engineering with a concentration in Developmental Economics. Rosselló continued his academic studies at the University of Michigan, where he completed a master's degree and a PhD in Bioengineering and Biotechnology. After finalizing his doctoral studies, he completed post-doctoral studies in neuroscience at Duke University, in North Carolina, where he also served as an investigator. Dr. Rosselló was a tenure track assistant professor for the University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus and Metropolitan University, teaching courses in medicine, immunology, and biochemistry. Dr. Rosselló's scientific background and training also makes him an expert in important developing areas such as genetic manipulation and engineering, stem cells, viral manipulation, cancer, tissue engineering and smart materials. He discusses: American political extremes; and the coronavirus for Puerto Ricans.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Looking at Canada, as a comparative metric, we have the similar situation with two dominant parties, but three minor to moderate-sized parties in terms of election numbers. In the United States, much more extreme with the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. You see a bit with the Green Party and the Liberty Party.

I think you may see this with the Pirate Party or something. Extreme support of anything science-supporting in policy. I don't know if it is thought out much beyond that. This binary of two extremes becoming more extreme, as you stated it.

It is, certainly, reflective of a condition of the United States that is concerning because when the wind blows with the United States. You don't what other boats it is going to rock if not bump into because it \$20,000,000,000,000+.

Only the European Union and the People's Republic China have a similar kind of financial force. What are you seeing as some of the root sources of these divisions that then lead to this bifurcation, this splitting into extremes in either direction?

Dr. Ricardo Rosselló[1],[2]*: I think this phenomena, even though it is occurring in the United States, as you said, is reverberating in many different parts of the world. I think there is a reason or several reasons for this. One, I think social media has changed the game.

There are a lot of voices, which is good. Now, the sort of negative symptom that I see. Unless, you make an outrageous claim. You really won't get covered. Let's take healthcare, you have three folks. One says, "I have this proposal: work with the insurance companies, work with choice. This and that," sort of nuance.

Another says, "Let's completely privatize healthcare." Another says, "Let's give healthcare completely for free." Who do you think is going to get more attention?

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Rosselló: It is, unfortunately in my view, the person who says, "Just give it for free," versus the

guy who says, “Privatize everything,” because it is a sort of a seemingly simplistic solution to a very complex problem. That’s a fell swoop.

I’m not diminishing. There are some things where solutions may be like that. I’m saying not all the solutions are like that. In fact, many are complex and nuanced. You need to think of secondary and tertiary effects.

What do I think keeps on happening? People see that the more extreme – I do not mean “extreme” derogatorily – or on the fringes that you make a statement, or the bolder the accusation or the bolder the statement, then the more coverage you’re going to get.

It is a symptom of something. Someone might have an interest analytical solution to one of these problems. Nobody cares. That’s one thing. A second thing, I lived this. I told myself as an element of discipline when I was governor, “I am not going to attack the opposition. I am going to oppose them on policy issues.”

The strength of the personal and negative attack, the effect of it, is so much greater than anything positive that you can do. Inevitably, a rational player in the game will always say, “If I want to get to do this, I will have to play by these rules and will have to get nastier.”

If Nancy Pelosi stands up and says, “I kind of disagree with President Trump.” It is not the same as saying, “That guy is crazy and has to be imprisoned.” What one of the two is going to get the headlines? That’s where I think this complexity is a little bit out of hand in a way.

Jacobsen: It’s our fault as journalists too. We play into this.

Rosselló: It’s everybody’s fault. It is like a chicken and an egg thing. People want to consume something. Take CNN, for example, CNN was – 20 years ago, 15 years ago – maybe, left-leaning, but center-left. It was sort of an editorial push.

Washington Post over here, as well. It has gone to a place, where it is very bold, strict statements that fly in the face and catch your attention. When you see that, and you’re producing as a media entity, you see; there’s been other media outlets that have tried to stay informing the news.

Those have died out. Again, taking just the news shows, I say “CNN.” But you could apply this to anyone. Back in the day, I remember watching with my grandfather *Crossfire*. It was the talking heads show. The rest was the news. Now, it’s the opposite. It’s like there’s an opinion show 50 minutes out of every hour, then it’s like “this happened.”

Because of the strength of that, there has been this emergent phenomenon. In my view, there is this big center. That was partially my calculation and I’ll tell you how I failed. There is this big center looking for rational solutions. Neither from the left or the right.

What is the rational solution to improve the quality of life of the people in my jurisdiction? Because the initial conditions in Puerto Rico are different than the initial conditions in Vancouver. Policy that might apply there might not apply here.

My view was, “I’m going to try to apply this scientific approach.” But because I was so tame, in the middle, I was sort of over-run by the corners. Then there’s another thing that you said. I want to be watchful. I don’t to pass judgment.

But I want to be watchful. I hear people say, “Let’s listen to science. Let’s listen to the experts.” I hope this doesn’t become a tag sentence that becomes cute. Because you can repeat it over and over again. There’s so much noise. They won’t be able to tell the difference.

I can envision two paths. Either we say it and we do it. I have some ideas on how we can get there. Or people say it. They will say it from both sides, but just use different data to support their claims.

Jacobsen: Sure [Laughing], which is primarily anti-scientific.

Rosselló: It is! It is. Even though, on the top layer of it, it is “trust science, trust science, trust science,” but it is really “trust science only if it fits into your storyboard.” Before, there was not a lot of information. People didn’t have enough information, perhaps, to make the correct choice.

Now, there’s so much information. I fear people have an innate feeling of something: “I like this” or “I like that.” They will pick-and-choose whatever data fits into that as opposed to being persuaded because the data is so strong on one side and so strong on the other.

To me, one of the clear issues is climate change. I make no apologies that climate change is happening and is happening at a very speedy rate. Not only do I say this as a scientist, I say this as somebody who had to lead a jurisdiction was the third hardest hit jurisdiction in global climate change in the world.

I – literally – saw an island off the coast of Puerto Rico called Palominito. It was there four years ago. It’s not there anymore. I’ve seen the hurricanes, of course. I have seen the coastlines. For Republicans, unfortunately, depends on your prism, to have veered into this opposition view of climate change – some of them, it seems ludicrous to me.

Because there’s no more conservative agenda in the galaxy than avoiding climate change.

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Rosselló: Somehow, some way, “if my opponent is here, I have to be in a stark contrast over here. Otherwise, I get railroaded.” There’s a lot of that happening. There’s two paths. It could unravel a little bit. My gut tells me: it’ll unravel for a little bit longer, then things will, like the ebbs and flows of waves, start coming back to the shoreline.

It is still concerning to see that that is the paradigm and whoever yells loudest and has the craziest claim has a seat at the table.

Jacobsen: In Canada, our most cited doctor is a epidemiologist named Gordon Guyatt. He makes the distinction between equity and autonomy in medical systems. Western European, most North Americans excluding the United States, value equity when it comes to healthcare.

So, then you get kind of a nationalized healthcare system, in the United States, they value autonomy more, so get privatization more in healthcare. So, he doesn’t make it in terms of a judgment, but the outcome you would expect in different situations of evaluation, intersubjective national evaluation of what matters in certain areas.

Even in Canada, he said ‘by accident’ to me. We don’t have pharmacare [Laughing]. Some Western European countries have pharmacare, which allows them to bargain better. In Puerto Rico, you have a situation in which healthcare and pharmacare are not present.

Yet, after your term in office, Puerto Rico has the coronavirus impacting it. There is a distance from other areas in which there may be more supplies to give the citizenry. How are Puerto Ricans handling the coronavirus? What is the situation for ordinary citizens?

Rosselló: I think it is similar to what is happening in the United States, but with a wider broken

structural integrity. When you look at a black elephant event, like a pandemic, some say it is a black swan, because it is unexpected. I think we should expect pandemics.

We should embed them into the design of whatever it is that we are doing. Now, you could see countries that do that responding better. There's a plethora of different factors. It is hard to compare a democratic society to an autocratic society and how they respond.

Whether you like it or not, that matters, but there are some things that I think are important in this. It's one of the big things. If we move forward with this scientific mentality in the United States and in the world, I do believe there is a need to create what other places have created.

But we need to tailor it more to a Western mindset, which is a foresight capability. The way I see this is people talk about science and people talk about government. Let me go back philosophically to what I have found are the major differences between being a political figure and a scientist, I happen to be both.

The scientist, typically, explores *ad nauseam*, looks for every little thing, analyzes, has the whole map in front of them, but are reluctant to make a conclusion from it. They, typically – and by “typically,” I mean “we typically,” the political figure needs no evidence, a whim or an intuition if you will. Some have it; some don't.

They can make a very clear and concrete determination based on it. If this is the starting point, if you agree with this concept that this is a starting point, and if we endeavour to merge the world's of science and politics and policy, there needs to be some bridges made to approximate that.

To me, one possible solution, they may be many, which may be better. One possible solution is creating or establishing a basis of your government, like the judicial system, but a system of foresight that is there to do a few functions.

Number one, to care-take for longer term projects, one of the advantages, for example, which could be a disadvantage as well; one of the advantages that Qatar or one of those places has the autocratic rule saying, “The next 40 years, we are going to invest here. This is what is going to happen.”

The liability in the democratic system is I could come and say, “We're going to invest here,” and then a few years later. Somebody comes to say, “No, no, scratch that, we're going to invest here.” It might be good, but that might also be bad for long-term growth.

We need to start segregating some of these things that are infrastructure, for example. It needs to be always changing, but a longer term endeavour because, otherwise, you're never going to see those results. Similarly, crisis and disaster management is something that's rarely on the mind of elected officials.

Because they operate – their space of operation is solving the problems right ahead or looking forward to a brighter future, but avoiding all these inconveniences, avoiding earthquakes, avoiding pandemics. I see that one possible path is creating a foresight function, embed it into government.

You put scientists there. But also, you put project managers there. The idea is you have all of these people in a dormant state for some time planning, preparing, and doing these things with foresight, expecting, and helping.

In the dormant state, you help the leader develop his path. So, you give the leader, “Hey, here are

all the conditions, these are all the things that we see. These are all of the facts. You create a path forward. These are the things that we see. These are the things that we need to look at, and consider.”

Say an earthquake, a hurricane, or a pandemic hit, then these teams, different to the rest of the political establishment, they’re ready to be activated, because they are thinking about this all the time. You couple this with project management, then you deploy.

Now, for example, the United States has FEMA. FEMA is another big bureaucratic monster. It gives a lot of money and that’s great. But it is nowhere near as effective. I’ve had this thought for four years. I tried to implement this in Puerto Rico.

It was a long-term path forward. The pandemic highlights why this is necessary. With the pandemic, you are battling a virus that is really 14-days ahead of you. A lot of policymakers that didn’t understand that were always going to be behind the curve.

They were reacting what is happening today. What is really happening, it is what you are projecting happening in 14 days. I think establishing that model will be very helpful. So, bringing it back to Puerto Rico and to the United States, I think they lack that model. Singapore has that model. Great Britain in some parts has that model.

Again, other factors, just by the sheer or the immediate reaction of some of these countries, “Hey, put a mask on”; whereas, others took months. The numbers are staggering in terms of the difference that one fact provided. I think there needs to be that bridge between science and policy, and politics.

There needs to be that institutionalized mentality of how we create this. I know it’s very raw how I foresee it. But I envision it as a judicial system if you will, which runs parallel and takes care of some of these things that are longer term and reacts to these phenomena.

To me, what is evidently clear, whether for good or for bad, complexity is going to keep increasing. If you have people thinking linearly in positions of power, they’re going to shoot themselves in the foot one time after the next.

Whereas, if you have people understanding complexity, maybe not controlling it, but, at least, understanding it, it changes the ballgame completely.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Former Governor, Puerto Rico.

[2] Individual Publication Date: April 1, 2021: <https://in-sightjournal.com/rossello-4>; Full Issue Publication Date: May 1, 2021: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

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Conversation with Master Chef Craig Shelton on Common Sense Versus Scientific Validity, and Motivation: Founder, Aeon Hospitality (3)

2021-04-08

Chef Craig Shelton has over 40 years of experience in science-based cooking and teaching in the hospitality business. He trained in eight of the world's greatest restaurants, including "El Bulli", "Jamin"; "Ma Maison", "L'Auberge de l'Ill", "Le Pré Catelan", "Bouley", "Le Bernardin", and "La Côte Basque. Chef Shelton has earned countless awards as Chef-Owner of his own restaurants including a James Beard Best Chef medal, NY Times 4-Stars ratings on four separate occasions, a 5-Star Forbes rating, the Relais & Châteaux Grand Chef title; and Number One Top Restaurant in America in 2004 from GQ. Mr. Shelton is also an instructor at Princeton University in the Princeton Environmental Institute, where he teaches a freshman seminar on the interrelationships between public policy, agriculture, diet-related disease and anthropogenic climate change. Mr. Shelton began his expertise in this area while an undergraduate of Yale where he earned his degree in Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry. He is a co-founder of the think tank, Princeton Center for Food Studies, the founder of King's Row Coffee, and a co-founder of Aeon Holistic Agriculture, Inc. He is recognized as a consummate business consultant with specialization in macro finance. He is known for his ability to generate excitement in his cooks and instill in them the drive toward excellence by connecting all aspects of gastronomy to the larger intellectual landscape – chemistry, ecology, literature, art and human physiology. His great passions are reading and ocean sailing. His full C.V. can be seen [here](#). More about [Aeon Hospitality](#), [Mountainville Manor](#), [Aeon Holistic Agriculture](#), [Kings Row Coffee](#), and [Princeton Studies Food](#) (in the hyperlinks provided). He discusses: common sense and scientific tenability; and motivation.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: What about on the side of food production? In other words, making a dish, delivering it to the plate of individual customers, what have been some big things taken as folk wisdom or common sense in the culinary arts, which are simply not scientifically tenable?

Master Chef Craig Shelton[1],[2]*: Yes, sometimes, I think only the Marquis de Sade could have designed the restaurant business model.

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Shelton: You could not have designed a model more poorly to do the bigger issues with consistency, delivering high quality. All businesses are supposed to have three divisions: marketing, finance, and operations.

The restaurants, especially independent restaurants, are basically operations divisions. For generations, they only had operations. There is no finance. A bookkeeper comes in and does the damage report every once in a while.

You have no marketing department with a whole group of people who study markets and test ideas and determine memes. None of that happens. I think it is partially because we have defaulted to the critic.

You have these evangelists, originally, in the industry. The connoisseur type critic who is out to spread the gospel and the wonder of arts at the table. It was kind of lovely, but it also invited a certain intellectual laziness saying, "We don't need to market. That's the job of the critic."

When you're not making a promise to your clients, things get wobbly really fast. It's a lack of clarity of what operations should be fulfilling. The purpose of marketing is to make promises and powerful promises, and successful promises.

As you build the business, the promises should be meaningful to the market. They should be unique and explicit. People should know what it is that they're expecting. All of that is completely missing.

If you were to say, "What are the implicit promises?" Since no one has a tagline, if you have a company like Federal Express, we can all remember the opening regional tagline when it positively has to be there overnight.

That is an extraordinary promise in all regards, extremely valuable to the people who use the service. It is unique. No one else can have an overnight guarantee. Thirdly, it is explicit. It is laid out.

None of that is happening in the restaurant industry. You are left with the default premises based on the word "restaurant," which is from the French *restaurer*. So, what is it we are promising to restore? We are promising to restore the traditional health of the body.

Of course, wouldn't you know? That is the absolute largest gap in the pedagogy of cooking schools. There is no training on nutrition, especially on up to date modern nutrition. What about the second? The emotional welfare, the restoring of emotional state of happiness.

Much of that occurs through the intermediation between the senses: taste, smell, touch, and so forth, guess what? There is a second great lacuna missing in the pedagogy of cooking school. There's no teaching about the neurophysiology of the senses, none whatsoever.

This is why you will see every cookbook with such inanities as 'seasoned to taste.'

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Shelton: Because if you understand how fluid the sense organs work, the one thing that you can never trust is sense. The momentary rigour of your sense organs. It can be extraordinarily precise, if you will, in measuring the change, the first derivative.

The change, "The thing I just tasted is this saltiness. The thing I tasted now." It can be a high degree of precision in noticing the change. However, because of fatigue or desensitization, it is remarkable how unreliable the sense organs are.

The nominal quantity, the actual degree of salinity, the actual degree of acidity, the actual degree of sweetness. It can be off by many magnitudes of order because of the immediate prehistory of what has happened before.

Jacobsen: On a personal level, where do you get your motivation? It's not simply having a high ability level and channeling it. It is drive too. For some, they acquire this from a personal faith. Others, they acquire this from an individual preference for challenge.

Others see it based in some kind of abstract ethical duties. Others, they want to make a living.

Shelton: I judge this by a moral imperative. I grew up as a dual-citizen in the full sense of the word. I enjoy the culture deeply. I was introduced to gastronomy. Here's what I kept noticing, when I was in France, we ate with reckless abandon, including dessert. No one counted a calorie.

I always lost weight. Enjoying the food to the Nth degree, never measuring anything, never leaving the table hungry, always fulfilled, happy, experiencing the highest states of clarity, cognitive clarity, which I recall.

Then I come back to America to the standard American grain-based diet. I feel sluggish, comparatively, put on weight until it was uncomfortable. So, this is one reality. I am experiencing this.

I am going through high school science classes and chemistry, physics. I am being told a calorie is a calorie is a calorie. Obviously, all of the problems in this society are the fact that we need to justify the idiotic thing called Occam's Razor.

This belief that when multiple solutions present themselves, then the simplest one is the most correct one. What is the basis for the claim? There is no basis for that. In fact, human experience should tell us the exact opposite.

Almost all things, in fact, that are important that we want to understand require complex systems mathematics, which very few of us are comfortable with and employ. We would rather have this totalitarian Napoleonic-type tale of the totalitarians, which is a desire for a simple folk tale.

To look at all this, and to look at what the standard American diet has done for human health here, and around the world, this grain-based diet and industrial seed oil called vegetable oil replacing wild, organic, 100% grass-fed animal fats.

