

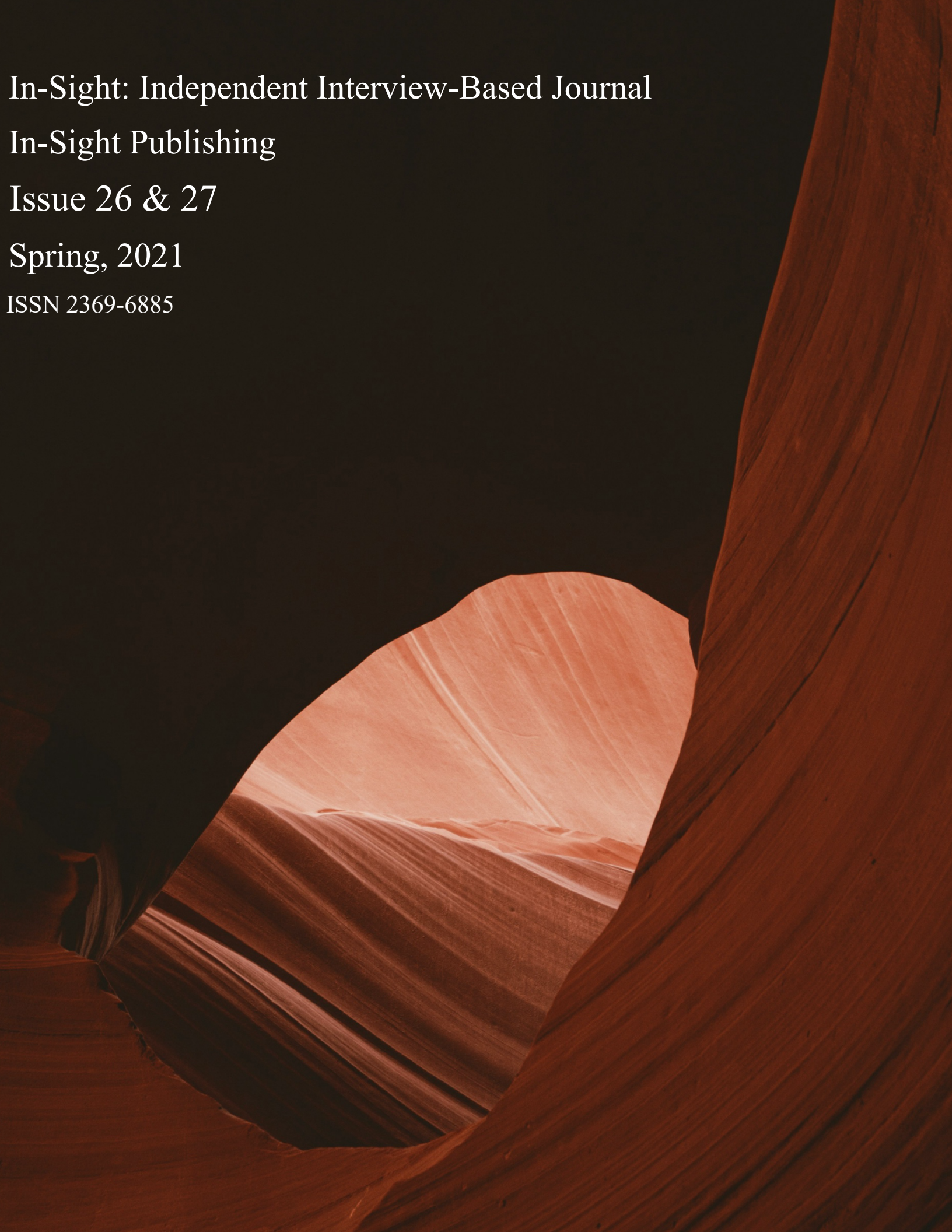
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In-Sight People

In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal

Short-form biographical sketch with name and section of the journal.

Editor-in-Chief

(Updated January 7, 2021)

1. [Scott Douglas Jacobsen](#)

In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal Advisory Board (Brief)*

(Updated January 9, 2021)

Interview views do not equate to positions of Advisory Board members.

Advisory Board listing alphabetized by first name and relevant hyperlinks active.