It has caused more death and more economic harm, and more medical harm, than all the wars America has fought put together. This is a great breaking of the trust, in my mind. It is the idea restaurants are supposed to be peddling life.

Whereas, most of them are peddling death. Many of them are not aware of it. There is a way, in my life. I have been desperately trying to show through Aeon (Hospitality) with combining gastronomy and agriculture some things to people.

The reason French cuisine is still possibly the best cuisine on Earth is because French agriculture is the most beneficial, the healthiest, agriculture. It is the nation that made the decision-tree based on behaviour based on hedonism.

Whereas, everyone else was compromising that with economics. No one worse than America. To me, America and France (and Japan) represent the ends of the spectrum of agriculture. America, I can describe it as corn disguised as protein and water disguised as produce.

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Shelton: Toxic water disguised as produce. That's what is interesting. Our entire feedback loop is the FDA, which only concerns itself with shape and colour. They don't even measure nutrient density or nutrient composition.

It is purely superficial, which is exactly the right mechanism if what you're selling is corn disguised as protein and water disguised as produce. So, even in my work at Princeton, people are much more comfortable with the simple map of unstacked agricultural systems.

Let's compare the yield in calories, a mono-cultural yield of corn versus a mono-cultural yield of beef. Of course, you're going to get more calories from corn. However, regenerative agriculture, especially integrated livestock systems, are not to be understood in terms of monoculture, but in terms of multi-culture. It means stacked systems.

You can have trees. You can have fruits. You can have a cycling on-and-off lands, which increases the fertility and the nitrogen fixation. The nutrient density of the produce can skyrocket. The quality of the protein and, most importantly, the quality of the fats skyrockets.

There's a massive deficit worldwide. The major deficit worldwide is Omega-3. We have these damn vegetable oils. The point, which I am trying to make, is: If you use rotational management of herds and rotational management of produce, and those are well-understood, you rotate those two rotations on parcels of lands.

You end up with a pretty extraordinary case of biomimicry, which captures carbon. So, the net result is a reduction of carbon in the atmosphere. You end up with extraordinarily healthy output as a byproduct of the sale.

In a sense, the price of everything comes down, as long as you have the same scale. That's the only reason industrial agriculture is able to produce – if you want to call it – food products. The only reason a tomato or a cucumber raised in an industrial farm is less expensive than an organic version is because of scale.

Industrial farms can be 10,000 acres. Most of our organic farms are mini-mom-and-pop places with 2, 5, or 100 acres. They are too small to use the same labour saving equipment. The automated carrot harvester that can do the work of 50 people, better, with less damage to the carrot and to the soil, etc.

For a long time, I have been trying to make a proof of concept to get to the next real level. Where, you are not farming 100 acres, but farming 5,000 acres with this labour-saving equipment. This is the idea of replacing extractive systems with generative systems.

The center piece, most of these problems, e.g., climate change. If we converted 60% of the crop land that we have remaining over to these carbon negative, regenerative, integrated systems, we would have more food than the current system.

We would be growing topsoil instead of destroying topsoil. We would have infinitely healthier human outcomes, so drop the cost of medical expenditures, including diseases of civilization caused by a high grain-based, high-glycemic index, toxic thing.

At the end of the day, this is the idea of integrating all of these things for the love of the biological sciences. My love of cuisine and human health. It is the diet related aspects of human health. The natural health of the planet, planetary sciences, ecological sciences, the environmental part of it.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Founder, Aeon Hospitality.

[2] Individual Publication Date: April 8, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/shelton-3>; Full Issue Publication Date: May 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 Master Chef Craig Shelton on Economics and Banking Systems: Founder, Aeon Hospitality (4)

2021-04-15

Chef Craig Shelton has over 40 years of experience in science-based cooking and teaching in the hospitality business. He trained in eight of the world's greatest restaurants, including "El Bulli", "Jamin"; "Ma Maison", "L'Auberge de l'Ill", "Le Pré Catelan", "Bouley", "Le Bernardin", and "La Côte Basque. Chef Shelton has earned countless awards as Chef-Owner of his own restaurants including a James Beard Best Chef medal, NY Times 4-Stars ratings on four separate occasions, a 5-Star Forbes rating, the Relais & Châteaux Grand Chef title; and Number One Top Restaurant in America in 2004 from GQ. Mr. Shelton is also an instructor at Princeton University in the Princeton Environmental Institute, where he teaches a freshman seminar on the interrelationships between public policy, agriculture, diet-related disease and anthropogenic climate change. Mr. Shelton began his expertise in this area while an undergraduate of Yale where he earned his degree in Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry. He is a co-founder of the think tank, Princeton Center for Food Studies, the founder of King's Row Coffee, and a co-founder of Aeon Holistic Agriculture, Inc. He is recognized as a consummate business consultant with specialization in macro finance. He is known for his ability to generate excitement in his cooks and instill in them the drive toward excellence by connecting all aspects of gastronomy to the larger intellectual landscape – chemistry, ecology, literature, art and human physiology. His great passions are reading and ocean sailing. His full C.V. can be seen [here](#). More about [Aeon Hospitality](#), [Mountainville Manor](#), [Aeon Holistic Agriculture](#), [Kings Row Coffee](#), and [Princeton Studies Food](#) (in the hyperlinks provided). He discusses: economics of hospitality; and banking systems.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: To close off, what about the economics of everything?

Master Chef Craig Shelton[1],[2]*: Also, the economics of it. I have a passionate love of the study of economics. The moral and historical basis, the heterodox basis, this expression, which I'm talking about, or the transmutation of agriculture and the food system.

The industrialization of the food system, the Frankenstein's monster that it became; it is symptomatic of an even deeper problem faced in the world, which is the systematic regressive wealth distribution caused because of the form of banking most of the world uses referred to as British banking.

Unlimited money creation power is given to commercial banks and other financial institutions. We don't even understand. It almost changes capitalism into a command economy, which redistributes wealth from the bottom to the top and the young to the old through a mechanism of artificial asset price inflation.

This is concerning and one of the key observations of a book, which I am working on now. A contrast of various forms of capitalism possible – trying to bring to light little policy space with such phrases as "How are we going to pay for it?"

The reality: There is massive amounts of policy space, once we are willing re-examine the first assumptions embraced by us – without even knowing it. That's a long-winded answer as to what I have been trying to do with my life and the food system, and trying to bring back authentic food systems back to it.

It is to restore human health and planetary healthy. It is looking at the looming problems. The British banking system compounded worse with income-based taxation. I think about the fact that when the entire history, of recorded history, of human beings back to ancient Sumer; taxation was always based on wealth.

80%, 90%, 100%, of taxes were property taxes, which corresponded very well with net worth back in the day before derivative instruments and such. So, what we're living in, the idea today is this radical transformation, where almost 100% of federal revenues are collected on the basis of income.

This is a radical experiment in the history of the world. It has helped to de-tether real estate from the rest of the economy. Germany discovered this over 200 years ago. Germany had a different style of banking. It is called variously, "German Banking."

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Shelton: Or Industrial Banking, in Germany, commercial banks are not allowed to use this power of money creation for financial transactions. Meaning, an asset not being created new. It is an asset pre-existing and changing ownership.

When you change a piece of land, nothing new is created. You cannot get a commercial bank on that. You would need something resembling a credit union in America. It is more community banking. There, and only there, you are borrowing true savings.

We have this mythology. We were led to believe. Banks are simply intermediaries or financial mediation via a bank. That the role bankers play is purely middlemen. They collect savings and then they allocate those savings out to someone less patient, more impatient, who charges that person a higher interest rate than the depositor. They live off the margins.

That is the simple folk tale people have been told. It is a malicious folk tale. It is the single greatest contribution to the world's immiseration. There's simply nothing out there doing more harm to more people.

It's the reason that inequality keeps skyrocketing. I said at the beginning of my book. Let's look at these 9, 10, or 11 graphs, here is America since the end of WWII, we see a nearly straight line of tax reduction for the richest and for everyone else.

Down, down, down, down, we ask the corporations to pay in taxes. You would expect profits to be up correspondingly over the next period of time. We look at the next graph. Labour share of sales, of GDP.

Down, down, down, down, every year since the mid-60s. It is a complete straight line down. You would expect the profits of the companies of America to be up. You look at the velocity of money. It is down, down, down, down. You would expect the profits to be up.

You look at the reinvestment of profits into new capital goods – down, down, down, down. It is every single year, a straight line. Look at the profits of American corporations, they are down every single year.

This is extraordinary. How can it be: all of the expenses to businesses are going down and profits are not going up, but going down, too? Then you see the buildup of corporate debt. It is due to the artificial asset price inflation of commercial real estate.

Commercial real estate is rising 10 times, 20 times, even 100 times faster, then the company is

able to raise its own retail prices. It creates a massive expense wedge, which is first taken out of labour. This is the reason all productivity gains, not one percent went to labour.

Basically, this is from the 60s forward. These are fascinating observations. This accumulation of debt. The size of the money supply, when you include credit as money, money is a commodity. I think it is tautological.

I think that's a false construct. Money and credit identical, not merely equal, that produces a theory of banking, which then is called the Credit Creation Theory of Banking. If you use Credit Creation Theory of Banking and substitute that for the Financial Mediation Theory of Banking used by all economists, you develop an economics, a mathematics, with a strong predictive power.

That is the weak link in the whole thing, in my humble estimation. Once you start to think in this out of the box fashion, one cannot un-see the seen. Its explanatory powers go down to agriculture. Why, on Earth, would human beings be so suicidal, so stupid?

In the last 40 years, the finite quantity of crop land, high nutrient dense topsoil; we've lost 1% every year. We're down to 60% of the original size, even as population has doubled or tripled in this time.

How can we account for that? Industrial agriculture is, certainly, to blame. Because when you made it your decision to grow the cheapest possible food, like corn, wheat, rice, and soy, unfortunately, when you grow the cheapest possible crops, you are limiting yourself to the cheapest possible agricultural techniques.

Amongst them, how are you going to irrigate? With corn, you end up with lime on the cheapest form of irrigation, which is, usually, a pivot. It is aerial. It comes from above and drops down onto the soil. The first problem: it is not ecologically sound, and wasteful of a precious commodity, which is water.

Equally important, the ground water coming up is filled with minerals and salts. The process of evaporation only concentrates them. If you use twice as much water as a surface irrigation, you use four times the amount. You end up with salinization.

Eventually, the soils will become inert. That is, you can't get any nutrients across the salt membrane. We are seeing this across the world now, in many locations. Much more damaging has been the plough, turning over the soil 18 inches as pest control or as weed control.

People need to understand. Plants don't have a digestive system, like we do. It is the microorganisms on the surface of the soil, which are the effective digestive system for the plants. When you turn it over, you are killing them, temporarily, at least.

In the state of nature, you do not see this type of erosion. But when you start turning over the top soil like this, you see, in the near 100 years or 150 years, since the great migration West; we used to have 12 feet of topsoil across the entire Great Prairies.

Almost all the agricultural lands in America were 10 to 12 feet of topsoil. Now, it is 1 or 2 inches. As bad as it is in America, it is as bad or worse everywhere else. It is the second biggest reason for the loss of volume and square acreage of top soils.

But the single largest may surprise you. The single largest contributor for the loss of top soil is

real estate development. This frenzy of selling debt, this embedded growth obligation of the British banking system.

The need this system acquires. This inexhaustible appetite for doubling the quantity of credit in the world again, and again, and again. It is the story of the person who did a favour for the sultan. When promised by the sultan, the man asked to take the chessboard and put one grain of corn on the first square, two on the second, and so on.

Hastily, he laughs and agrees to this. The court mathematicians come and say, "There isn't wealth of corn in the entire world worth what you have just promised him." This grotesque, insatiable demand for the doubling of credit in the world.

It needs placement. Credit, the bank credit has this one limitation. Banks, literally, can create money out of thin air, but only out of crediting it into existence. Some project or purchase has to happen.

The present value of the land for the farmer who has been brainwashed into growing corn, for example. The last time I checked, the average yield for a farmer who grows corn is only 60\$ an acre, including all the government subsidies going into it.

So, the present value of the land, if you're using for industrial corn production, is almost zero. You figured out a way to squander one of the most precious resources in the world to its lowest possible use.

It cannot stand up to the competition from real estate developers. The system is designed. They can get \$200,000 an acre at present value in real estate development. To understand why this is happening, not just what is happening, it is a passionate concern because the system itself has taken on its own life.

I do not ascribe this to a lot of evil people at the top wanting to destroy the world. It is following rules blithely passed from one generation to the next. It set us on a path of self-annihilation. It takes a lot to not see the symptoms and connect them all together, when they have a root cause in the British banking.

It is made worse with a tax system based on income rather than property, wealth, or net worth. Of course, it is made worse. We act surprised that we have poverty or homelessness, or bad health outcomes, opioid crises.

It is so absolutely obvious. We have chosen this. These are all a result of our public policy choices. British banking was rejected by Germany 225 years ago. It is for that reason Germany didn't lose its industrial base.

The German worker has relative parity in purchasing power to their grandparents. They can still afford to raise a family. They can still afford to buy approximately the same house, in approximately the same sized lot, in approximately the same location.

With some variation, it's not perfect. There are no tariffs on foreign money coming in, which does destroy markets. But still, the difference is extraordinary. China adopted the German style of banking to a large extent with something called Guidance of Credit.

Guidance of Credit have three macros. There's consumer credit used to buy consumer goods. Let's limit the amount of consumer credit in our nation, so, we don't produce consumer price inflation.

What about the second macro? The second macro are financial transactions e.g., when you buy houses, when you buy land, shares in publicly traded stock, and so on. In most cases, you cannot lose new money printed out of thin air.

You have to borrow pre-existing savings in a German system, in China. The third category is industrial banking. You will create something new, a new factory, buy new equipment to expand the factory.

That's called new capital good creation. They allow it. That's where the banks create the money out of thin air. The goal of German banking and Chinese banking is to make sure that the private debt to GDP ratio stays relatively flat.

That way, new money creation goes to the good of society in expanding the economy rather than just producing windfall profits that punish the buyer and reward the seller in an artificial fashion. This is the reason for the German miracle and the reason for the Chinese and a couple of other miracle nations.

They took this German banking system and elevated it. It is sometimes called Window Credit, Window Guidance. There are various names for it. There is variation between the nations. But here's the kicker, Germany has never had an internally created banking crisis ever since it made this switch in 225 years.

What you begin to realize, this thing we call the "business cycle" is a complete misnomer. There's no such thing. It should be called the 'British Banking Cycle.' Economists identified more than 100 years in the most persuasive cycle.

All this misery, great depressions and little depressions, are all caused by banks printing money out of thin air for the wrong purpose. Basically, collateral-based lending rather than for the creating of capital goods.

It is a mission for me to get this word out. My industry suffers from the distortions caused by British banking more than any single other industry in our economy. We have what is called the lowest productivity. Most people don't know what productivity means.

They think of it as a virtue. It is not. A company's productivity could go up, even as their sales and profits fall. Productivity means how successful are you in eliminating jobs and replacing those people with equipment.

In other words, the true definition is taking the annual sales of the company and dividing by the average number of full-time workers or their equivalent. When you do that, you see the average – 10 years ago, probably not different today – of all the industries in America combined is about \$420,000.

But if you pick apart the various industries, you realize, "Oh my God." Big tobacco is at the highest productivity. At the time, it was close to \$3,000,000. Restaurants at the absolute lowest or \$50,000. This is another area of gross incompetence, which is the way we pay for a social safety net.

It baffles the rest of the world, "Why could the wealthiest country in the world not have even the basic health program for its most vulnerable, poorest, and working people?" Not people out of work who don't have it, but working people, nobody asks the most obvious question.

"How do they pay for it in the rest of the world?" Every other nation has it. They never said it. It

is because it is distributed. The cost of the social safety net is distributed across businesses, but on a fair topline basis.

Everyone shoulders it equally based on sales. In America, we count on a head tax basis. It means a restaurant will pay 100 times the rate of employment tax that big tobacco will, as a percentage of sales. 100 times!

So, these are the kind of baked in policy choices that encourage a maximum degree of wealth transference from the poor to the rich and from the young to the old. These are choices that have been made through the use of power and wealth.

It's baked into our cake now. We're feeling the consequences of it ever more sharply. What a great time.

Jacobsen: Thanks so much.

Shelton: My pleasure, very much appreciated.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Founder, Aeon Hospitality.

[2] Individual Publication Date: April 15, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/shelton-4>;
Full Issue Publication Date: May 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 Mr. Sudarshan Murthy on: Member, World Genius Directory (2)

2021-05-08

Mr. Sudarshan Murthy is a Member of the World Genius Directory. He self-describes as follows: “My name is Sudarshan Murthy. I am 41 years old male from Bangalore, India. I have studied Master of Pharmacy and working in the research and development of Nutrition Products for general wellness and disease-specific products. I am a creative individual and published research papers in journals and also published books on [appropriate strategies](#) for [curing acidity and ulcers](#) of the stomach and intestine. I have developed a product called [Glucovita Bolts](#) which is a chewable tablet of Glucose and Vitamins and Minerals for energy and reduction of fatigue. This product can be taken by individuals who suffer from chronic fatigue. My hobbies are numismatics, philately and travelling. My interests are astronomy, reading books, solving IQ tests, understanding the secrets of ancient knowledge particularly Indian Vedas which I believe is a storehouse of profound knowledge on various aspects of life and the cosmos.” He discusses: grandfather; proposed medicines; importance of education; missing out on meeting with close relatives; education; innate ingenuity; Mysterium; theories or ideas; Newton; Leonardo Da Vinci; Sushruta; Bhaskaracharya; “deep observation”; the mind of a genius; the more promising paths; order; the disagreements among “different religions”; scientific principles; eternal mysteries; rule utilitarianism; situational ethics; politics; tripartite metaphysical formulation; and societies.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: As your grandfather was illiterate and living in a village without formal education, your story seems like one of triumph in spite of the circumstances. Why did he study Ayurvedic by himself?