1. [Dr. Aubrey de Grey](#)
2. [Professor Azra Raza, M.D.](#)
3. [Dr. Daniel Bernstein](#)
4. [Dr. Herb Silverman](#)
5. [Ismail Hamaamin Hamalaw](#)
6. [Dr. Kathy Bullock](#)
7. [J.J. Middleway](#)
8. [Dr. Lloyd Hawkeye Robertson](#)
9. [Marissa Torres Langseth, B.S.N., R.N., M.S.N., ANP-BC \(retired\)](#)
10. [Rod Taylor](#)
11. [Dr. Sally Satel, M.D.](#)
12. [Stacey Piercey](#)
13. [Professor Sven van de Wetering](#)
14. [Prof. Imam Syed B. Soharwardy](#)
15. [Terry Waslow, M.B.A.](#)
16. [Tim Moen](#)

Long-form biographical sketch with name, title, associations, biography, and photograph as provided.

Editor-in-Chief

(Updated January 9, 2021)



Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Founder, In-Sight Publishing

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

In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal Advisory Board (Full)*

(Updated January 6, 2021)

Interview views do not equate to positions of Advisory Board members.

Advisory Board listing alphabetized by first name and relevant hyperlinks active.



Dr. Aubrey de Grey

Chief Science Officer & Co-Founder, [SENS Research Foundation](#); Editor-In-Chief, [Rejuvenation Research](#)

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

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



Professor Azra Raza, M.D.

[Columbia University](#), Medicine, Professor; [Myelodysplastic Syndrome Center](#), Director

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

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

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

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

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



Dr. Daniel Bernstein

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

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



Ismail Hamaamin Hamalaw

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

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

Published works in Kurdish:

My Hat is Full of Rain and Flowers – Poems – 1998

The Fall of the Wolf – Novel – 2001

A Glimpse from The Myth of Clay– Novella – 2004

Beyond the Border, folding through moon forests – Novel- 2011

The Lost Acrobat – Essays – 2012

Sloterdijk From Close – Essays – 2015

The Mould of Fascism – 2019



Dr. Herb Silverman

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

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

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

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

Herb is the author of *Candidate Without a Prayer: An Autobiography of a Jewish Atheist in the Bible Belt* (2012) and *An Atheist Stranger in a Strange Religious Land: Selected Writing from the Bible Belt* (2017). He co-authored *The Fundamental of Extremism: The Christian Right in America* (2003), *Short Reflections on Secularism* (2019), and *Short Reflections on American Secularism's History and Philosophy* (2020).



Dr. Kathy Bullock

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

Dr. Katherine Bullock is a Lecturer in the Department of Political Science, University of Toronto Mississauga. Her teaching focus is political Islam from a global perspective, and her research focuses on Muslims in Canada, their history, contemporary lived experiences, political and civic engagement, debates on the veil, and media representations of Islam and Muslims. She was the editor of the American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences from 2003-2008, the Vice-President of The Association of Muslim Social Scientists (North America) from 2006-2009. Her publications include *Muslim Women Activists in North America: Speaking for Ourselves* and *Rethinking Muslim Women and the Veil: Challenging Historical and Modern Stereotypes*, which has been translated into Arabic, French and Turkish. She is also President of The Tesselate Institute, a non-profit research institute, and of Compass Books, dedicated to publishing top-quality books about Islam and Muslims in English. Originally from Australia, she lives in Oakville with her husband and children. She embraced Islam in 1994.

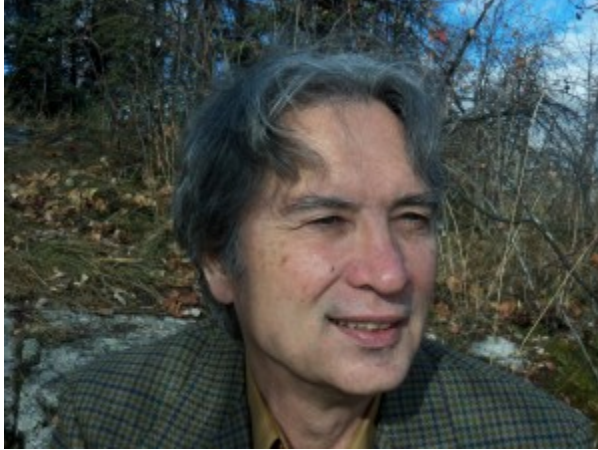


J.J. Middleway

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

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

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



Dr. Lloyd Hawkeye Robertson

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

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

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

He has written on residential school syndrome, the structure of the aboriginal self, the application of memes to self-understanding, the evolution of spirituality and religion, prior learning assessment and recognition, the treatment of suicide ideation and attention deficit disorder, and works on anxiety and trauma, addictions, and psycho-educational assessment, and relationship, family, and group counselling.

His most recent book is [The Evolved Self: Mapping an Understanding of Who We Are](#) (2020).



Marissa Torres Langseth, B.S.N., R.N., M.S.N., ANP-BC (retired)

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

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

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

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

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

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



Rod Taylor

National Leader, CHP Canada

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

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

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

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

Rod and Elaine have been members of CHP Canada since before its founding convention, with Elaine serving on the first riding association board for Skeena. Rod served as the CHP Deputy Leader from November, 2008 until January, 2014 and in November of 2014, became National Leader. From 2009 until the present, Rod has

worked full-time for the Christian Heritage Party, first as the Western Development Director and later as the National Development Director and since 2014 as CHP Leader.

Rod also participated in the creation of CHP-BC—the first provincial wing of the Christian Heritage Party—which involved the reconfiguring of an existing party, the BC Heritage Party. Rod has served as the CHP-BC Leader and for a time as President of the federal BC Council of the CHP.

Rod is committed to the restoration of justice, the defence of personal freedoms, especially freedom of speech and religion and the protection of innocent human life. He believes in the traditional family and believes that Canada's moral values and national prosperity are rooted in our Christian heritage. He reminds citizens that our Charter of Rights and Freedoms begins with these words: "...Canada is founded on principles that recognise the supremacy of God and the rule of law..." He is concerned that our freedoms are under attack and that government control and sponsorship of media will ultimately result in censorship of important ideas and perspectives.

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



Dr. Sally Satel, M.D.

Lecturer, Medicine, [Yale University](#); [W.H. Brady Fellow, American Enterprise Institute](#)

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

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

Dr. Satel is author of *Drug Treatment: The Case for Coercion* (AEI Press, 1999), and *PC, M.D.: How Political Correctness Is Corrupting Medicine* (Basic Books, 2001). She is coauthor of *One Nation under Therapy* (St. Martin's Press, 2005), co-author of *The Health Disparity Myth* (AEI Press, 2006), and editor of *When Altruism Isn't Enough: The Case for Compensating Kidney Donors* (AEI Press, 2009).

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



Stacey Piercey

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

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

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

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

Hobbies include listening to the radio, writing short stories and, French cuisine.



Professor Sven van de Wetering

Head/Professor, Psychology, [University of the Fraser Valley](#)

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



Prof. Imam Syed B. Soharwardy

Founder, Islamic Supreme Council of Canada; Founder, [Muslims Against Terrorism](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Imam Syed Soharwardy was appointed as a teacher at Dar-ul-Aloom Soharwardia where he taught various subjects of Islamic studies. Later, he also served as the assistant Imam and Khateeb at Jamia Bughdadi Masjid,

Martin Road (1971- 1979). Imam Soharwardy has lectured in Pakistan, USA and Saudi Arabia at various universities and institutes for over 12 years.

Prof. Soharwardy is the founder of Muslims Against Terrorism (MAT). He founded MAT in Calgary in January 1998. He is also the founder of Islamic Supreme Council of Canada (ISCC). He has authored several papers on various topics such as, challenges for Muslims in the western world, conflicts within the Muslim community, Intra and Inter religion conflicts, terrorism, political Islam, etc. Mr. Soharwardy has addressed hundreds of gatherings in Pakistan, USA, UK and Canada on various topics of Islamic faith.

Prof. Soharwardy is the Executive Imam at the Al Madinah Calgary Islamic Assembly, Jamia Masjid Noor-e-Madinah, Montreal, Jamia Riyadhul Jannah, Mississauga, Jamia Riyadhul Jannah, Edmonton and Jamia Masjid Aulia Allah, Surrey, B.C. He lectures in Montreal, Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton, Calgary and Vancouver on monthly basis. Imam Soharwardy is the spiritual leader of Jama'at Ahle Sunnat Canada and the World Sufi Mission Canada. He is also the founder of Multifaith Club of Calgary.