Mr. Sudarshan Murthy[1],[2]*: My Grandfather was an orphan. He was in a small village. He then came to the city in search of a job. When he came here he was taken into the shelter by an elderly gentleman who was an Ayurvedic physician. He took my grandfather as an office boy for his clinic. My grandfather was having sharp intellect. He developed an interest in medicines and gradually became a compounder and then finally started to understand the medicines and Ayurveda under his master’s guidance. As the master’s children were not interested in Ayurveda the master started teaching Ayurveda to my grandfather. My grandfather took a keen interest in this and then started his own clinic. Since he became well-versed in Ayurveda he started developing his own medicines.

Jacobsen: What were some of the proposed medicines by your grandfather?

Murthy: He developed Ayurvedic medicines for memory, hairfall, diarrhea and high fever. He was doing clinical trials on medicines for children’s health when he suddenly expired.

Jacobsen: Between the home life, the surgeon, the doctor, and the electrical engineer, what is the importance of education within the family?

Murthy: I personally believe that education is important to get formal accreditation to start our professional practice but everything depends on our ability to apply our knowledge in our chosen education to be successful in our life. Education, by itself, cannot guarantee success in life. It is the innate ability and ingenuity which is required to succeed in our life. There are many such ex-

amples. Baba Ramdev from India who started Patanjali Ayurved became a Rs.10000 Crore company in a span of 6 years which many multinational companies have failed to achieve. He is having no formal Ayurvedic education. He is now invited to IIT and IIM to coach students on how to achieve success in life.

Jacobsen: Do you regret missing out on meeting with close relatives in a different start when younger?

Murthy: Yes I feel bad that I was not able to meet and stay with close relatives during my younger days when intimate relationships do form and stay long-lasting. Now I am not having any close relationship which helps to build emotional strength. This makes me feel lonely and insecure.

Jacobsen: Why pursue the education in pharmacy, business administration, food and nutrition, writing, and the sciences regarding clinical trials?

Murthy: I am crazy as far as education is concerned. I am interested to learn a variety of knowledge, especially in medical field. But only technical knowledge is not sufficient to progress in life but it requires business sense also so I studied business administration.

Jacobsen: Why are internal qualities of “innate ingenuity” so often unseen or unobserved without a formal test, even by the person with the innate ingenuity? It seems counterintuitive at first blush.

Murthy: I think that the world is based on the principle of “what you see is what you believe” and every person is also framed like that. We don’t believe ourselves till we see what we have done. This is a problem with genius people. They don’t believe themselves till others make them see what they have done.

Jacobsen: Is Mysterium still extant?

Murthy: I saw the group on facebook. Mr. Monte Washburn is the admin. The name is “Mysterium Society”.

Jacobsen: Do you have any particular theories or ideas that you’re trying to advance?

Murthy: I don’t have any particular theories or ideas to advance. I believe any theory which is made for common good without exploitation.

Jacobsen: What makes Newton one of the great historical geniuses, in character and in productions?

Murthy: Newton is great because he first observed the theory of gravity operating in the earth by observing and thinking why did apple fall on the ground why did it not go up. As I mentioned before this quality of profound observation is what makes a person genius.

Of course his three laws of motion and various other inventions make him one of the greatest historical geniuses.

Jacobsen: What makes Leonardo Da Vinci one of the great historical geniuses, in character and in productions?

Murthy: The same argument which I put forth for Newton applies here also. Many people know about him and his various inventions but what I admire in him is that he could write with both hands and he could write the words /sentences in their mirror image as well simultaneously. This

shows his profound imagination and his ability to visualize the mirror image without actually seeing in mirror. This is an extraordinary quality of usage of his mind.

Jacobsen: What makes Sushrutha one of the great historical geniuses, in character and in productions?

Murthy: Sushrutha is considered the first surgeon of India. He was so brilliant that he could actually fit the nose to a person who had lost his nose. In those olden times, he could perform surgery when knowledge of medical science was not so advanced. This makes him one of the historical geniuses of India. Some even say that he could perform cloning and also able to fit one animal's body part into humans. Even today we don't know how this can be done without eliciting organ rejection by the body.

Jacobsen: What makes Bhaskaracharya one of the great historical geniuses, in character and in productions?

Murthy: Bhaskaracharya was an ancient Indian mathematician and astronomer who is said to have discovered gravity much before Newton. He is also known for developing various mathematical equations on algebra, geometry and trigonometry. His achievements can be found on google search. This makes him one of the historical geniuses of his time.

Jacobsen: Can “deep observation” be trained, or is it more innate?

Murthy: I believe deep observation can be trained.

Jacobsen: What explains the level of creativity in the “application of ideas that originates from the mind of a genius”?

Murthy: Let me give you an example of the Wright brothers. Every human being saw the birds flying in the air on an almost daily basis. But it was the minds of the Wright brothers who thought why humans can't fly. This gave them the idea of designing a machine like a bird having wings that can be used to fly off humans. The result we see today is the aeroplane.

This shows that geniuses can convert the ideas into reality, i.e., they not only get ideas but also know how to apply them as well.

Jacobsen: What are some of the more promising paths for the “various medical and nutrition products in the healthcare industry”?

Murthy: Hippocrates once said, “Let food be your medicine and medicine be your food”. This explains that the food that we eat should be healthy and suitable for our body and mind. Also, the medicine should be in the form of food and not be a separate entity which we take only when we fall sick. The ultimate meaning I believe is that food is healthy to our body and mind i.e. it should make our body and mind fit and should act as medicine to ensure we do not fall sick. The junk foods and synthetic medicines of today are not healthy. They do harm our body in some way or the other. Many medicines are not without side effects.

Jacobsen: Why can “such order” not “happen on its own”?

Murthy: This is a mystery to me. If we the events around us happening or happened in the past it becomes clear that order did not happen on its own. This is because nature is always in the process of change. The process of constant change does not allow the order to happen on its own. For example, seasons change so do the flowering pattern and birds migration. This changes the order. Some plants bloom in winter while some die. Some viruses become active in winter while

some lie dormant or die.

Jacobsen: What do you make the disagreements among “different religions” on the aspects, form, and interactions with humanity, even representations to human beings, of “this supreme intelligence” called “God”?

Murthy: There is a story about 7 blind men describing the elephant in seven different ways. All of them are partly true but none correctly describing the elephant as it is. This is what applies to different religions representing the supreme intelligence in their own ways without any knowing correct representation of God. The religions still today is similar to the blind men describing an elephant, partly correct but not wholly true.

Jacobsen: What scientific principles most intrigue you?

Murthy: One scientific principle that intrigues me and also teaches me that all are created equal is the free fall principle. When two or more objects of different masses are allowed to fall freely at the same time from a similar height they fall at the same time irrespective of their masses but our thinking says that objects with greater mass should fall first. This is the most intriguing phenomenon in science.

Jacobsen: What things about nature seem like eternal mysteries rather than problems with the potential for solution?

Murthy: There are two such things which appear as eternal mysteries of nature: – Why does the natural death occur, i.e., why do animals age and die? The second mystery is: why children born to the same parents have different life events?

Jacobsen: Why rule utilitarianism for an ethical philosophy more than others?

Murthy: Ethical philosophy is concerned with morally right or wrong and utilitarianism is based on morality which advocates actions that bring happiness and pleasure and opposes any action that causes harm. Hence any action which is done to bring happiness and pleasure automatically becomes morally right and otherwise actions that bring unhappiness and pain to all is morally wrong.

Jacobsen: What make situational ethics best for a social philosophy? Does this tie into rule utilitarianism?

Murthy: As I said before social philosophy concerns itself with social behaviour and interprets the society in terms of ethical behaviour i.e. right or wrong and situational ethics is concerned about the particular context of an act when evaluating ethically. Both these are concerned with ethics i.e. what is morally right or wrong. Thus situational ethics is best for social philosophy as helps in evaluating morally right and wrong actions. Rule utilitarianism is concerned with actions that bring the greatest good. I believe that any actions/behavior in society that brings the greatest good for all is morally right. Thus situational ethics is best for social philosophy and both these can be linked to the philosophy of rule utilitarianism.

Jacobsen: Why should politics be above religion or beliefs of people? It seems as if a formal argument for secularism.

Murthy: The politics should be for the benefit and greatest for all. The religion or beliefs of people may not always be for the greatest good of all people but maybe only for their specific religion or belief. Secularism is something seen away from religion and not based on the greatest

good for all. It is a viewpoint and not necessarily for the greatest good of all people. Politics should be for the greatest good for all and includes secularism but not necessarily secularism.

Jacobsen: What is the “spiritual” in this tripartite metaphysical formulation of the physical, the mental including emotion and perception, and the spiritual?

Murthy: Spiritual means relating to our soul and not to material or physical things. Being Spiritual means we become consciously aware that we are all one and are a part of the whole divinity which exists and surrounds us. This is something more than the sensory experience.

Jacobsen: What societies seem to fit these social, economic, political, and philosophical views in one more than others, i.e., practical manifestations of them?

Murthy: As of now I am unable to see any societies that fit all these dimensions. But if all of them come together as one society then maybe it will be.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Member, World Genius Directory.

[2] Individual Publication Date: May 8, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/murthy-2>; Full Issue Publication Date: September 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 Uwe Michael Neumann on Travelling and Youth: Member, CIVIQ High IQ Society (1)

2021-05-08

Uwe Michael Neumann developed a love of photography when he got his first camera, a Polaroid, at the age of eight years old. From 1982 to 1988, Neumann diverted from photography, studying law at Cologne State University. But his love of photography, driven by curiosity and the desire to see new things and discover and show their beauty, always called him back. He conducted his first photo tour in Provence, France in 1992. In 1998 he visited New York where he further developed his photographic style; experimenting with verticals and keystone/perspectives. Launching into the field of international cooperation he combined his daily work with his photography in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Finland, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Sweden and Ukraine. In November 2014, Neumann attended the wedding of a daughter of the Sultan of Fommban, Princess Janina, in Fommban, north-west of Cameroon. There he met and became friends with the famous French photographer and producer, Alain Denis who inspired him to become a professional photographer, instructing him in portrait and landscape photography. After his life-changing visit to Cameroon in 2014 Neumann returned there in February 2015 taking photographs of Central Africa's unique nature and everyday life, which differed greatly from Europe, and even tourist destinations in Africa like Kenya and the Republic of South Africa. During his stay in Central Africa, he lived in Yaoundé, Cameroon and travelled frequently to Equatorial Guinea, the Central African Republic, Gabon, Chad and Congo Brazzaville, among the poorest countries in the world. He also visited and photographed Algeria, Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo), Benin, Kenya, Egypt, Mauretania and the Republic of South Africa. Neumann focused on often-overlooked treasures in nature, the environment, and beauty in places seemingly dominated by poverty. In October 2017, Neumann returned to Berlin and worked on over 90,000 photos from Africa, launching his first exhibition in May in 'Animus Kunstgalerie', Berlin. In October 2018 his exhibition 'Inner Africa' in GH 36 gallery in Berlin was focused on Central Africa displaying not only a huge variety of photographs, but also traditional masks from different regions. In 2019 and 2020, other exhibitions at Bülow90, Berlin and Nils Hanke, Berlin followed. In Ghent, Belgium, he was a speaker at the European Mensa Meeting 2019 on Africa and presented some of his works. He was also invited to present his works in the online exhibition e-mERGING a r t i S T S. and again at GH36 in the exhibition No Time. [One of his photos](#) was on the title page of the Norwegian magazine Dyade in 2019. His photos have also been featured several times in the online Magazine Foto Minimal & Art. In December 2021 his works were part of an exhibition at Basel Art Center in Basel, Switzerland. He discusses: background, photography, Yaounde, and the high-IQ mental lifestyle.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: So, we are here today with Uwe Michael Neumann. If individuals are in some of the High IQ communities and examine some of the biographical and online information, the one thing that comes straight to the fore, for me, is the extensive amount of travel that you've done, in terms of doing the photography. So, I guess my first question would be, did you travel very much as a youngster? When did visual arts, photography become very important for you?

Uwe Michael Neumann[1],[2]*: Yes. They became important for me. I was always a visual type. And I got my first camera, I think, when I was eight or so. That was a Polaroid, you could

press the button and then the photo came out at the bottom of the camera. So, yes, I was not continuously doing photography, but from time to time. But I was always interested in that. So, yes, I was not so much travelling because my family was not particularly with the science, so to speak. The modest background, so, the only trouble we had was through Austria in the holidays mostly when I was a kid. And also, later as a student, I couldn't afford travelling too much. So, actually, when I was studying law for five years, I couldn't travel anywhere. I didn't travel at all.

And so, when I made my first money, I started travelling to France and then I started at some point working in southeastern Europe. So, I very often took my camera with me. And I saw a lot of different small countries here, but they are quite different to Germany because they have been part of the Soviet bloc somehow. So, they have a different development. I was also in Albania, which was completely isolated during the Cold War. They were allied with China, at least formally. And then somehow this developed, and at some point, I wanted to go to Africa. My ex-wife and me, we had friends there. It came up. I also made friends in central Africa. Also, some years before I had been at a conference in Bordeaux, in France. And for me, as a German, it was very interesting to see when you went at the French conference. They have guests or they have corporations with their former colonies.

So, I was at a conference of the French trade union, but there were many people from Africa because they are connected still. And I don't know the exactly how that goes exactly, but they are also involved in – let's say they were there. So, I made friends with a guy from Mali. I still have the contact now. It was 20 years ago. We are still writing each other. So, I'm also interested in how it's going on there because when you follow the official media, you don't get so much information about, not so much precise information, about certain countries or Africa. So, I was always keen to work on that. At some point, I got the contract to work there for three years as a project leader. So, I also, of course, took my camera with me and started taking pictures of Africa.

Actually, before we were invited to a marriage of an actual princess and an actual sultan, so, in Cameroon, you have these official structures or the modern state structures, but you have also the traditional structures. So, you have also the sultan of a region in the northwest. So, he's also a senator. So, he has two functions. He has a state official function and then he's also officially the sultan. We were invited to a marriage of one of his daughters, a princess. And it was really like a fairy tale, somehow. When I worked there, my house was in Yaounde. My office was in Yaounde, which is the capital of Cameroon, but I was also responsible for the five other countries (Chad, Congo Brazzaville, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Zentral African Republic).

So, I did a lot of traveling not only by plane, but also by car. We went through the jungle. We went through the borders; and we passed the border controls. So, that is quite an interesting experience. When you come from Europe, you could at least travel before corona without any problems. You just drive over the border; and there was no border control anymore in the last years. And in Cameroon, Africa, there is really strict border control that takes you one hour to get through, let's say. And they have their procedures and their forms; and it's very slow. And they have fences; and it's like in the Cold War, basically. So, yes, that reminded me a little bit of the wall because when I was young, with my family we went to East Germany. It was also like that. You had to apply in advance a month before to go to East Germany.

And you have to prove that you have relatives there and you had to change money. And then there was really a border wall; and there were fences; and there were controls. It was taking lots

of time, half an hour, one hour,. The fence, of course, and it's unimaginable. Now, you just go through; and you don't see anything anymore. But there was a real wall, of course. So that was also very exotic because the lifestyle, the way of living in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR), was completely different from all the Western countries. So, for us, when we went to the Netherlands or to France, it was like, "Okay, this is different." But the style of life, the living, the system of works, was similar, but in the GDR; it was completely different.

For instance, you couldn't just go in the shop and buy something because, very often, there was nothing to buy; and people were standing in line outside the shops. And then, sometimes, they even didn't know what's inside, what they are selling, but they just bought it to trade it in later with their friends. So, they trade it. They made barter trading. So, they bought something, which they could exchange with somebody to get something so very basic. It's not for us, of course; it's not a foreign country, but it was very exciting to go there and was very different at that time. So, yes, basically, that's how it went. I guess you contacted me because of my membership in Mensa, and so on. And, of course, the good thing about these High IQ societies is that you get to know people from all over the world.

During the first phase of the Covid pandemic, we were having talks not on Zoom, but on a similar thing we'd see. It was running for 24 hours. So, when we were in our evening time, the first people from Canada showed up. So, that was also very fascinating.

Jacobsen: Really like zoological specimen.

Neumann: Yes, I'm very interested. I think that's typical for high IQ people. You're interested to see new things and to meet new people, and so on. You easily get bored at some point. So, the daily routine, it's difficult to keep for us.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Member, CIVIQ High IQ Society.

[2] Individual Publication Date: May 8, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/neumann-1>;
Full Issue Publication Date: September 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 Assistant Professor Simon Olling Rebsdorf on Background, Work, Philosophy, and High-IQ Societies: Assistant Professor, VIA University College (1)

2021-05-15

Professor Simon Olling Rebsdorf is an Assistant Professor at VIA University College and a prominent member of the high-IQ communities. He discusses: growing up; a sense of an extended self; the family background; experience with peers and schoolmates; 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; some work experiences and educational certifications; more important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses; the God concept; science; tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations); the range of the scores; and ethical philosophy.

Updated with edits from Kathy Kendrick of ISPE.

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

Dr. Simon Olling Rebsdorf[1],[2]*: [My private weblog is here: <https://humanlifelab.wordpress.com>]

The midwife dragged me into this worldly place in the city of Odense, Denmark, in 1971. Looking back from this halfway vantage point, I still wonder whether retrospective selection of milestones or turning points in our consciously remembered life story do in fact contribute to changing our own self-images into a narrative of someone we would rather like to be, instead of who we are. However, this is a risk as well as a cerebral human condition.

When my parents got divorced, I was five and my big brother was nine years old. The divorce took a lot of energy, especially when my age was around 10 and 14. In this period, my parents had quarrels—legal cases about custody rights. Thinking about my grandparents is more comforting. My grandfather was a creative man full of ideas. He was a craftsman working at a lathe, in his own shop business in the attic in central Copenhagen. Very ingenious and skilled. During the Second World War, he decided to hang a hand grenade on the back of the front door to the shop, just in case German Nazi SS troops were to enter the courtyard. Illegally, he crafted little pieces for weapons of the Danish Resistance Movement. He was never caught. This is probably the most prominent family story, which was told many times.