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

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



Terry Waslow, M.B.A.

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

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

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



Tim Moen

President, [Libertarian Party of Canada](#)

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

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

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

Previous Advisory Board Members

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

Monika Orski

Ordförande/Chairwoman, Mensa Sverige/Mensa Sweden

Hasan Zuberi, M.B.A.

Chairman, Mensa Pakistan

Dr. Sandra Schlick

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In-Sight Publishing

Publication Location: Fort Langley, British Columbia, Canada

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ISBN: 978-1-0692343

“Your life is an expression of all your thoughts.”

Publications: People/Organizations

- [*African Freethinker*](#)
- *Critical Science Newswire*
- *Freethought Newswire*
- [*In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal \(ISSN: 2369–6885\)*](#)
- [*Indigenous Middle East*](#)
- [*Question Time*](#)
- [*World Religions Journal*](#)

Publications: Overview

- [*African Freethinker*](#)
- *Critical Science Newswire*
- *Freethought Newswire*
- [*In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal \(ISSN: 2369–6885\)*](#)
- [*Indigenous Middle East*](#)
- [*Question Time*](#)
- [*World Religions Journal*](#)

Publications: Feeds

- [*African Freethinker*](#)
- [*Apostasia*](#)
- [*Critical Science Newswire*](#)
- [*Freethought Newswire*](#)
- [*Ghana's 5%*](#)
- [*In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal \(2369–6885\)*](#)
- [*Indigenous Middle East*](#)
- [*Question Time*](#)

In-Sight Publishing Overview

In-Sight Publishing began in Winter 2014. It publishes ebooks, for free and charge, and operates in independent and public interests rather than for private gains, and is committed to publishing, in innovative ways, ways of cultural,

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

Open, General Acknowledgement and Appreciation

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

Design and Development

- *Phase 1*, August 1, 2012: foundation with “Independent Interview-Based Undergraduate Journal” status.
- *Phase 2*, January 1, 2013: production capacity increased with “Tri-Annual” status.
- *Phase 3*, January 1, 2014: stricture removal, both implied and actual, based on “Undergraduate” status through cessation of “Independent Interview-Based Undergraduate Journal” status and instantiation of “Independent Interview-Based Journal” status.
- *Phase 4*, January 1, 2014: increased presence through incorporation of social media.
- *Phase 5*, September 1, 2014: creation of *In-Sight Publishing*, and inclusion of reference styles in American Psychological Association (APA, 6th Edition, 2010) and Modern Language Association (MLA, 7th Edition, 2009).
- *Phase 6*, January 1, 2015: inclusion of footnotes and bibliographic references in full PDF issues, and Chicago/Turabian (16th Edition) and Harvard reference styles, and creation of the ebooks section for the first stages of construction of *In-Sight Publishing*.
- *Phase 7*, January 1, 2015: incorporation of American Psychological Association (APA, 6th Edition, 2010), Chicago/Turabian (16th Edition), Harvard, and Modern Language Association (MLA, 7th Edition, 2009) reference styles in website interview publications.
- *Phase 8*, April 1, 2015: creation of “Academic” and “Casual” sections for ebook publications. “Academic” includes footnotes, bibliographic references, and reference styles. “Casual” does not include footnotes, bibliographic references, and reference styles.
- *Phase 9*, May 1, 2015: inclusion of footnotes and bibliographic references in website interview publications.
- *Phase 10*, July 1, 2015: incorporation of common reference styles such as American Medical Association (AMA), American Psychological Association (APA, 6th Edition, 2010), Brazilian National Standards (ABNT), Chicago/Turabian Author-Date (16th Edition), Chicago/Turabian (16th Edition), Harvard, Harvard (Australian), Modern Language Association (MLA, 7th Edition, 2009), and Vancouver/ICMJE reference styles in website interview publications in addition to one complete list of 27 reference styles (manual insertion without access dates)