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

Rebsdorf: In some sense, yes. Resistance against authority and a critical mind have been heralded as the norm and a necessary attribute of family members.

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

Rebsdorf: Danish. My father was born in 1930 in the southern part of Jutland, the Danish peninsula, in a city called Ødis, close to Kolding. My late father's brother was concerned with genealogy and made a family tree dating back to the 1600s. During World War 2, my father's family

hosted a young boy, who was a member of Hitler Jugend—the nazi boy scouts—but the boy’s parents had managed to escape Germany, and in Denmark, they had found my father’s family to host the boy for some time. I remember my immediate shock when my father told me that had he been raised in Germany instead of in Denmark, he might as well have been a conscientious Hitler Jugend boy. His point was a cultural relativist one, and I understood this immediately after some explanation. My father is now 90 years old. He has always played classical music and jazz—he plays the violin, and he is the reason that I have learned to appreciate and play music myself since the age of 5, when he forced me to take violin lessons.

My father at age 17 went to Copenhagen to study pharmacy. He ended up becoming a freshwater researcher, even publishing in *Nature* once. I found out about this in 2018, without his ever letting me or my family know! How typically humble of him, not mentioning it. In 1999 he co-authored a paper on “[Regional Trends in Aquatic Recovery from Acidification in North America and Europe](#),” Volume 401 Number 6753 pp513-622 (it’s on page 575, name: A. Rebsdorf), on behalf of the National Environmental Research Institute in Denmark.

My mother was born in 1945 and grew up on the island Zealand, close to the Danish capital, Copenhagen, in a city called Hillerød. Her father, my granddad who owned a lathe shop, was extremely protective of his youngest daughter, and was known to hire a private eye to follow her on dates. My dad lived across the street from them and they fell in love. They had two children—Morten, my big brother, in 1967, and me in 1971. In 1976, they got a divorce and have had several other girlfriends/boyfriends since. My mother studied to work in a kindergarten and has done so all her life. She is now retired. My mother has always been the more creative kind, having us dress up, play, dance, draw and just live out ourselves and our curiosity.

Throughout my life, I’ve had a general feeling that my free choices were ok, no matter what they were. Later in life I’ve realized the importance of this and the role this general outlook has had on my life and life choices.

Going to lower elementary school in the hamlet Bryrup in the middle of the Danish peninsula Jutland, I had a great time until control was lost due to the separation of my parents. Looking back, mathematics, English, natural sciences, music, and the Danish language seemed quite easy and all-interesting, but they were not trivial topics to me.

Music was the exception. Playing instruments and singing was effortlessly intuitive to me. I played everything by ear and frowned inside when the other kids could not play the right rhythm or worse, couldn’t remember what we played last week. This was a walk in the park for me. I learned the music notations system three times in my life—and forgot it three times. I never really made use of musical scores. The music has always been kept safely in my mind’s ear, and my head is always full of music and sounds.

My dad forced me to play the violin from age five, and later I turned to piano, then electric bass, drums and guitar, now upright bass and piano. Today I am grateful to his stubborn demands of weekly rehearsals in my room. Music has always been my thing. However, whenever I was good at something, I kept this experience to myself. [<https://humanlifelab.wordpress.com/music>]

The Nordic Law of Jante completely imbued my upbringing and schooling: A pattern of group behavior, that negatively portrays and criticizes individual success and achievement as unworthy and inappropriate, is what usually made me keep my successes to myself. But it also made me

try to do better. I never told anyone when I was good at something. Never. I didn't want to appear as the archetypical, annoying smart-guy.

Regarding religion: My upbringing has had a clear lack of religion. It is a mystery to me why I was baptized at all. More about this ecumenical topic below.

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

Rebsdorf: I didn't perceive myself at all as the brainy child who could read prematurely or solve math problems years ahead of the norm. And if I was, I would never have known, let alone been told. I was just a pretty happy little brother with a creative pre-school teacher mum and an academic dad researching fresh-water resources. I loved being left on my own to discover the universe. Philosophizing, as I learned later, was my favorite activity, and my mind was a lively place, an inner world not accessible to others. It was my own world. It provided a sense of control. And nobody ever entered it.

I wholeheartedly believed that everybody else in kindergarten and elementary school was likely to have similar individual inner worlds just like mine, filled with colored numbers, friendly creatures of music, physical sensations of huge, imaginary bubbles of tension when pressing together my middle and index finger, as well as inner dialogues and discussions with imaginary people. This was my world, a warm place of structure, texture, and ethereal, rhythmic sounds and shapes. Later in life, I learned that perhaps my assumption wasn't true for all the people around me, and this was perhaps one reason why my peers sometimes talked about boredom—a mental state completely uncharted by me.

Five years after my parents' separation, an important milestone unearthed. A bipolar 'Barbarossa' artist befriended my mum, and they became lovers. With his long red beard and spiky hair, this manic-depressive, psychopathically bent artist painter completely took over my mum, deprived her of all her self-esteem to his own personal, economical gain by spending all her money on his art production. Emotionally, this became a very dark period of four years for a happy kid full of inner life from the outset. But at the same time, intellectually, it became four vital years of research and tremendous learning for me. Despite Barbarossa's bad characteristics and ill temper, he cracked the physical universe more open for me. Perhaps he embodied a provocative counter-movement against the Law of Jante, which ultimately educated me. A ten-year-old, I flipped through his subscription issues of the *Scientific American*, and I mimicked transmission gears from technical manuals using LEGO technique. He taught me Goethe's theory of colors, how to play card games, how to draw human faces using charcoal, and he introduced me to the artist M. C. Escher, promptly turning the Dutch mathematician and painter into my favorite artist, owing to his impossible geometrical works, which I copied and developed further. As a result, mathematical topology became a burning interest of mine, but I just didn't know the technical term at the time. It all took place on a completely intuitive level by way of paper origami and drawings, e.g., of the three-dimensional shadows of the tesseract, a mathematical four-dimensional cube, or attempts to draw the four-dimensional one-surfaced manifold known as the Klein bottle.

One vital problem was that it all happened in a state of complete loneliness. Emotionally, I closed myself down for self-protection, as Barbarossa took advantage of my mother, so I was left to myself a lot. I philosophized in a great cherry tree, looking down on passing cyclists, often falling asleep between two thick, supporting branches. I craved sacrosanct places for myself, making caves in the woods and hugging my impartial, natural friends, the trees. I had too many

feelings everywhere around me, so I reduced the emotional complexity by creating my own quiet spaces and letting curiosity lead the way.

Only last year, with the help of a cognitive psychologist, I discovered former obsessive tendencies, which I had completely forgotten. The loss of control by proxy of my run-down mother turned into obsessive activities to provide some feeling of control. I counted everything countable around me; I pressed my fingers together to feel myself; I had obsessive thoughts of fate; constantly, yet quietly, I was beating complicated rhythms with my fingers and toes—and then came a horrid fear of darkness.

In addition, I also became a proficient liar. Children of divorce are perfectly loyal to both their parents, and to me this simply meant lying to them—but then I also began lying to my teachers and classmates. I made up immense scaffolds of lies taking up a lot of mental energy. I took my lying to the next level when my parents fought over legal custody of me and my big brother. In the '80s, in Denmark, the mother usually won such legal custody disputes, despite any father's stubborn fight against it. My own father fought persistently, which I got to know only later in life. Sadly, the dispute also turned my father from an academic into an alcoholic academic.

I was so good at lying and setting up façades that none of my teachers believed what I had gone through. But finally, and luckily, my mother left the inspirational yet unhealthy crackpot artist. Today, I believe that the four emotionally dark years also provided me with an intellectual strength and mental capacity that I would never have been without. Perhaps I should thank my mother for her emotional dispositions towards the infamous Barbarossa, even if I have become a skilled liar and professional coward as a by-product of that period.

Thomas—an odd one out in my class—and I became friends throughout the last two years of elementary school. And we formed a closed sphere not very open for others. I managed to play cowboys and Indians with my classmates, but with Thomas, there was an opening into a common discovery of the universe by creating and drawing comic magazines, practicing British dialects, dressing up as detectives, role playing, producing soundscapes with a ghetto-blaster and cassette tapes, or creating neologisms for fun. Soon we decided to seat ourselves in the front row in physics/chemistry classes, just to break with the present anti-scientific culture in the class. It worked. Quickly I got better at the hard sciences, and I remember my great preparations for the exam—and my utter disappointment that my friend Thomas didn't invest the appropriate energy into the topics.

High school was not favorable for my self-worth. I couldn't decode the system of reproducing facts from the blackboard. What got me through high school was the seven hours of music lessons and playing in numerous bands on the side. Also in high school, I teamed up with the odd one out, Martin, and in this way I found my investigative companion. Together, we found our own motivation outside our classes. We made up a system of linguistic babble creation that turned into a smash-hit at our high school parties. On stage, we read aloud a new text sounding like normal sentences, yet made no sense whatsoever. Our brief success was likely due to the deliberate incorrectness of the prose as compared to all the rational orderliness crafted by the teachers. Socially, I managed to hang out with the popular people due to my merits as the most proficient bass-player—and a “world-famous” babble creator. In retrospect, I regard my high school years as a sort of social compensation for an energetic period of research and investigation prior to high school. If only high school could manage to embrace curiosity and out-of-the-box thinking. My sacred inner world from lower elementary school had been partly sacrificed during high

school, and it took me years to gain access again.

Another milestone was a library book on astronomy—and sheer luck. I have never had a plan. Curiosity and immediate lust have been my life guide, and I have always been at a complete loss of direction or ambition in life. An important value transferred from my poor grandparents via my mother and then to me is this: money doesn't matter. I still believe this to be very true, at least when you are a Scandinavian kid built into an expensive tax system, world-class healthcare safety, great job opportunities, and very low crime rates. My high school result was poor, below average. I had somehow lost my academic grip from elementary school. I sucked. And a downward spiral resulted in low self-esteem and lack of trust in the future. All seemed dark and pointless. I worked in odd jobs and sensed my father's silent frustration of missing future avenues. After high school, when working as an unskilled painter of some locker room walls at the local gym, I secretly read a large book on astronomy from the municipal library. At nights, I drew the night sky constellations and studied stellar creation. I had eaten all sorts of popular science books since age nine. I devoured the astronomy book in the restrooms of the gym as well as during passionate reading marathons in my rented abode. Completely alone. Whenever the gym manager came to check up on me, I managed to hide the book and lie to him about some technical difficulties hampering my painting progress. I just couldn't believe that the gym manager believed my lies. But I was a pro, so it worked.

And the astronomy monograph had a momentous impact. The necessary passing grade averages were low for many natural sciences studies at university, such as astronomy. This was my luck. I enrolled at the Faculty of Sciences at the University of Copenhagen. And moving to a college in the capitol was my fresh start.

I felt very alone while in Copenhagen, and I seriously thought about just killing myself. But I didn't have what it takes, luckily. And then came the intelligence test. Much of my bad luggage and suicidal tendencies due to loneliness and academic failure were swiftly wiped away after passing the Mensa test. Indeed, even love life became a reality a few years after practicing the art of flirting. And then I met my wonderful congenial, my wife Charlotte.

My ensuing authorship and research highlights included a six-month research visit at the Astronomy and Astrophysics Department, University of Chicago, including a stay at the Yerkes Observatory in Wisconsin, but also an affiliation with the Morris Fishbein Institute of social sciences. In 2009 I published a 500-page monograph on the history of modern astrophysics in the US and in Denmark entitled *The Father, the Son, and the Stars*. In addition, I published two PhD-based peer-reviewed research papers in the Cambridge periodical *Journal for the History of Astronomy*, co-authored two master thesis-based peer-reviewed research papers in the renowned Oxford periodical *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Modern Physics*, and a peer-reviewed article in the international history of science periodical *Centaurus*. Another rich experience was the co-authoring of a textbook on creative idea development for the teaching of bachelor students of innovation management at the Aarhus School of Business. But my hot dream remains the completion of a literary fiction novel as well as having some of my short stories published. One day, I left academia and have tried many sorts of positions since then. After heading the European Space Agency's Danish education resource office in Denmark and working as project manager and fundraiser at the House of Natural Sciences, I was appointed assistant professor at VIA University College, teaching and researching higher science education. This seems to be the right spot for now. Our kids are 8 and 10, and it's like life cannot cease to keep educating me.

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

I have never managed to find a very good response to this question. Having always been rather ambivalent about IQ tests, I have tried to live with this inner dilemma. This means that I tend to think, still, that the urge to belong to a high-intelligence society is just a Freudian mechanism in order for the insecure snowflake to find some force and energy from like-minded poor things like myself. But at the same time, I tend to feel that like-mindedness rather strongly, and this feeling cannot be ignored, either. The clear over-representation of megalomaniac super-narcissists within many esoteric high-IQ circles and societies tells their own story of the Freudian mechanisms at work. I have never met so many arrogant brain-bragging and apparently self-contained people as I have met in high-IQ societies. At the same time, I have made some deep and rare friendships that I would never be without. Perhaps the sea of brain-braggers is the price of finding congenial soul gems out there.

The history of intelligence tests is dubious and not only very flattering. However, the idea is interesting and the value of a measured intelligence in one way or another cannot be ignored. The issue of cultural bias (and many other biases) is very important to constantly articulate. History tells us sad stories of some of the apparent pitfalls hidden in the process of defining intelligence.

High mental capacity is there, though. Its existence is indisputable. It is a great responsibility to host high mental capacity “under the helmet,” and I am full of gratitude and humility. Sometimes it feels like a straitjacket to constantly remind myself that time is of the essence and that action is needed in the real world.

I have been a Mensa member many times—and then I’ve terminated my membership again. I stopped as a member of Mensa recently once again. I fail to see that the society does good in the world outside this club. It is too closed—but I am fully aware that this legitimizes its existence to many members. In turn, I am very ambiguous about Mensa and also about many other high-IQ societies. Disillusion is perhaps what is my issue with them. The intention seems to always be the same—good ambitions and hopes for lively activity to change the world to a better place. The question is, what ends it really serves. In a broader perspective, do all these digital (and somewhat physical) societies provide us all a better world in any way? Hardly.

And how does an exclusive club manage to do anything inclusively to—or for—the world? If we really want to make a change, and not just share funny pictures and anecdotes (and make fun of all the low-IQ idiots making our lives miserable, as some members seem to believe) how do we organize in order to take steps in this direction? This bugs me these days.

To what extent are the high-range (and medium-range) IQ societies representations of real life, and to what extent are they esoteric circles of narcissistic megalomaniacs with low self-esteem in which they can feel better than in the idiotic low-IQ world. This outlook is somewhat harsh, I know. But this kind of sentiment is exactly what I felt in some of these clubs I have frequented.

On the other hand, of course, are the many interesting discussions that can be had with like-minded people, and clearly this serves ourselves very nicely. Self-service is just not enough for me anymore. We need a bigger perspective. Supporting members to get out of their safe esoteric circles and act in the real world might be worth considering.

Another problem: The idea of genius. If the concept of genius is to be taken seriously, we don’t need a list of current “geniuses” whose only achievement that counts is a formal intelligence test. As a PhD in science studies and the history of science and technology, this is not how genius

should be defined. This is not the kind of extraordinariness the world needs, in my view. Genius has its linguistic origin from the Latin verb that means “I breed.” So, from a linguistic perspective, a genius displays unique creative power. There is no necessary connection to a high IQ, although there could probably be a common quantity of creative persons within high-IQ circles. But it seems clear that you’d also find a common quantity of people displaying creative power from other parts of society, and hence also from non-high-IQ circles. The role of creative power played by nature, nurture, acquired skills, hard work, and experience is, of course, unknown. Investigations of rare creative composers indicate that many years of practice are a prerequisite for the creation of masterpieces. A high IQ would clearly not be sufficient, and probably completely irrelevant. I fear that some members of many high-IQ societies tend to exaggerate the role of mental capacity with relation to the concept of genius. And remembering that the mark of a genius often goes hand in hand with deeply felt admiration, some insecure and non-creative people with impressive high-IQ raw scores may elevate themselves to pedestals that they/we clearly didn’t deserve.

My name figures on the World Genius Directory (160 SD15), but I fail to see why, exactly. There seems to be a set formal IQ limit of 145 SD15. By this somewhat empty definition, I am a genius... But society should be the judge, not a formal IQ test. What is my standing unique gift to mankind? What is my creative power, in comparison to the great masters? I may have displayed some creative power—see my [“Creating Stuff” webpage](#), for example; but apart from two lovely children, my creations are not to be heralded by future generations as something magnificent. My [PhD dissertation](#) is probably the most important (scientific) contribution, which also has some creative power built in; but more important, this is the result of hard work and not genius. Earning a PhD is by no means unique anymore.

So, high IQ should not stand alone, clearly. It needs to be combined with other traits, such as creativity or high skill performance, talent, and hard work. IQ and skill are not at all necessarily correlated. High IQ might even induce laziness on the poor soul getting a high raw score. Humility works better, I think.

Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?

Rebsdorf: A key turning point in my life was passing a Mensa test in 1993 at my first year as an astronomy and physics student at the Niels Bohr Institute, University of Copenhagen. Passing the test transformed me from a low-achieving, near-suicidal, rather lonely and insecure young man into a higher-achieving, self-confident student with an increasing amount of self-respect.

I left the Mensa club the same year, though, and I distanced myself from the esoteric society by presenting my experience at social meetings as a botched taboo event not worth taking seriously. The Danish Mensa society was rather small at the time, and I even made fun of the people in the club and, immaturely, I called them losers. This judgment was perhaps partly due to my cultural background in terms of the infamous Law of Jante, but, ultimately, the blame is clearly on me. As Seneca had allegedly and wisely stated, “When you judge, investigate.”

I still fail to remember what made me take the life-changing Mensa test back in 1993. For long, this has been a conundrum to me, as I didn’t regard myself to be either intelligent or high-achieving or in any way particularly mentally capable at that time. For years after the test result, I kept telling myself that I had just rehearsed to becoming skilled at passing the test. I thought that I had simply managed to “cheat” the test. But knowingly, I somehow unconsciously forgot the tremendous impact it had had on all my future performances in natural sciences and an ensuing career

of many different interesting employments with the guiding principle of increasing the scientific literacy in society.

Jacobsen: When you think of the ways in which the geniuses of the past have either been mocked, vilified, or 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.

Rebsdorf: Their views have conflicted with

- common zeitgeist (original composers like Arnold Schönberg or Karlheinz Stockhausen)
- religious dogma (examples are legion, sadly, e.g., Giordano Bruno and the Catholic Church, Galileo Galilei,... or [the 1277 Condemnation of Aristotelianism](#)), or
- social/cultural norms (artists like painter Picasso, composer John Cage).

In addition, within scientific circles, breaking with scientific standard models/normal science has oftentimes resulted in expelling researchers from the scientific community, until a theory had proven strong enough to survive as a new paradigm.

Some examples of self-proclaimed new scientific paradigms are to be found in high-IQ circles. One example is the so-called TDVP theory hailed by its own authors as a new paradigm. I have co-written a highly critical article about this—it is to be found at my research publication overview at [ResearchGate](#). In this article, my co-writer and I discuss central aspects of “Triadic Dimensional-Distinction Vortical Paradigm” (TDVP) by Vernon Neppe and Edward Close. In my opinion, the scientific discipline of physics is the most important part of the study of reality (ontology), almost by definition. It appears that some of the most important premises in TDVP are incorrect. It follows that if the basic premises are wrong or meaningless, the whole “paradigm” must be considered to be wrong and meaningless. I question whether or not this proclaimed paradigm-changing framework, in fact, represents a scientific theory, whether the theory is meaningful and substantiated, or whether it is something else.

This is one example, I think, within high-IQ circles, of the display of a lack of humility and perhaps even of disrespect for the scientific profession. The authors behind TDVP should not be the ones to claim the theory to be either ground-breaking or paradigmatic. This job is saved for the scientific community, the test of nature, and history. My, and others’, critical claims opposing their theory have been completely rejected by the authors, which is another clear display of their lack of understanding of the negotiation element of the scientific process. Enough about this. Just an example.

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

Rebsdorf: The canon of the greatest geniuses is easily googled. Figures like Goethe, Da Vinci, Galilei, Newton, Descartes, Kant, Einstein, Bill Gates, Elon Musk, and Donald Trump (pun intended) often heralded with a bit of envy by many aspiring intellectuals as the embodiment of their wettest dream: to make huge profits by means of mental capacity. Some other names:

- Georges Lemaître, cosmologist and priest, consciously embracing religion and rationality without mutually confusing or mixing the two incommensurables
- Jens Martin Knudsen, late Danish physicist and life-on-Mars enthusiast

- Nicole Oresme, late French medieval natural philosopher, of whom I've written [an article](#)
- Ole Rømer, Danish discoverer of the speed of light, which should have been named after him
- Niels Bohr, for his creation of a creative research environment in the 1920s leading to the Copenhagen Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics
- Steward Brand, for his early premonition that we need to think on the long term
- Fyodor Dostoevsky, for his fictitious creativity and introspection and clear display of the human condition
- Thom Yorke, iconoclastic and uniquely creative bandleader with a faint singing voice yet rare composing ability
- Avishai Cohen, the most brilliant double bass virtuoso and composer of the present: exceptional creative ability
- Donald Trump, a political genius, but only if you ask himself. In other words, who has got the right to define genius?

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

Rebsdorf: We need an unambiguous definition of the term *genius* first. Utilizing a thesaurus definition of genius, i.e., “exceptional intellectual or creative power or other natural ability,” the difference either stands out as pretty clear or means the opposite. It depends on your use of the logic “or” in the definition. So, having tested to be highly intelligent puts a person potentially into the pool of geniuses. Yet it might not be enough. Also, some display of unique creative power or other natural ability is required for the person to qualify. Unless you take the “or” literally. And then you can form a long list of geniuses by simply collecting the names of people with rare IQ test results. This has been done already and can be found on the website “[World Genius Directory](#).” Once fascinated by this possibility, I also ended up on that list with a result of 160 SD15. Yet it is of course likely that my range is somewhere else. Perhaps below, perhaps above. No one knows for sure. And nobody really cares. So, in my view, a high IQ raw score is clearly not enough to qualify as a genius. You need some special super power, creative or other rare ability. Otherwise, how does great professional skill make a genius, like genius jazz players or classical music composers? Some cases might be found in the intersection between profound intelligence and rare creative ability. Mozart or Bach is a likely example, although we will never know their mental ability or intelligence quotient, will we?

More interestingly, a genius might just be a “truly great person.” My wife would be one of the best examples.

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

Rebsdorf: Do you mean passed formal exams and work experience? That's all listed here:

Work

2020 – *Assistant Professor | VIA University College, Denmark*

2017 – 20 *Head of [ESERO Denmark](#) & Project Manager | House of Natural Sciences,*

Denmark

- 2017 – 20 **Danish delegate representative** | *European Space Agency Advisory Committee on Education*
- 2010 – **External University Examiner** | *Science & Technology Faculty, Aarhus University (AU)*
– Philosophy and History of Science, Higher Science Education & Science Communication
- 2015-2017 **Publishing Editor** | *Aarhus University Press, Aarhus, Denmark*
- 2013-15 **CCO (Chief Communications Officer) & Project Manager** | *House of Natural Sciences*
- 2012-13 **Communications Consultant** | *Regional Hospital Central Jutland*
- 2010–11 **Writing Consultant** | *Niels Bohr Institute, University of Copenhagen*
- 2008-12 **Information Officer** | *International Centre for Research in Organic Food Systems, Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark*
– Research communication and research coordination
– Secretary of ICROFS’ National Programme Committee in the period 2008-2010
- 2007-08 **High School Physics Teacher** | *Eux, Viborg, Denmark*
- 2004-06 **Postdoc** | *Centre for Science Education, Aarhus University*
- 2001-04 **PhD Graduate** | *Centre for Science Studies, Aarhus University*
- 2000-01 **Creative Idea Developer** | *Danish Technological Institute, Denmark*
– Facilitating idea development, project management, advising inventors, negotiating with companies and inventors on intellectual property rights.

Education

- 2018 **International Business Academy—IBA Kolding** | **Fundraising Manager**
Academic Education in Communication and Dissemination: Fundraising & lobbying, strategic fundraising and partnerships, financing opportunities, financing, 10 ECTS, grade: A.
- 2014 **NGO-Project Management** | *Project Management, Leadership, Coaching and Strategy*
Practicing project management: Resource management, team management, conflict management, personal management, 10 ECTS, grade: A.
- 2008 **Higher National Diploma in Journalism** | *Danish School of Media and Journalism*
Media studies, press law and ethics, language in the media, journalistic idea development and research, journalistic dissemination, presentation techniques.
- 2004 **Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Natural Sciences (Science Studies)** | *Science & Technology*
- 2001-2004 **PhD Graduate** | *Centre for Science Studies, AU, Aarhus University*
The PhD project ([Amazon](#)) was a study of the development of astrophysics in the 20th

Century. Focusing on the Danish professor of astronomy Bengt Strömgren (1908-1987), in the USA, formerly known as “The Great Dane” amongst scientists, the dissertation is a biographical study, investigating Strömgren’s life in science and the development of astronomical and related fields. The project includes institutional and technological developments and the international astronomical networks of scientists and science-politicians. At the same time, it is a comparative study of two local contexts, the Danish and American observatories and the scientific networks of the field of astrophysics.

2000 *MSc in Physics* | *Science & Technology, AU*
 – Teaching skills of high school physics

1998 *BSc in Physics* | *The Niels Bohr Institute, University of Copenhagen*

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?

Rebsdorf: I have already embarked on this question above.

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

Rebsdorf: I belong to the agnostic and atheist branch, but certainly NOT anti-theist. The world needs no more missionaries, religious or anti-religious. E.g., Richard Dawkins’ choir of non-believers is not productive. Mocking religious people is futile. Science and religion are incommensurable in the sense that a rational argument is given little weight by the faithful, and the religious narrative is given little weight by the rationalist. What we need is mutual respect—and the freedom to believe and think what we want, as long as it is not illegal, and as long as we can keep it to ourselves (or at least away from educational institutions) and stop brainwashing our offspring and the young generations.

I hope that my own children, now aged 8 and 10, will choose *not* to be baptized (most likely there is just one realistic alternative to choose from: the Christian Lutheran), but it is completely their own choice. I have shown them the world map of religions just to present the clear display of hefty cultural-geographical bias—and we have discussions about the roots and apparent needs of religion, the idea of god and the concept of creation *ex nihilo*, the humanly biased need for a primus motor and our dislike for infinity before and after the ever-flowing present moment. Kids love these kinds of subjects, if we hear them out.

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

Rebsdorf: Very much. Working for increasing the scientific literacy as well as the interest and motivation for science and technology has been a guiding principle and the core of my professional working life since 2000. It is important and meaningful to me. And science leads the ways when it comes to training critical thinking, a commodity in general decline. We need a new enlightenment.

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

Rebsdorf: Life-time member of a number of intellectual societies (links given)—a crazy collecting hobby of mine, mostly involving puzzle-solving but also some (digital) socializing on online platforms. Below you have it all—a long and not very interesting list:

≥ 160, SD 15:

- Listed in the [World Genius Directory](#), *160 SD15*, even though I am most certainly not a genius (just ask my wife), as also stated above. I was just once narcissistically fascinated to figure on that list.
- [4G High IQ Society](#),
- [Profundus](#),
- [Leviathan](#),
- [EPGSIG](#) Facebook Group,

[150; 160], SD 15:

- [SPIQR](#),
- [Misty Pavilion Society](#),
- [Egregius](#),

[140;150], SD 15:

- [ISI-S](#) (distinguished member),
- [Glia](#), Paul Cooijmans' test raw score: 153 SD 15.
- [The International Society for Philosophical Inquiry](#) (Senior Research Fellow, Social Network Administrator, selected member of the society's Committee on Ethics),
- [CIVIQ](#),
- [Magnus](#),
- [Uber](#),
- [Torr](#),

[132; 140], SD 15:

- [Poetic Genius Society](#), composed of intellectually gifted individuals with a passion for poetry,
- [Intertel](#) (2017-18),
- [Mensa](#) (member on and off since 1993, currently not member),
- [Top One Percent](#),

< 132, SD 15:

- [Callidus](#),
- [Synapse](#),
- [Literarians](#)– The New Literarian Society aims at nurturing the poetic, artistic and bellet-ristic spirits of its members, like Poetic Genius Society
- [Supernova Society](#),
- [Atlantiq Society](#),

- [Spacetime Society](#),
- [Polymaths and Polymathy](#) Facebook Group,
- [International High IQ Society](#) (2017-18).

Numericore test result.

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.

Rebsdorf: See above. In short: $132 < X < 161$ (SD 15)

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

Rebsdorf: I am not sure how to interpret this question. If you mean which established (or home-spun) moral philosophies that I tend to cling to, then perhaps— and somewhat surprisingly to many—a selection of the fundamental tenets formulated in *modern satanism* (Yes, but in an iconoclastic version completely devoid of the ridiculous biblical embodiment of evil named Satan) combined with Kant's moral philosophy are good picks. Philosophical, ethical ideas could thus be turned into human virtuous practice by including the message of the following inspiring moral principles:

- *Deontology and Virtue:* The rightness or wrongness of actions does not depend on their consequences but on whether they fulfill our duty, the categorical imperative
- *Beneficence, Least Harm*(what is right and good): One should strive to act with compassion and empathy toward all creatures in accordance with reason. Not only existing creatures, but also past and future, unborn creatures (the lack of action on a basis of empathy for unborn generations is one of the greatest challenges of our time, technologically as well as ethically, I believe).
- *Nature:* As completely dependent on—and intricate parts of—Nature, all humans should strive to act accordingly with respect and humilit
- *Justice:* The struggle for justice is an ongoing and necessary pursuit that should prevail over laws and institutions. Still, we need to abide by the law, national and internationa
- *Respect for Autonomy:* The freedoms of others should be respected, including the freedom to offend (and take the consequences). To willfully and unjustly encroach upon the freedoms of another is to forgo one's own. Respect different views of virtue.
- *Human Knowledge Morality:* One should take care never to distort scientific facts to fit one's belie
- *Human Fallibility:* People are fallible. If one makes a mistake, one should do one's best to rectify it and resolve any harm that might have been caused.

Some very important virtues and imperatives are also found in many religions, but in my view those to some extent include messages comparable to the above practical working tenets.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Assistant Professor, VIA University College.

[2] Individual Publication Date: May 15, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/rebsdorf-1>;
Full Issue Publication Date: September 1, 2021: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

Conversation with Christopher Angus on Family, Background, Life, Philosophy, Being Christian, and Love: Member, ISI-Society (1)

2021-05-22

***Christopher Angus** is a Member of the ISI-Society. He discusses: growing up; extended self; family background; youth with friends; education; purpose of intelligence tests; high intelligence; extreme reactions to geniuses; greatest geniuses; genius and a profoundly gifted person; necessities for genius or the definition of genius; work experiences and jobs held; job path; myths of the gifted; God; science; tests taken and scores earned; range of the scores; ethical philosophy; political philosophy; metaphysics; worldview; meaning in life; source of meaning; afterlife; life; and love.*

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

Christopher Angus[1],[2]*: Any such stories mainly revolved around being farmers living in a rural community within the larger context of Canada's stories and Canada's relationship with the rest of the world.

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

Angus: I'm no longer involved with farming, but yes they have. My roots are still there, and after having lived in a fairly large city for a while, I am now back in a rural area of our province.

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

Angus: My family came from western Canada (western Manitoba to be more exact), with a typical prairie culture and the English language. They were Protestant (United Church of Canada). It was a culture steeped in rural activities such as hockey, camping, hunting, sports, motorcycles, snowmobiles, and the like.

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

Angus: It was fairly good, so far as these sorts of things go. I've heard horror stories from others that I did not experience. However, I was suffering from insomnia and hypoglycemia for most of my life, so I wasn't always functioning at full IQ potential. The hypoglycemia is under control, but the insomnia still afflicts me.

Jacobsen: What have been some professional certifications, qualifications, and trainings earned by you?

Angus: I have a certificate in graphic arts, as well as some other smaller things. I'm mostly self-taught in film, more specifically animated film.

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

Angus: It was mostly curiosity. I knew that I was above average, but I didn't have any idea that I would score as high as I did.

Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?

Angus: Officially, around 6 years ago.

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.

Angus: People are uncomfortable with, or scared of, that which they can't understand. The typical person cannot understand many of whom are classified as "geniuses."

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

Angus: I think there were interesting people in the late 1900s who became somewhat lost over time in our current cultures. Their ideas and inventions have been overlooked and even replaced by that which has set us back. Edison is an example. Also, I believe William James has some brilliant insights into psychology, the mind/body question, consciousness, etc, which were later largely lost. I think he's going to be noticed again.

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

Angus: The typical response is that genius is what happens when the profoundly intelligent person does something with their intelligence, acts upon it, as it were. But I think it may be more complicated than that. For instance, people can have brilliant flashes of insight and not do anything with them, or have the resources, time, or freedom, to fully pursue them.

So, I'd think genius is when intelligence works with known information in a way that brings about something brilliant and does something fresh with that information, whether it works its way out in science, the arts, philosophy, or whatever. But I would think there needs to be the necessity of it being at least on the pathway to what is true and real, not something that a person just dreamt up that is actually utterly untenable – I've seen that in the high IQ "world".

There are surely plenty of examples of genius that we will never know about, and there's plenty that we have accepted as genius which likely is not.

Jacobsen: Is profound intelligence necessary for genius?

Angus: How do we define genius? Some would say that Michael Jackson was a genius musician and performer, but so far as I know he wasn't of profound intelligence.

I would define genius as the ability to take known information and synthesize it into something new and fresh that others haven't seen or considered before. I'd say that profound intelligence would be needed for that. Michael Jackson didn't do that as far as I can see. He had an immense talent on display, but it wasn't outside of the previous box to the extent of being genius, in my opinion.

Jacobsen: What have been some work experiences and jobs held by you?

Angus: I've mostly worked within the artist/animation field and am working on my own films.

Jacobsen: Why pursue this particular job path?

Angus: It's where my passion lies, what I'm best suited towards doing. Also, I believe it can be my voice in the world, and I believe that the arts and story can have an immense impact.

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?

Angus: I think the most important aspect of the notion of “gifted” is to realize that such people have some different needs, peer issues, and some different ways of interacting with the world, all while often still wanting to maintain some sort of sense of normalcy and safety in society. These needs are real and shouldn’t be marginalized.

The myths are that people with high IQ are automatically “geniuses” who have minds that can figure many things out without error. The truths that dispel them are the fact that so many high IQ people have differing views. They can’t all be right. High IQ can help a person along in many ways, but it can also lead them down a path of getting more stuck.

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

Angus: There are a lot of philosophical arguments for God being debated right now, arguments such as the Kalam argument (an updated argument of the uncaused cause), the question of absolute morality, various spiritual experiences, fine tuning in the universe, etc. I actually don’t believe that any of these arguments concretely prove God’s existence even if some of them have more weight than others do, although the question of where the information needed to create consciousness is quite interesting — in order to create consciousness, it surely would have had some sort of comprehension of consciousness and thus either be a higher consciousness or have come from it.

But here’s the thing: although these arguments might not give solid weight on their own, none of them exist in a vacuum. They are all part of a whole. So if we look at these various arguments — and life in general — in a holistic manner, then theism becomes the most tenable (for some the only tenable) foundation by which to view the world.

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

Angus: I respect science and generally understand the scientific method, but it isn’t my primary inclination. I am much more interested in philosophy, theology, and of course the arts. So, I see science’s value, but Scientism is far from being a trap for me.

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

Angus: Recently:

GIFT High Range IQ Test – 158 SD15

Verbatim – 156 SD15

FIQURE – 155 SD15

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.

Angus: Mid to late 150s SD15.