- *Phase 11*, August 22, 2015: article website layout refinement: article title, biography, abstract, keywords, common reference style listing, article title, bibliography/references/reference list, footnotes, appendix I: complete reference style listing—if any, other appendices including tables, figures, and images, and license and copyright. Updates to *Copyright*, *General Philosophy*, *In-Sight Publishing: Overview*, *Journal Overview: Section B*, and *License*.
- *Phase 12*, September 1, 2015: previous *Letter of Appreciation* appreciations moved to *Acknowledgements and Appreciation*. Major appreciations remain in *Letter of Appreciation*. In addition, the refinement of interview layout on the website: interview title, interviewee image/photograph/portrait/sketch, abstract, keywords, common reference style listing, interview title, bibliography/references/reference listing, footnotes, appendix 1: complete reference style listing, and license and copyright; refinement to interviews in full issues: interview title, interviewee image/photograph/portrait/sketch, contents, abstract, keywords, common reference style listing, interview title, bibliography/references/reference listing, appendix 1: complete reference style listing—if any, other appendices including tables, figures, and images, and license and copyright. Footnotes for each page remain in their respective page. An update to ebook inside cover with respect to mandate and copyright. All informal statuses.
- *Phase 13*, September 22, 2015: revision to format of the online publications, introduction of appendices for photographs, transformation of bibliography/references/reference list into bibliography, removal of common reference style listing, and introduction of citation style listing in place of complete reference style listing.
- *Phase 14*, November 1, 2015: Amazon purchase transition with total proceeds to co-authors and *In-Sight Publishing* and *In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal*; EBSCO contract signed by Scott Douglas Jacobsen and EBSCO to proliferate *In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal* for formal institution distribution from the P.D.F. issues.
- *Phase 15*, January 1, 2016: EBSCO co-sign completion with over 150 entries at the time; officiation of the *In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal* with continued information status of *In-Sight Publishing*.
- *Phase 16*, February 1, 2016: In-Sight Publishing “academic” books have consistent “casual” counterparts; “academic” will be free on the website to encourage independent thought with footnotes and bibliographic references for personal research, and casual will be for charge with half of interview funds given to the interviewee (and the other half to *In-Sight Publishing* efforts towards cultural, community, educational, moral, personal, and social value); some e-books will not include the delineation between “academic” and “casual.”
- *Phase 17*, May 1, 2016: Update and refine contents for Amazon Kindle products for In-Sight Publishing.
- *Phase 18*, September 18, 2016: attain and maintain 18 member Advisory Board with 1 Editor-in-Chief for the individual interview publications, free and low-cost e-books, and full journal issues.
- *Phase 19*, November 1, 2016: develop and implement early stages of novel venue for solo and collaborative article publications and interview publications in both academic and casual formats outside of the journal through In-Sight Publishing as hyperlinks compatible with P.D.F., Kindle, and iBooks.
- *Phase 19*, November 1, 2016: develop and implement early stages of novel venue for solo and collaborative article publications and interview publications in both academic and casual formats outside of the journal through In-Sight Publishing as hyperlinks compatible with P.D.F., Kindle, and iBooks.
- *Phase 20*, November 1, 2017: expand the range and variety of front cover options of ebooks for more aesthetic appeal.
- *Phase 21*, February 1, 2018: experiment with individual, unique book cover designs.
- *Phase 22*, March 1, 2018: continuation with the previous phase, as this worked.
- *Phase 23*, April 15, 2018: updates to the In-Sight Publishing *In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal* archives at the University of California, Irvine (UCI) Interdisciplinary Center for the Scientific Study of

Ethics and Morality (Ethics Center) Vaughen Archives (Bettye Vaughen): <https://www.ethicscenter.uci.edu/vaughen.php>.