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

Angus: I’m not sure if I accept any of the more “official” views on this subject. I’ll suggest that a healed and healthy human psyche also has a strong and healthy light of a conscience that we

should live according to. Of course some have scathed over consciences (or scathed over in certain areas) and it is for those with right conscience to influence society in different ways in response to societal concerns. I think the light of conscience is a divine light attuned to a higher law (does conscience have any validity if there isn't a higher good and thus plumb line for morality?).

Then there's the question of who has the healthy psyche and is most attuned to their conscience, but often as things unfold, this can become more apparent as society considers people's motivations. Thus, this would also leave room for some sort of reasoning as people debate the best response according to conscientious interaction with the information around them.

So, perhaps something like Divine Command Theory. Maybe a soft form of Divine Command Theory with an understanding that there is a divine light of conscience in humanity attuned to a higher goodness, and thus, moral law.

In regards to Divine Command Theory, people could argue that morality should be based on certain religious texts, but of course not everyone believes in these texts (or at least certain ones), and besides, how people interpret them is largely based on their conscience (or scathed over conscience). Added to this free societies consider religious freedoms to pursue or reject certain religious texts or views of value.

So where does that leave us? Perhaps, pursue healing and let the light in our conscience shine bright.

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

Angus: I would say that I lean towards Classical Liberalism. I reject Libertarianism because, although I believe humanity has free will in that we are not bound to a chain of cause and effect but can actually make true choices (our own causes with their own effects — which is another discussion), I do not believe that our will is separate from some mighty strong influences on it. Therefore, although we are free as individuals to some extent, we are also deeply influenced by our environments. But this shouldn't lead to a social stance which takes away from the individual freedoms that we are capable of attaining. Therefore, I support individual property rights, unencumbered business, and the like.

Related to this, I believe in a rule of law and penitentiary system that is merciful to the human condition when appropriate, but also that treats all citizens equally, and that, when appropriate, can also come down hard on certain horrific criminal behaviour.

So, I think we should consider how strongly we are influenced and respond accordingly, but we should also consider that we do have choices to make with certain moral obligations and a conscience to help guide us and also act respond accordingly to those concerns. Of course, this doesn't lead to easy black and white answers on some issues. But a person's psyche within their community, isn't black and white. This, however, isn't to take away from the necessity of the above mentioned rule of law.

This answer dovetails a bit with my previous comment about ethical philosophy, so it might be pertinent to add that I see great value in a society or culture having an emphasis on inner healing. This would help with a lot of other issues.

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

Angus: Capitalism and a free market makes the most sense to me. This along with a slight

amount of socialism in relation to roads, law enforcement, park systems, some support of the arts, and the like. There can be a stability with some socialism, but it also doesn't take much for it to get bogged down, and a free market is more easily corrected by the people who retain more control. Some have never lived with their freedoms having been lost and do not understand the importance of freedom. Others are currently realizing its value and how tenuous it actually is. A free market society is the best economic system to protect freedoms while it can also allow for care for the downtrodden via charities, business endeavors, etc, which work towards that end.

So I see freedom as something which should also be considered in regards to economic systems. Some societies or groups within societies put less emphasis on it than others, which is understandable as each society or sub group can have its own "personality" with different views on how much freedom is pertinent, but we should all agree to never allow it to be lost, and actively protect it.

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

Angus: I believe that the US constitution with its emphasis of putting power in the hands of "We The People" and its attempt to protect this sentiment doesn't just make the most workable sense, it may serve to help to protect freedom not only in the US, but also abroad. If the US loses its freedoms, then it won't bode well for rest of us.

Jacobsen: What metaphysics makes some sense to you, even the most workable sense to you?

Angus: I would sit somewhere between idealism (the notion that all comes out of consciousness and consciousness permeates the universe), and dualism.

I believe that there is a profound conscious aspect to the universe with consciousness being key. But I also believe that the natural world is a very real and not a mere illusion created by consciousness, as can be found in Idealism.

To put it another way. I'd align somewhat with panentheism, if one considers it to mean that higher consciousness is in and throughout a very real natural world with its own truly independent conscious creatures, but also above that natural world in a way whereby the notion is very clearly delineated from pantheism.

I'm also not sure if this would lead to animism as I don't know if all "consciousness" is necessarily the same as found in humanity, or even other creatures. For instance, a rock might have some sort of "life," but that doesn't necessarily mean that it can interact.

Jacobsen: What worldview-encompassing philosophical system makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?

Angus: Would populism count as a philosophical system? It's of course far from my only belief, but I believe it is currently notable as I think that the rise of populism is quite pertinent to the season that we are in — considering what is being exposed — and that this movement has just begun.

Jacobsen: What provides meaning in life for you?

Angus: My faith. Any other aspect to my life has no value unless it is hinged to this in some way. Without that connection, it is ultimately empty.

Jacobsen: Is meaning externally derived, internally generated, both, or something else?

Angus: It's both, and something else. We often create meaning based on our interaction with external truths, but they are true. The human ability to do so is also an externally true element of existence. So, our creation of meaning is an attempt to grasp what is true and meaningful beyond us.

Jacobsen: Do you believe in an afterlife? If so, why, and what form? If not, why not?

Angus: Yes. As a Christian I believe in a state of conscious awareness and interaction, in a loving existence with Christ when people accept it. I've heard and read a variety of interpretations of this afterlife, and while some things said may have validity, I'm just not in the position to fully accept these views. I just don't know.

Jacobsen: What do you make of the mystery and transience of life?

Angus: Mystery leads to wonder, and part of the human endeavor is to probe into the mystery in some shape or form, but of course it always goes deeper — everything ends in mystery of some sort. We've answered some of the hows, but there's always a deeper why to these things. Why does beauty exist? Why is there something rather than nothing? Why does love exist in the universe? Those are profound questions not enough people are asking these days, and ultimately I would say that those speak into the transience of life.

Jacobsen: What is love to you?

Angus: Different personalities receive and give love in different ways, and it's good to understand this when interacting with different people. Yet in these differing ways it isn't true love unless there is an element of self-sacrifice.

True love, like true beauty, is far beyond the superficial. Which brings an interesting question — to what extent is love related to suffering and beauty?

I mean, can one attain to a comprehension of beauty with any depth, if they have never loved and suffered?

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Member, ISI-Society.

[2] Individual Publication Date: May 22, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/angus-1>; Full Issue Publication Date: September 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 Anthony Sepulveda (Brown) on Abortion, Relational Ethical Quandaries, and Mothers: Member, World Genius Directory (10)

2021-06-08

Anthony Sepulveda (Brown) is a Member of the World Genius Directory. He discusses: abortion; the 20th and 21st century; ethical views; ethical premises about abortion; the father; religion and abortion; and secular worldviews and religion.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Abortion, what is it, historically?

Anthony Sepulveda (Brown)[1],[2]*: The act of terminating pregnancy.

Jacobsen: What is it now, in the latter 20th century and early 21st century?

Sepulveda (Brown): The same act, if conducted under significantly safer conditions.

Jacobsen: What ethical views seem the most relevant for this subject matter?

Sepulveda (Brown): For many, abortion is no different from murder. Made all the more heinous because they equate the fetus to a healthy, living child. They are mistaken insofar as a developing fetus is not so different from any other arrangement of human cells. If anyone is so passionate about the sanctity of such minute issues, they'd have to express themselves towards all behaviour that could be considered sadistic or masochistic if they didn't want to seem hypocritical.

Jacobsen: What ethical premises seem the most important to consider regarding the gamete cells of the father, the mother, then the zygote, the blastocyst, and the foetus?

Sepulveda (Brown): It's most important to reduce the overall suffering of all parties involved once aborting the pregnancy has been deemed necessary. Often, abortions are conducted well before the infant is capable of living outside the womb or even feeling pain. In those cases, the only ones who truly suffer are the parents involved. Once the pregnancy has developed beyond a certain point, the birthing process is induced and the child is put into protective custody.

In Tango's case, there was one major complication – her husband. He is not a rational man and there's no way she could hold everything together with him in the picture. Years ago he threatened my life for simply speaking to her. So I could only imagine how far he'd go if he learned someone else had impregnated her.

It was so hard for me to tell her to, in her eyes, kill her child. I knew how hard she was willing to work to give it a good life. But I knew she'd never consider cutting her husband out of their child's life; that'd be too cruel an option in her eyes. So, I told her the truth – either everyone suffers or just the three of us will (Tango, myself and the photographer). Thankfully, she chose the latter.

Jacobsen: What ethical premises seem the most important to consider regarding the father, whether part of a relationship with the mother or a sperm donor?

Sepulveda (Brown): Most consideration is given to the mother as she has to physically carry the child and her role as parent is certain. In comparison, fatherhood can be doubted for obvious reasons. There are some arguments that men should have some say in what happens. But while it would be fair to let them voice their opinions, I believe that the final decision should be up to the mother.

In the case of sperm donors, they should have absolutely no say in what happens.

Jacobsen: What ethical premises seem the most important to consider regarding the mother?

Sepulveda (Brown): Her highest priorities are her health and safety.

Jacobsen: What ethical premises seem the most important to consider regarding the type of relationship status of the mother?

Sepulveda (Brown): Any consequences to someone's relationships shouldn't matter in comparison to the suffering of those involved. To love someone is to want them to be happy, no matter what it takes. It requires you to be humble enough to accept your position in their life and pursue what's best for them anyway.

To those reading – please don't judge anyone you know who's either been through or is going through this process. Rarely is it a casual option. So just keep your mouth shut and support them as much as you can.

Jacobsen: How do different religions view abortion?

Sepulveda (Brown): Many consider the act to be an abhorrent sin for which those who've committed it will be punished for eternity.

Tango is one such person. And when she expressed that belief, there was nothing I could do to disprove her religious views. Which I wouldn't have done if I could because I knew how important her faith is for her. Instead, I tried to assure her that no loving God or reasonable person would judge her unfairly. And I promised her that every year we'd take some time to pray to her child and tell it how things were going so that if our day of judgement comes, God and her child could make an informed decision.

Despite how things went, I intend to keep that promise.

Jacobsen: What about secular (agnostics, atheists, humanists, etc.) people who are "Pro-Life," so the same or similar views minus the transcendent justification or argument for the views?

Sepulveda (Brown): Their arguments are more reasonable, insofar as they're grounded here in objective reality. But their views aren't as logically valid as they think. Beyond the argument about suffering I made above, Judith Jarvis Thomson developed an excellent counterargument that I recently learned about in the video Abortion and Ben Shapiro by Philosophy Tube. It would take me longer to explain here than watch, so I'd highly recommend it to anyone interested in the subject.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Member, World Genius Directory.

[2] Individual Publication Date: June 8, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/Sepulveda-10>; Full Issue Publication Date: September 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 Dr. Benoit Desjardins, M.D., Ph.D., on Background, Academics, Intelligence, Science, and Philosophy: Academic Physician; Member, Mega Society (1)

2021-07-08

Professor Benoit Desjardins, MD, PhD, FAHA, FACR is an Ivy League academic physician and scientist at the University of Pennsylvania. He is a member of the Mega Society, the OlympIQ Society and past member of the Prometheus Society. He is the designer of the cryptic Mega Society logo. He is member of several scientific societies and a Fellow of the American College of Radiology and of the American Heart Association. He is the co-Founder of the Arrhythmia Imaging Research (AIR) lab at Penn. His research is funded by the National Institute of Health. He is an international leader in three different fields: cardiovascular imaging, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity. He discusses: growing up; extended self; family background; youth with friends; education; purpose of intelligence tests; high intelligence; extreme reactions to geniuses; greatest geniuses; genius and a profoundly gifted person; necessities for genius or the definition of genius; work experiences and jobs held; job path; myths of the gifted; God; science; tests taken and scores earned; range of the scores; ethical philosophy; political philosophy; metaphysics; worldview; meaning in life; source of meaning; afterlife; life; and love.

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

Dr. Benoit Desjardins[1],[2]*: Nothing interesting. A very ordinary family, trying to stay afloat financially. I found out on my wedding day that my father was adopted, which added mystery to the family for the first time in my life. But I chose not to investigate further out of respect for his wishes.

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

Desjardins: No, not much of a legacy. My family history did, however, make me prioritize financial stability as one of my main goals in life.

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

Desjardins: French Canadian, catholic, I grew up in Montreal. I was a first-generation college student, although I never really attended college and was fast-tracked directly to medical school and graduate school. We were not a very religious family. A priest had cursed my mother to get a physically disabled child when she was pregnant with me because she missed mass, and my parents then dissociated from the church. I was fortunately not born with any handicaps.

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

Desjardins: Not great. I was not good with human interaction. I was a bit of a recluse, although I did attend school but did not have many friends. I went to an all-boys high school. I only became comfortable interacting with girls a few years after high school. Now I have a wife and kids. Happily married for 34 years.

Jacobsen: What have been some professional certifications, qualifications, and trainings earned

by you?

Desjardins: My path was unusual. I was fast-tracked to medical school in Canada because of my exceptional intellectual abilities, skipping college. But medical school did not satisfy me intellectually. So, after medical school, I received a very prestigious Award to pursue four simultaneous graduate degrees in the US, combining Pure Mathematics, Artificial Intelligence, Formal Philosophy (Logic), and Theoretical Physics. I called this my “intellectual interlude”. I then completed the medical curriculum (internship, residency, fellowship) to earn a living as an academic physician. So, I have an MD degree, a PhD degree, half a dozen Masters, and medical post-graduate training certificates. I also completed several additional certifications on the side, like recent certifications in hacking and cybersecurity. I love to learn new things, and these certifications force me to learn new fields very thoroughly.

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

Desjardins: Their purpose is to attempt to evaluate intelligence. I just take those tests for fun as I love to solve complicated problems.

Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?

Desjardins: It was in high school since I was pretty much a recluse before that.

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.

Desjardins: It usually depends on the mindset of the society in which they live. If it is not open to new ideas or non-traditional ideas, geniuses get vilified, sometimes imprisoned (e.g., Galileo), or killed (e.g., Socrates). On the other hand, if it values new ideas and risk-takers, geniuses get praised or platformed (e.g., Gates, Jobs, Musk).

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

Desjardins: One hundred billion humans ever lived on Earth, so out of those, there were quite a few geniuses throughout history. Here are a few: Socrates, Galileo, da Vinci, Einstein, Darwin, Newton, Aristotle, Turing.

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

Desjardins: Extreme creativity and long-term focused effort characterize genius. Profoundly intelligent people are much more common, and most don’t amount to much in life.

Jacobsen: Is profound intelligence necessary for genius?

Desjardins: Profound intelligence is usually a left-brain process. Extreme creativity is usually a right-brain process. So no, it’s not necessary.

Jacobsen: What have been some work experiences and jobs held by you?

Desjardins: The main path I followed is that of an Ivy League academic physician and scientist. But I have always pursued multiple sidelines in parallel. For example, one of my current sidelines is being a hacker and a cybersecurity specialist.

Jacobsen: Why pursue this particular job path?

Desjardins: Early in my life, I sought an intellectually challenging career, which generated good financial security income. However, I quickly realized that such a career did not exist or was very difficult to find. So, I decided to pursue two careers in parallel. I picked academic medicine to generate income and pursued many other activities in parallel to provide an intellectual challenge.

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?

Desjardins: There are many myths. For example, the myth that gifted people always do well in school. But, unfortunately, the structure of the education system is not always appropriate for many geniuses, who either do poorly in school or drop out (e.g., Einstein).

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

Desjardins: God was an invention of prehistoric man to explain what he could not understand. Eventually, science explained more and more and made God and religion irrelevant. As for philosophy, it is a field that helps sharpen critical thinking, analysis, and writing. Therefore, everyone should take courses in philosophy, unless one aims for a job not requiring much thinking, like a farmer or a US congressman.

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

Desjardins: I earn a living as a physician and scientist, so much of my worldview is based on science.

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

Desjardins: I took the Mega test and Titan test in the mid-1990s for fun. My scores on those were good enough to qualify for membership to the Mega Society. Whether they are appropriate tests to measure very high IQs is still an open question, but all similar tests face the same problems. I probably have taken other tests as a kid, but I don't remember much. I also do puzzles and quizzes whenever they come up, such as Tim Roberts quizzes, and I usually finish first at most of them.

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.

Desjardins: High enough to qualify for membership in the Mega Society. Narrow range, around five-sigma.

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

Desjardins: I take a little bit from each of the main ethical philosophies, depending on the context. Deontological ethics mainly guides physicians, but a utilitarian approach often makes more sense to me.

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

Desjardins: I value the "Live and let live" social philosophy with a set of practical constraints. As long as people's behavior does not harm others, does not harm the environment, and does not

harm the social fabric, let people do what they want to do. If they're going to hurt themselves, it's their choice. You can always provide them with the best possible advice to help them realize the consequences of their actions, but in the end, it's their choice. Physicians use that approach a lot. For example, we inform patients who drink too much or do drugs about the consequences of their actions, and if they chose to continue, it's not our role to forcibly stop them from harming themselves.

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

Desjardins: Well, I cannot tolerate the cruelty and exploitative nature of predatory capitalism in the US. I instead value any economic system that provides people with the means to achieve their goals in life and reap the benefits of their hard work while at the same time providing a robust social net to prevent people from falling through the cracks. Canada, where I grew up, is a social democracy that provides all these features and makes sense to me from an economic perspective.

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

Desjardins: I oscillate between social liberalism and social democracy, depending on the context. Their basic policies are often the same. I value the power of the state but do not value as much the power of unions.

Jacobsen: What metaphysics makes some sense to you, even the most workable sense to you?

Desjardins: I have a purely atheistic scientific view of the world, and I do not need metaphysics.

Jacobsen: What worldview-encompassing philosophical system makes some sense, even the most workable sense to you?

Desjardins: As a scientist, post-positivism is the worldview philosophical system that makes the most sense to me. Reality is accessible through careful observation and scientific reasoning. Scientists make theories that can evolve, and they use observation to support or disprove a theory, knowing that all observations have a certain amount of error in them. Thus, science makes steady progress towards understanding reality.

Jacobsen: What provides meaning in life for you?