- Phase 24, June 7, 2018: beginnings of more journals with *Ghana's 5%* and *In Context*.
- Phase 25, June 8, 2018: beginnings of *Apostasia*.
- Phase 26, June 11, 2018: beginnings of *Indigenous Middle East*.
- Phase 27, June 12, 2018: construction of team for *Ghana's 5%*.
- Phase 28, June 24, 2018: construction of team for *Indigenous Middle East*.
- Phase 29, June 18, 2018: beginnings of *Canadian Islamic Theology Journal*.
- Phase 30, September 8, 2018: start publications of *Indigenous Middle East* and *In Context*.
- Phase 31, September 13, 2018: construction of team for *Canadian Islamic Theology Journal*.
- Phase 32, October 21, 2018: beginnings of *African Freethinker*.
- Phase 33, November 1, 2018: start publications of *African Freethinker* and *Ghana's 5%*.
- Phase 34, November 3, 2018: construction of national editorial teams for *African Freethinker*.
- Phase 35, December 1, 2018: add years sections in Ebooks tab.
- Phase 36, January 1, 2019: increase of the available chronologies on the website.
- Phase 37, June 1, 2019: experiment with more published ebook material with 2 ebooks published at this time.
- Phase 38, July 1, 2019: collect and compiled disparate written professional productions of insufficient size in a single publication to complete an individual ebook for publication as an ongoing series entitled "Book of Stuff," as, humorously, a book with stuff in it.
- Phase 39, August 1, 2019: alteration of copyright interior of ebooks and further work to expand co-authors.
- Phase 40, January 2, 2020: an experimental bilingual ebook with prominent ex-Muslim and Founder of the Council of Ex-Muslims of France, Waleed Al-Husseini, entitled [*Crépuscule des idoles: Conversations avec un Franco-palestinien sur le sécularisme*](#).
- Phase 41, February 1, 2020: increased collaborative efforts with others for co-authored books.
- Phase 42, February 1, 2020: ongoing collecting and publishing of extant materials in various publications with small collections insufficient for an entire book alone collated and published as the *Book of Stuff* series.
- Phase 43, February 1, 2020: ongoing refinement and advancement in the sophistication of the ebooks.
- Phase 44, February 1, 2020: ongoing connections between ebooks on In-Sight Publishing main site for free and Amazon Kindle ebooks for low-cost with connection back to the original In-Sight Publishing website.
- Phase 44, April 12, 2020: updates to the Advisory Boards and Update to progress on publications, including *African Freethinker*, *Apostasia*, *Ghana's 5%*, *In Context*, *In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal*, *Indigenous Middle East*, *Question Time*, and *World Religions Theology Journal*.
- Phase 45, May 1, 2020: incorporation of Publication Chronology for each publication with publications.
- Phase 46, May 1, 2020: inclusion of more article submissions of a variety of authors, including more experimental large-scale discussion groups published together.
- Phase 47, May 8, 2020: experiment with the removal of the number of the questions to simplify some of the interview questions and response presentation.

- Phase 48, September 1, 2020: introduction of new series and changing of some of the formatting of the interviews and the articles.
- Phase 49, January 1, 2021: experiment with a dual-series single issue, “Issue 24.A, Idea: Outliers & Outsiders (Part Twenty) & Issue 25.A, Idea: Land of Fire and Ice: Islandia, Snelandia, and Insula Gardari (1).”
- Phase 50, January 1, 2021: creation of section “D” for *In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal* as a separate section of the formal issues devoted to group discussions, i.e., 3 or more participants with the “3 or more” inclusive of the moderator.
- Phase 51, January 1, 2021: introduction of yearly renewal invitations to Advisory Board to maintain up-to-date consent of use of name and profile for *In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal*.
- Phase 52, January 1, 2021: updates to various sections of the website copy in content and in the formulation of the structure of the publications and the websites.
- Phase 53, January 1, 2021: improved sophistication and organization of the journal issue contents and form.
- Phase 54, February 12, 2022: creation of the Jacobsen Bank as a repository of every article, interview, published or republished, in part or in whole, by the Founder of In-Sight Publishing.
- Phase 55, September 1, 2022: new codification structure for journals.
- Phase 56, January 1, 2023: introduction of more diverse content inclusive of educational content and submissions from outside ongoing.
- Phase 57, January 26, 2023: elimination of two (2) defunct experimental journals *Ghana’s 5%* and *In Context*. Completion of most of the [Jacobsen Bank](#), extant as a living repository of written works by the Founder.
- Phase 58, April 8, 2024: Attain permission from select individuals and organizations for republication permissions while maintaining or honouring current ones: James Haught (Editor Emeritus of [Charleston Gazette](#), deceased July 23, 2023 aged 91), Dr. Lloyd Hawkeye Robertson (Founder) for [New Enlightenment Project](#), Ian Bushfield, M.Sc. for [British Columbia Humanist Association](#), Dan Barker (and Annie Laurie Gaylor) for [Freedom From Religion Foundation](#), and by Michel Virard for [Association humaniste du Québec](#).
- Phase 59, May 5, 2024: Foundation of [Freethought Newswire](#).
- Phase 60, May 17, 2024: Additional permission from Dr. Herb Silverman for [Secular Coalition for America](#), Nicole Carr of *The Humanist* for the [American Humanist Association](#), and Doug Thomas for [Secular Connexion Séculière](#), following in the footsteps of Phase 58.
- Phase 61, May 24, 2024: Foundation of [Critical Science Newswire](#) with another partnership with [National Center for Science Education](#), dissolution of *Apostasia*.
- Phase 62, May 28, 2024: Additional permission from Leonard Presberg of [Association of Secular Elected Officials, Inc.](#), following Phase 58 and Phase 60.
- Phase 63, May 29, 2024: Additional permission from Kevin Bolling of [Secular Student Alliance](#), following Phase 58, 60, and 62.
- Phase 64, June 1, 2024: Additional permission of Andrew Copson from [Humanists UK](#), following Phase 58, 60, 62, and 63.
- Phase 65, June 15, 2024: Additional permission from [Ex-Muslims of North America](#), following Phases 58, 60, 62-64.
- Phase 66, June 22, 2024: Additional permission from [Humanists International](#) following Phases 58, 60, 62-65.
- Phase 67, August 2, 2024: Additional permission from [Military Religious Freedom Foundation](#) following Phases 58, 60, and 62-66.