Desjardins: Three elements provide meaning to my life: my wife and kids, job and research work, and achievements. For the past few decades, I undertook a series of Grand Challenges outside work for personal growth and achievement. Each new Grand Challenge had to meet three conditions: (1) be something I had never done in my life, (2) enable me to grow as a person, and (3) have a well-defined end goal. I have pursued many such grand challenges, such as getting a Black Belt at Tae Kwon Do, earning a Wood Badge with Boy Scouts of America, becoming a pilot, becoming a competitive master marksman, etc.

Jacobsen: Is meaning externally derived, internally generated, both, or something else?

Desjardins: It's both. In my case, my grand challenges are purely internally generated. However, other aspects such as wife and kids are externally generated.

Jacobsen: Do you believe in an afterlife? If so, why, and what form? If not, why not?

Desjardins: We either get cremated or eaten by worms and get recycled, currently into dirt, but eventually possibly into Soy lent Green.

Jacobsen: What do you make of the mystery and transience of life?

Desjardins: Life is a beautiful thing. It appeared by itself out of nothing billions of years ago. It kept evolving until it produced Homo Sapiens, which could colonize and change the planet, and might eventually become interstellar. Science has taught us more and more about the mechanisms of life, so it's becoming less mysterious with time. The transience of life is a good thing, as otherwise there would be 100 billion people living on Earth, 94 billion of them living in old people's homes.

Jacobsen: What is love to you?

Desjardins: Love is an emotion that binds people to each other. I never thought of it more deeply or philosophically. But I express it regularly. For example, I've bought roses for my wife every month since we started dating, and I have not forgotten any monthly roses in the 37 years we have been together.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Academic Physician; Member, OlympIQ Society; Member, Mega Society.

[2] Individual Publication Date: July 8, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/desjardins-1>;
Full Issue Publication Date: September 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 Richard May (“May-Tzu”/“MayTzu”/“Mayzi”) on “Picking One’s Own Pocket,” “Did Gurdjieff understand his own teaching?”, “What is the work?”, “Truth,” “Good and Evil,” and “Is this what the work has become?”: Co-Editor, “Noesis: The Journal of the Mega Society” (6)

2021-09-08

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: “Picking One’s Own Pocket”; “Did Gurdjieff understand his own teaching?”; “What is the work?”; “Truth”; the meaning of truth in “Truth”; “Good and Evil”; so few being awake; “Is this what the work has become?”; the work, and play; identification with the work; identification with the work considered sleeping rather than waking; and Gurdjieff and Wittgenstein.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: “Picking One’s Own Pocket” describes a context in which the truth, to an individual, gets posed as forever-incomplete, while the truth, itself, can be complete. How is this playing off the poly-agnosticism regarding different levels of knowledge in other braindroppings in *Something for No One*?

Richard May[1],[2]*: To me picking one’s own pocket meant simply that one cannot abrogate one’s own authority in choosing what or whom to believe, if anyone. It’s your judgement.

Jacobsen: “Did Gurdjieff understand his own teaching?” posits, based on Blavatsky’s and Gurdjieff’s overlap in writings, Gurdjieff taking from other sourcing without full knowledge of the implications of the knowledge or parts of the systems lifted from other sources. Who was Gurdjieff? Why was he important? Is he well-regarded in general or more as a fringe loon, or a ex-communicated enlightened figure found, more or less, in obscurity? Same questions on Blavatsky, too, please. (These are not Zen koans.)

May: There are hundreds of books on the topic of who Gurdjieff was. No one knows who Gurdjieff was.

Gurdjieff was important only to his pupils.

He is generally regarded as a obscure fringe loon, as you suggest, except by his pupils, and Blavatsky could only aspire to be regarded as a fringe loon.

Jacobsen: “What is the work?” describes a stick with two ends, but inverts North American Judeo-Christian theological foundations. How does the devil lead to paradise and God to hell?

May: The devil may lead to paradise and God lead to hell? I do not know that there is a devil or a God. This is something Gurdjieff seemed to claim. But Gurdjieff said can lead to paradise, not does lead with certainty.

Jacobsen: “Truth” describes the where the lies of truth lie. Side questions, what was the importance of Ouspensky? What is the importance of Blavatsky? What was the importance of Gurdjieff? Because... they seem neither well-known nor well-understood.

May: Ouspensky is generally regarded as Gurdjieff’s most important pupil. Otherwise Ouspensky had no importance. Ouspensky wrote coherent English. Blavatsky and Gurdjieff had no importance except to their pupils. Blavatsky and Gurdjieff were neither well-known nor well-understood.

Jacobsen: What is “truth,” in that sense,” as stated in “Truth”? What is truth and falsehood in that sense? What does this state about human nature with defilement of truth as necessary for truth to come forth and be heard properly?

May: Gurdjieff seemed to be saying that humans as they were could not understand truth. Truth could only be understood by most humans if presented as a lie.

Jacobsen: “Good and Evil” explains the nature of good and evil as first requiring a realization of them. How do good and evil only exist for a few?

May: That good and evil only exist for a few was a claim made by Gurdjieff. I don’t know how this is true, or if the claim even has any meaning.

Jacobsen: Why are so few awake? What is “awake” in this sense? Is it akin to enlightenment in some philosophies of Buddhism?

May: Why are so few awake? What is the biological utility in an evolutionary context of awakening? Maybe awakening has no biological utility. I think awake may be equivalent to enlightenment in some Buddhist philosophical schools. But I may be incorrect.

Jacobsen: “Is this what the work has become?” talks about the work. First, what is the work?

May: The work is Gurdjieff’s system for awakening humans from the condition of being what he called sleeping machines or unconscious automata.

Jacobsen: Second, why does it have to be work? Why not play?

May: Referring to Gurdjieff’s system as work rather than play suggests that it may be difficult to awaken. But I did not choose the terminology of work or play. Supposedly the sheep in the folk tale of the magician illustrate the illusions of hypnotic sleep.

Jacobsen: The magician sounds sadistic and cruel. What is the identification with the work?

May: Supposedly the sheep in the folk tale of the magician illustrate the illusions of hypnotic sleep.

Jacobsen: How is this identification with the work considered sleeping rather than waking?

May: Identification in any form is considered to be sleep.

Jacobsen: Is the act of identifying the work akin to the universe seeing its own back, so as to mess with the still waters of the awakened—so to speak? By act of observation, the work is broken. One is no longer awake but asleep with an even deeper illusion.

May: I don't understand your question regarding "the universe seeing its own back."

Gurdjieff may have taught that one could sometimes awaken if only for a moment.

Ludwig Wittgenstein also noted this changing quality of human attention. He wrote that we may occasionally awaken for a moment sufficiently to realize that we have been asleep and dreaming.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Co-Editor, "Noesis: The Journal of the Mega Society."

[2] Individual Publication Date: September 8, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/may-6>;
Full Issue Publication Date: January 1, 2022: <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 Bob Williams on David Piffer, Latent Variable Analysis, High Correlations with the g Factor, Executive Function, Leonardo da Vinci, DMN, Booze, Promiscuity, and Charles Murray: Retired Nuclear Physicist (4)

2021-09-15

Bob Williams is a Member of the Triple Nine Society, Mensa International, and the International Society for Philosophical Enquiry. He discusses: the more evidenced theories of creativity similar to g or general intelligence as the majority position of researchers in the field of general intelligence; theories of genius; the main figures in these areas of creativity and genius connected to the research on g; personality differences between scientists and artists; conscientiousness; the ability to think; the expected probability of genius at higher and higher cognitive rarities; Howard Gardner; Robert Sternberg; the works of Arthur Jensen building on Charles Spearman; and the questions remaining about genius.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: After a hiatus, round four, what would make a general test of creativity valid? Has David Piffer proposed anything?

Bob Williams[1],[2]*: Piffer has done a good bit of work related to creativity and published several papers on it. To avoid congestion with my answer, I will append references to some of these papers. One of his particularly interesting observations: “There is some evidence that schizotypal traits and temperament are associated with creativity. Schizotypal traits as measured by the O-LIFE questionnaire were related to creative thinking styles and a subscale (but not the other three scales) ImpNon (Impulsive Nonconformity) was positively correlated to Divergent Thinking tasks in a sample of British students.”

Among the things he mentions in his papers are that Openness and low Conscientiousness are predictors of creativity. This has high face value and indirectly links creativity to intelligence (via Openness). He found a correlation of 0.54 between scientific and artistic creativity that was 70% genetic. Piffer suggested that the best measure of creativity is the impact of a work on its creative field. I like that definition more than the usual one of *something novel and useful*.

From my perspective, measuring creativity is difficult. It is not like intelligence in that we don't have a positive manifold and we don't have good ways to check the measurement instruments. One of the problems I see is the lack of importance in creativity below the level that we see in great composers, directors, writers, etc. If a person has a very low level of creativity, or even no realistically detectable level, he will not suffer in the way that the same low standing would cause problems relative to intelligence. Piffer referred to two kinds of creativity: Big-C (as in true genius) and Pro-C (someone at a level where he can work professionally in a creative discipline). If we add one more category, Little C, we have a group where there is a range of creativity, but where it has little impact.

People actually try to measure creativity over a full range. I'm not sure why or whether they have paid much attention to how the Little-C people are affected by their level of creativity.

Tests have a construct validity and an external validity. The construct (internal) validity is simply an indication that the test is measuring the thing it is supposed to measure—in this case, creativity. The treatment of construct validity is less rigorous than a test of external (predictive) validity.

One way it

is done is by comparison to tests or other means of making the measurement. If it matches conventional expectations, it is showing internal validity. In the case of intelligence, the usual method is to factor analyze the test and compare the resulting factors to those found in other tests that are believed to show construct validity.

If we consider validity to mean accuracy, the question is one of how well the test predicts creative output. If we have people at two significantly different levels of creativity, can we use their output to validate the measure, as we do in intelligence testing? I don't know the answer; I see the whole approach to creativity measurement as fuzzy, even when compared to other life sciences.

The more important validity is external or predictive validity, which tells us that the test is measuring things that can be predicted and verified. If the test shows that someone is in the 90th percentile of creativity, we expect that the person will display high levels of creativity in his job and life. For example, he may be a successful screenwriter or composer. Predictive validity is central to the whole

notion of being able to meaningfully test for creativity. If we are measuring things that actually predict real world outcomes, the test is useful. If it fails this, the test is of questionable value.

Jacobsen: Why is the reliance on latent variable analysis important for the study of creativity?

Williams: Latent traits are found in multifaceted constructs, including creativity. The use of latent traits allows the researcher to show how multiple variables interact and form a structure. Remote association tests are used in creativity research with good results. The difficulty level of making specific connections (item level in the test) can be determined using latent trait models. This is similar to Item Response Theory as used in intelligence tests.

Jacobsen: Why is the reliance on latent variable analysis important for the study of intelligence?

Williams: The often displayed hierarchical structure of intelligence is a representation of latent traits. These identify narrow and broad abilities and g. All of these are latent traits and are essential to the understanding of intelligence. It is difficult to overstate the importance of g in the study of intelligence. It translates directly to the study of the brain, is remarkably stable over lifespan, and explains life outcomes better than any other single parameter.

Jacobsen: What five items or tasks in formal intelligence tests have the highest correlation with the g factor?

Williams: The g loadings of various factors are test dependent. For example, vocabulary is a well known factor that usually shows a very high g loading. But its specific loading depends on the structure of the test and the number of test items that correspond to each factor. If you add more test items, it tends to skew the loadings upwards. Some tests are designed to use only a single category of test items. The best known of these is the Raven's Progressive Matrices. It can be factor analyzed to show that it has factors other than g, but those factors are usually ignored because they are not the traditional ones seen in comprehensive tests, such as the WAIS.

The WISC-IV has only 5 Stratum II factors. Here are the g loadings for those:

Comprehension-Knowledge (Gc) __ .80

Fluid reasoning (Gf) _____ .95
 Short-Term Memory (Gsm) _____ .62
 Visual Processing (Gv) _____ .67
 Processing Speed (Gs) _____ .27

Timothy Salthouse created a factor structure from 33 of his studies (about 7,000 people, ages 18 through 95) and also found 5 Stratum II factors. The g loadings he found:

Reasoning _____ .95
 Spatial ability _____ .91
 Memory _____ .66
 Processing speed _____ .60
 Vocabulary _____ .73

Johnson and Bouchard found a natural structure of intelligence by using the 15 test Hawaii Battery, the

Comprehensive Ability Battery, and the The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale. They eliminated some subtests to avoid duplication. When they factor analyzed the massive test, a four stratum structure emerged. I consider this to be the best fully analyzed study of the structure of intelligence. The top 5 g loadings:

Verbal _____ .96 Stratum III factor Perceptual _____
 .99 Stratum III factor Image rotation _____ .97 Stratum III factor Scholastic
 _____ .88 Stratum II factor
 Fluency _____ .83 Stratum II factor

The point of presenting these different results is to show how different tests cause different factors and different loadings. The very high loadings, in the last set, are the result of the large number of diverse test items used. This causes most non-g factors to cancel out.

Jacobsen: What do these five tasks or sub-tests tell us about the structure of general intelligence and the human brain?

Williams: If you look at the three sets of factors, you see that they are similar. Tests are generally designed to either fit the three stratum Cattell-Horn-Carroll model, or are forced to produce another three stratum structure. All tests show one general factor, that may appear at stratum II, III, or IV. Ergo, we have accepted and repeatedly confirmed Spearman's early findings. I am always amazed by how much he reported over a century ago and how dead-on accurate his findings were.

Richard Haier formulated the Efficiency Hypothesis based on positron emission tomography studies he did, starting in 1988. These showed high glucose uptake in low IQ cohorts and lower glucose uptake in high IQ testees. It meant that, when trying to resolve the same mental task, the low IQ group required high mental effort, while the bright group required less mental effort. Some MRI work was available with Jensen wrote The g Factor (1998), but it has only been in the 21st century that we have had large MRI based studies. It has only been possible to look for g in the brain by using advanced imaging technologies. Among the most important are structural

MRI, functional MRI, and diffusion tensor imaging. The latter two have provided the ability to study white matter and brain networks.

The above comments are a necessary introduction to what has been learned about the general factor within the brain. We already knew that *g* was unitary at the psychometric level. Now we know that it is not unitary at the neurological level. Richard Haier and Rex Jung found 14 Brodmann Areas that are strongly related to intelligence and problem solving. They created a model known as P-FIT (parieto-frontal integration theory) [described in detail in Haier, R. J. (2017); *The Neuroscience of Intelligence*, Cambridge University Press]. The model involves a sequential transfer of information between the cognitive centers, ending in the frontal lobes where the integrated information is evaluated.

The distributed nature of *g* within the brain has been confirmed by various studies, including focal lesion studies (using the Vietnam Head Injury Study). An important finding from this and other studies of networks is that damage to critical white matter areas causes lowered *g*. These areas are concentrated networks that link the P-FIT regions. Since the important cognitive centers work by information exchange, we have to think of *g* in the brain as the areas that are being linked as well as the efficiency of the connecting networks.

Most of the P-FIT Brodmann Areas (BA) share their associations with *g* and other non-*g* traits. BA-10,

however, is only associated with *g*. This area appears to function as a control mechanism that is critical to the distributed processing nature of *g*.

Jacobsen: What do current tests of general intelligence miss?

Williams: As you would expect, different tests miss different things. While researchers today recommend comprehensive tests (WAIS and Woodcock-Johnson, etc.) other tests that are not diverse still work well for most purposes. This is because of Spearman's *indifference of the indicator*. We are ultimately trying to measure *g* and can do that by a variety of seemingly unrelated tests. Each of the different tests (consider vocabulary and block design) is *g* loaded and is measuring the same *g*.

But, we know from the structure of intelligence that there are factors, particularly at the broad abilities level (Stratum II) that are particularly important to some tasks. Arguably the most important of these is spatial ability. In this paper: [Spatial Ability for STEM Domains: Aligning Over 50 Years of Cumulative Psychological Knowledge; Jonathan Wai, David Lubinski, and Camilla P. Benbow; 2009, *Journal of Educational Psychology* Vol. 101, No. 4, 817–835.] the authors show that spatial ability is high in people who pursue engineering and sciences and its magnitude increases as the degrees held go from Bachelors, to Masters, to PhD. These fields are heavily dominated by males. At least part of the reason is that there is a sex difference in spatial ability favoring males. Some tests do not have any spatial ability test items, so they would certainly miss this ability. We know that various test designers try to force their tests to show invariance by sex, which may be why they do not include spatial ability test items.

Jacobsen: How much can an individual train and change the degree of executive function in adult life? Is it a trainable skill or something more innate as with the *g* factor?

Williams: I haven't seen any research showing that the executive function can be enhanced by training. It seems, however, that some people can increase things such as Attention and the inhibitory function (both are components of the executive function) when needed and decrease them

when that is appropriate. When we see people focused to a degree that blocks out virtually everything around them, they are using the executive function in conjunction with the inhibitory function to stay on task and to block external stimuli. All of this is strongly related to working memory. High WMC enhances the executive function and other factors such as rate of learning, the formation of long term memories, and fluid intelligence.

Jacobsen: With someone like Leonardo Da Vinci, what would the structure of such a creative genius mind look like in real-time at peak performance?

Williams: I don't think we have any data that relates directly to brain imaging of true genius. If we did have it, I would expect that those in different fields (art versus science) would show behaviors that are similar to their colleagues and quite different from those in other disciplines.

The issue of artistic and scientific creativity is interesting to me; I see it as unresolved. I once asked Rex Jung if the two forms were the same and he said that they were. Jensen, on the other hand, expressed a belief that intelligence was a larger factor in scientific creativity as compared to artistic creativity. To me, this has more face value. I think that Jung was considering how tests of creativity work over a wide range of ability and was not focused on the rare true genius brains.

Neurologists have done measurements of some people while doing a creative task, such as music improvisation. Their findings are certainly related to real-time creativity, but I do not see this as relating to the brains of Leonardo or Beethoven. The task of learning what is going on in their brains is so difficult that I think it will not be resolved for a long time. The starting problem is to find people who are actually at that level of creativity. Then we have to be able to make meaningful measurements at the moment they are inspired to create. I think that director David Lynch is at that level of creative genius, but I doubt that we can monitor him constantly and figure out when and how his brain comes up with the huge number of elements that go into the finished film. My guess is that it is a series of creative flashes, spaced by tasks that require either different kinds of thought or those that do not demand creativity.