- Phase 68, December 24, 2024: Integration with governmental services for an established In-Sight Publishing ISBN (978-1-0692343) with the restructuring of file formats from PDFs to ePubs for distribution through Apple Books for low cost, incorporation of author page in books, reframing and structuring of book license and copyright and relevant book information inside books, and transference of select 1st edition books as second editions into new format and distribution cycles alongside new project 1st editions books in new format.

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

In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal

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

General Philosophy

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

Advisory Board

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

Format, Overview

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

Sections A, B, C, D, and E

- Issue titles imply format, e.g. “Issue 1, Subject: Psychology,” “Issue 2, Idea: Epistemology,” and so on. Interview, submission, response, and group discussion, sections segmented by issue content. Interviews specified by “A”; submissions specified by “B”; responses specified by “C”; group discussions specified by “D”; educational series specified by “E,” e.g. “Issue 1.A, Subject: Psychology,” “Issue 2.B, Idea: Arts,” “Issue 2.C, Idea: Denmark’s Mythology,” “Issue 3.D, Idea: Islamic Scripture in Context,” “Issue 4.E, Topic: Secular History,” and so on.

Subject Issues

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

Idea Issues

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

Frequency

- Individual publications throughout the year: January 1 to May 1; May 1 to September 1; September 1 to January 1, and so on. Each publication on the 1, 8, 15, and 22 of the month. Tri-annual full issues publications on “Spring,” “Summer,” and “Winter”: January 1, May 1, and September 1, respectively. Frequency dependent upon

material quantity and completion dates. **Multiple delayed completions will accelerate the publication rate until issue fulfillment.**

Interview Guidelines (A)

An overview of the interview process for this section.

Research

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

Consent

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

Conducting

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

Editing Stage One

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

Editing Stage Two

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

Submission Guidelines (B)

Material

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

Scope

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

Submission

- It must not have publication or pending publication elsewhere. For exceptions, sufficient reason should be sent to the Editor-in-Chief along with the material. For written scholarly material, it must be in 12-point font, Times New Roman, 12-point font, single-spaced, 6-point after spacing, and with APA or MLA formatting. Length of material ranges from 500 to 7,500 words. Material should be sent to the following:
 - Scott.Douglas.Jacobsen@Gmail.com

Response Guidelines (C)

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

Material

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

Scope

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

Submission

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

Group Discussion Guidelines (D)

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

Educational Series Guidelines (E)

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

Research Ethics

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

Internal and External Funding

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

Attachments

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

Advertising Policy

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

Open Access

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

Introduction

I apologize in advance for the significant delays in the production of In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal. There were delays and detours in a number of directions. However, the production of flagship journal begins once more. I appreciate the support of Antjuan Finch, Anthony Sepulveda (Brown), Bob Williams, Clelia Albano, Chris Cole, Christian Sorensen, Daniel Hilton, Dong Geon Lee, Entemake Aman (阿曼), Gareth Rees, Gary Whitehall, Hiroshi Murasaki, Katherine Bullock, LaRae Bakerink, Luca Fiorani, Craig Shelton, Matthew Scillitani, Michael Baker, Masaaki Yamauchi, Paul Cooijmans, Ricardo Rosselló Nevares, Rickard Sagirbay, Saba Ismail, and Terry Adrian Gunnell, for bringing this issue to fruition.