I would also expect that if we were lucky enough to be able to examine several creative geniuses, we would find different approaches. Some would probably go into long, deep, creative sessions and some would have multiple sudden insights that they combine to produce their works. And we might find some who do both over the course of a project.

In the specific case of Leonardo we have the most extreme example of a polymath I can imagine. His brain would be a neurological treasure today, now that we finally have the technology to really study it. In such extreme cases of genius it is difficult to imagine what biological factors were combined to

produce the end results that were so profound. One would have to assume that his brain was an extreme case of factors that simply do not exist together in others. From the little we were able to learn about Einstein's brain, we know that his too was bizarrely different.

Jacobsen: What is the DMN, default mode network?

Williams: The DMN is the network that we use during mind-wandering, spontaneous cognition, imagination and divergent thinking. It is detectable by the presence of increased alpha-power. As is always true, things are messy. While the DMN is clearly linked to these things, the production of novel ideas seems to arise from the interaction of the DMN and various other networks. When the brain stops mind-wandering and focuses on a specific task, the DMN disengages and switches to other networks. We now know that the brain doesn't lock in on a specific network for

a prolonged period; it switches between networks. One of the things that emerged from the focal brain injury studies was the identification of the regulatory role of Brodmann Area 10 as I previously mentioned. I am unsure if this includes network switching, but I think it is likely.

I once asked Richard Haier if it was known whether solutions to problems (the kind that happen after study and then hit us unexpectedly as we are doing something unrelated) are actually made in real-time while we are in the DMN or if the answers were made subconsciously and then revealed using the DMN as a vehicle. He said we don't know yet.

Jacobsen: Odd question, incoming: How would a universal definition of genius expand into other species? So, we see certain traits consistent across species with some conscious cognitive capacity, so as to consider them – exceptional minds in individual species – geniuses. This would seem an enlarged consideration, biologically, of genius with potential insight into the nature of human genius, so the quality of genius itself.

Williams: The only definitions I believe are appropriate to true human genius are those that relate to a constellation of traits, expressed at a high level. In the case of animal studies, it is difficult to measure as many behavioral traits as we see in humans. For example, researchers have found a general factor of intelligence in some animals, but that factor is based on a rather small group of different categories of problem solving. It may be possible to measure factors such as zeal and persistence in animals, but we have to see that these things are actually productive. For example, I recall a study of wolves and dogs in which there was a barrier between them and food. The wolves continued to repeat the same efforts to go directly to the food. The dogs figured out that they needed help and tried to get it from humans. The point here is that, while persistence tends to be a genius trait, it is so because the genius does not repeat the same failed effort endlessly. We have seen a lot more animal studies in recent years and they are becoming more sophisticated. It is likely that they will eventually have a wider spectrum of tests and measures of animal behavior and that may lead us to identify exceptional individuals. Related to this, much of the animal kingdom is organized around male physical strength and fighting over mates, which creates a situation where the things we see as genius in humans may not show up at all.

Jacobsen: Why do creative people tend to drink so much?

Williams: In the book *The Cambridge Handbook of the Neuroscience of Creativity* (2018) Rex E. Jung (Editor), Oshin Vartanian (Editor), there is a mention of creative professions showing twice the rate of alcoholism as found in the general population. Some of the people in these professions have creativity expectations associated with the use of alcohol. In general they seem to be right, at least for the insight stage of creativity, but as the amount of alcohol they consume increases, their creative output declines. As we know, at least from modern history, creative people tend to use other drugs as well.

Jacobsen: Why are actors the biggest drinkers?

Williams: The book cited above confirms that actors (60%) use alcohol at a level beyond the norm for the general public. It mentions writers as being particularly likely to have serious problems with booze. This makes sense in that writers have to constantly create new material and their “writers’ block” is often mentioned in various media.

Jacobsen: Could those without high levels of executive function, but latent creativity, help themselves with exogenous agents such as alcohol to perform creative functions? However, this

leads to the deleterious lives exhibited in high-performing creatives who have to rely on alcohol and other substances to accomplish incredible creative feats.

Williams: I haven't seen studies that directly address this situation. It falls into a category of research that is likely to be regarded as too dangerous unless conducted from natural data. I believe that it is a case of "a little helps, but too much hurts." It follows the distribution that is sometimes called the inverted U curve. We see this in psychosis and neurosis, both contributing positively to genius results, but only when the level is "elevated" and not substantial. Various substances, that are used to enhance creativity, appear to work this way. The problem is that the use of the substances can become a drive and cause the user to not moderate his intake.

Jacobsen: Is there a correlation between sex drive/promiscuity and genius?

Williams: I can only guess, as I haven't seen a specific study relating to it. What we often see in true genius is isolation and often no children. But I expect we can find rather extreme cases of sexual behavior, depending on the specific personalities and possibly on the category of work they do. One discussion

that relates to this: Who are the "Clever Sillies"? The intelligence, personality, and motives of clever silly originators and those who follow them; Edward Dutton, Dimitri van der Linden; *Intelligence* 49 (2015) 57–65. The title of the paper is somewhat misleading. From the paper: "... creative, original, uncooperative, and impulsive risk-takers. These kinds of characteristics permit them, like artists, to conceive of an original idea, thus showcasing their intelligence and creativity, and take the risks

necessary – short term ostracism – to achieve their long term goal of high socioeconomic status. The fact that some of those whom we have assessed achieved high social status but not high economic status can thus be seen as the risks only partially paying off. In addition, the lack of sexual success among some of these figures is congruous with many geniuses not having children. But their actions can be interpreted as advantageous at the group level."

Jacobsen: If taking one moral perspective on it, is there a correlation between perversion or various forms and genius?

Williams: That one falls outside of my knowledge base. I can imagine that there may be various forms of perversion, but I haven't seen anything that explores the relationship.

Jacobsen: When does conscientiousness become a negative trait? What contexts? I do not mean simply statements on specific professions.

Williams: Low conscientiousness is found in artistic people and high conscientiousness is characteristic of people more likely to be found in STEM. Conscientiousness is less likely among people who use drugs (per our discussion) and who have random life patterns, consisting of no schedule or traditional jobs. The extent of problems relating to low conscientiousness is probably related to specific professions. There are lots of stories of actors who were difficult to work with, inclined to walk out, or get drunk. The most extreme cases of near-zero conscientiousness are those from the world of rock music, where performers have written the book on bad behavior and short lifespans. The "27 Club" was the subject of a documentary [27: *Gone Too Soon*] of at least 6 high level performers, but the total toll for young deaths is much larger. Low conscientiousness was one of many things that are obvious in the world of idol worshiped musicians.

Jacobsen: Following from the previous question, when does conscientiousness become a positive trait? What contexts?

Williams: In most employment situations, where a person has responsibilities that relate to an entire group, conscientiousness is valuable. You want to have the person who, when given a job, can be counted on to get it done, even if there is a tight deadline. The performers we discussed would not be a good choice for this kind of business.

Jacobsen: How much is productivity a measure of genius?

Williams: The magnitude of output of true geniuses is high. We see massive quantities of output from composers, painters, and writers, even from those who died very young. Part of this may be related to the speed with which some art is created. I once watched a documentary of Picasso, showing him painting. He was fast and changed the painting frequently by painting over parts of the painting repeatedly. I seriously doubt that a sculptor could chisel his way through a piece of marble quickly. The task is at least partly related to productivity, in the sense of output rate.

Jacobsen: Are there any substances that temporarily or artificially increase tissue functionality? Or, more generally, what about substances going in either direction of high FA and low FA temporarily due to their intake? What would be the expected effects and productive outputs from such intake, when heading into artificial high FA and artificial low FA? Perhaps, the wording isn't sufficiently precise in the questions, but, I think, the curiosity for the idea is there.

Williams: That is a thought provoking question. For the benefit of readers who are not familiar with FA, in this context, it means fractional anisotropy. This is a measure of diffusivity. If FA is zero, the medium is isotropic; if it is at the other extreme, 1, it means that the diffusion is along one axis and there is no loss to radial diffusion. In brain imaging, we see high FA as desirable; this means high tissue integrity.

In the cases I have seen reported, FA is discussed as a tissue property that does not fluctuate. If it goes down, it stays down. But there may be studies showing that there are agents that can reduce FA temporarily and that it would return to normal when the agent is no longer present. Alcohol or drugs associated with hallucination might have some impact on FA (guessing). During the past week, we had the annual conference of the International Society for Intelligence Research. One factor that was discussed during an open session was the impact of anesthesia on the brain. I was unaware that it is believed to be damaging to intelligence. Unfortunately, the discussion was in the context of a one-way trip down.

The reason this could relate to creativity (assuming that it happens) is that low FA can result in the brain following longer paths to join information. This presumably causes brain regions that are not related to the task at hand to be activated and may result in the formation of remote associations of the type associated with creativity. This would happen if a network has broken connections, thereby causing the brain to follow longer paths to complete tasks that recruit information from different parts of the brain.

Jacobsen: For Mensa International, Intertel, the Triple Nine Society, the Prometheus Society, and the Mega Society, you observed a trend or pattern – non-absolute – of individuals who may not succeed in “education, profession, and personal relationships.” They seem more prone to becoming a part of them. Jensen mentioned in the Mega Press interview the dilettantish nature of the interactions and a void in deep, critical evaluation. Yet, the qualifications of the societies ground themselves in higher, sometimes abnormally, higher than normal IQs. Which leads to an

associated, but somewhat distant, question, what is IQ missing regarding critical intelligence if that's the case? The stereotype with some truth to it: A genius level IQ without a sense of the mechanics of the social and professional world, or the right question to probe an intellectual problem appropriately.

Williams: It is certainly true and easily observable that these groups are statistically more attractive to people who have failed to establish meaningful careers, despite having high intelligence. Jensen mentioned that he was personally able to form satisfying relationships with his work colleagues and that, while all were bright, none belonged to Mensa (the only example he mentioned). Part of the answer may lie in the nature of personality. Of the Big Five, only Openness is significantly correlated with intelligence. That leaves a lot of room for other factors, as well as those that only appear in other personality test batteries, to cause problems. In fact, if you look at the four other traits, all of them can be expressed in a direction that could be poisonous to careers. I would expect that two traits would be particularly damaging: low conscientiousness and high neuroticism.

Jacobsen: Does Charles Murray account for global population growth with the 1.5 times per year number in genius emergence? In short, is this number larger in more recent history with vastly more people living at the same time compared to the past, e.g. 0.75 times per year at some point in the past and 3 times per year at a time closer to the present? This is taking into account the speculation of a decline in mean national intelligence.

Williams: No. Murray simply identified 4,002 people of extreme eminence over the period 800 B.C. to 1950 and limited his study to arts and sciences. The problem of computing the rate of genius birth is complicated because of the decline in real intelligence that is largely driven by the negative correlation between intelligence and fertility rate. [See *At Our Wits' End: Why We're Becoming Less Intelligent and What It Means for the Future*, by E. A. Dutton & M. A. Woodley of Menie. Exeter, UK: Imprint Academic.] Dutton and Woodley express concern that the births of geniuses will become increasingly rare, despite many births among low intelligence groups. They fear that this will or already has led to a reduction in innovation and discovery rates.

Jacobsen: What are the difficulties in estimation of mean national intelligence?

Williams: We approach the study of national intelligence (the comparison of mean IQs by nation) by gathering as many datasets as possible for the nation in question, then converting them to a single standard. The conversion is parallel in principle to what we would do in a national economic comparison. In the latter case, we would convert all currencies to a single reference, such as the dollar or Euro. The standard we use for intelligence is white British. This standard is sometimes called the Greenwich IQ Standard. The details of conversion are discussed in Richard Lynn & David Becker (2019). *The Intelligence of Nations*. Ulster Institute for Social Research, London GB ISBN 9780993000157.

For the most part, the difficulties are simply that it takes a large amount of work to deal with the full set of nations for which we have IQ data. There are lots of studies available for developed nations and most emerging nations, but some poorly developed nations have limited data available. When *The Bell Curve* was written, there were only a few reports of intelligence for sub-Saharan Africa. But since 1994, we have had data pouring in from around the world. Today we have so much data for many nations that we can map intelligence within the nation by states or provinces. These data have resulted in within-nation studies that have shown patterns that seem to largely reflect migration and economic factors. A rather large number of nations exhibit a

higher mean IQ in the northern regions and a decrease at lower latitudes. The opposite is seen in Britain, where the brightest region is in the south and the dullest in the north. Researchers have explained this as the result of the decline in the coal mining industry and its impact on migration. In India, Intelligence is higher in the South and in states with a coastline (indicating economic factors relating to trade). When Richard Lynn first reported the intelligence gradient for Italy (higher in the North) he explained it by noting that mean local intelligence reflects the fraction of the population that immigrated from the Near East and North Africa. In that study regional IQs predict income at $r = 0.937$. This resulted in papers objecting to his findings and that resulted in an exchange of published papers. It appears that Lynn was (as I would have guessed) right. [The title of the initial paper is a good summary of what was found. In Italy, north-south differences in IQ predict differences in income, education, infant mortality, stature, and literacy; Richard Lynn; *Intelligence* 38 (2010) 93–100.]

Jacobsen: What is the validity of the measurements done globally now? Some areas must be more reliable than others because of the finances and expertise to do it properly.

Williams: I haven't seen any reports of reliability for the IQ scores used in the national level studies. When *IQ and the Wealth of Nations* appeared, two things were triggered. The first was that researchers began to try different curve fits and concluded that a log scale works best and that nations with IQs below 90 were either in poverty or had valuable natural resources (usually oil). Some researchers attacked Lynn as usual. They claimed that his numbers were wrong; that they were based on too few data; that the nations were he used neighboring scores to estimate means could not be true; and that his entire study was politically incorrect and could not be trusted. But, the data, as mentioned above, kept coming in from sources around the world. Now we can say that Lynn was right on every point and that even the estimated mean scores were very close to measured scores that are now available. The validity of this work is shown in the many things that national mean IQ predicts: 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. These are the kinds of things used to establish the predictive validity of IQ tests. Naturally, there are confounds, such as the presence of natural resources in some low IQ nations, but the statistical predictions remain powerful.

Jacobsen: Who else, other than Gardner, are individuals qualifying as individuals who are “in a category that is highly regarded by the general public and not by many serious intelligence researchers”?

Williams: The first who comes to mind is Robert Sternberg. His triarchic theory was shredded by Linda Gottfredson and is not something other researchers have accepted. He has been criticized for grossly over citing his own work. In general, the public has embraced such things as emotional intelligence, grit, mindset, and other tabloid worthy inventions. In his book, *In the Know: 35 Myths about Human Intelligence*, Russell Warne goes through his list of things that the public loves to love but which are not science. I think the single most disliked person (from the perspective of researchers) is the late Stephen Jay Gould. His book, *The Mismeasure of Man* was an intentional distortion of facts and is loved by the public because politically left people wanted to hear his false message. He attacked g and other factors, such as brain size, using outrageous comparisons to what researchers were doing in the distant past. It was almost as extreme as

claiming that chemistry is worthless because alchemists were unsuccessful.

Jacobsen: Who are the most serious researchers and commentators on genius, on IQ, and on the g factor? I take those as three related, but separate, questions in one.

Williams: Genius – Jensen wrote a good piece on genius in the last chapter of *Intellectual Talent: Psychometric and Social Issues* by Camilla Persson Benbow & David Lubinski; The Johns Hopkins University Press (January 22, 1997). Dean Keith Simonton has written numerous articles on genius. His work impresses me as biased and inaccurate. Eysenck wrote about genius and the personalities of genius. Some of this can be found in H. Nyborg, Editor, *The Scientific Study of Human Nature: a Tribute to Hans J. Eysenck at Eighty*, Pergamon, Oxford (1997). Eysenck believed that true genius required elevated neuroticism and psychoticism. Overall, the material we have about genius is based on observations of various eminent historical figures. Statistical studies are not seen because there is no satisfactory way to find and test a statistically meaningful group of such rare people.

IQ – The most prolific and brilliant commentator on intelligence was Arthur Jensen. His lifetime output of 7 books and over 400 papers is huge and remains influential. I think that Richard Haier is probably the most important living commentator. With only 1 book and one DVD lecture set, he is nonetheless a major factor in our understanding of IQ from the neurological perspective. While

Charles Murray is accurately described as an author, he is one of the most knowledgeable intelligence scholars alive. Like Jensen, he has been willing to take the heat from the left and calmly discuss the realities of IQ. Ian Deary has been a high profile researcher and department head. Two young researchers have shown themselves to be bright, competent, and broadly focused. Michael Woodley has authored or co-authored half a dozen books, covering a wide range of topics. His work has been at the forefront of new understandings of such topics as the Flynn Effect and the decline of intelligence. Like Woodley, Stuart Ritchie has rapidly become a serious contributor to the understanding of intelligence. I have read his books and find that his writing style is particularly appealing. His most recent book, *Science Fictions*, is a detailed account of abuses of the scientific process of doing research and reporting it.

Psychometric g – Jensen almost single-handedly convinced researchers worldwide that intelligence is about g and that their work should be focused on g. His book *The g factor: The science of mental ability* is the most cited in all of intelligence research. Linda Gottfredson has been a prolific writer of g related papers and articles. She has devoted much of her energy to explaining g and its consequences to non-experts and has made her entire output available to the public on her web site. Today, intelligence research is g research, so it is fair to say that we have lots of people writing about g and studying how it relates to the neurology of the brain.

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Shared genetic and environmental influences on self-reported creative achievement in art and science; Yoon-Mi Hur, Hoe-Uk Jeong, Davide Piffer; *Personality and Individual Differences*,

Volume 68, October 2014, Pages 18-22.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Retired Nuclear Physicist.

[2] Individual Publication Date: September 15, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/williams-4>; Full Issue Publication Date: January 1, 2022: <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.

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