This is the 21st issue of *Outsiders and Outliers* and the 2nd issue of *Land of Fire and Ice: Islandia, Snelandia, and Insula Gardari*, where this becomes a joint issue coinciding with a number of content, format, procedural, and substantive, advancements and changes to In-Sight Publishing inside of and outside of *Insight: Independent Interview-Based Journal*. I extend appreciation to Dr. Aubrey de Grey, Professor Azra Raza, M.D., Dr. Daniel Bernstein, Ismail Hamaamin Hamalaw, Dr. Herb Silverman, Dr. Kathy Bullock, J.J. Middleway, Dr. Lloyd Hawkeye Robertson, Marissa Torres Langseth, B.S.N., R.N., M.S.N., ANP-BC (retired), Rod Taylor, Dr. Sally Satel, M.D., Stacey Piercey, Professor Sven van de Wetering, Prof. Imam Syed B. Soharwardy, Terry Waslow, M.B.A., Tim Moen, as the current Advisory Board members up to May 1, 2021, at the time, and to the former Advisory Board members.

Also, I express gratitude and respect for the Athabasca University, Simon Fraser University, The University of British Columbia, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, University of California, Irvine, Fort Langley Library, Thompson Rivers University, and Surrey Public Library librarians. The people unseen, often, count the most. I appreciate all assistance in collaboration necessary for required sufficient comprehension of new styles and content of thought, and being connected to these people.

Onwards,

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Founder, [In-Sight Publishing](#); Publisher, [Books](#) (ISBN: 978-1-0692343)

Editor-in-Chief, [In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal](#), [Issues](#) (ISSN: 2369-6885)

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Issue 26, Idea: Outliers & Outsiders (21)

Conversation with Gary Whitehall on Drunks, Castro, Kant, and Capitalism: High-Range Test-Taker

2021-01-01

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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Abstract

Gary Whitehall is a high-range test-taker. He discusses: growing up; an extended self; family background; experience with peers and schoolmates; some professional certifications; the purpose of intelligence tests; high intelligence; the geniuses of the past; the greatest geniuses; a genius from a profoundly intelligent person; profound intelligence; some work experiences; job path; the idea of the gifted; the God concept or gods idea; science; tests taken and scores earned; ethical philosophy; social philosophy; economic philosophy; political philosophy; worldview-encompassing philosophical system; and meaning in life.

Keywords: capitalism, drunks, Fidel Castro, Gary Whitehall, intelligence, Kant.

Conversation with Gary Whitehall on Drunks, Castro, Kant, and Capitalism: High-Range Test-Taker

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

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: When you were growing up, what were some of the prominent family stories being told over time? **Whitehall:** Yes. I am a violent and abusive drunk now, too.

Gary Whitehall[1],[2]*: The few ancestors I know of were violent and abusive drunks.

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

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

Whitehall: My father is half-Scottish; my mother is English. Neither of my parents were religious – at least not while I was growing up.

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

Whitehall: I beat up any kid who disrespected me, and pulled every girl in my class. I couldn't have asked for a better childhood.

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

Whitehall: Bachelor's degree in computer science.

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

Whitehall: To score higher than the other nerds in order to impress women and get laid.

Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?

Whitehall: I have always known that I was way smarter than most people.

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.

Whitehall: Every generation thinks that it has everything basically figured out, and doesn't like being told that it was just as dumb and delusional as the previous generations. It's really that simple.

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

Whitehall: Fidel Castro, who reportedly banged a staggering 35,000 women. The more I ruminate on the deep mysteries of life, the universe, and consciousness, the more I regret not spending that time laying pipe. Lord Castro had the right idea.

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

Whitehall: Nothing. Those two things are synonyms.

Jacobsen: Is profound intelligence necessary for genius?

Whitehall: Yes.

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

Whitehall: Web developer.

Jacobsen: Why pursue this particular job path?

Whitehall: Because it's relatively easy and pays well.

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?

Whitehall: The biggest myth is that the ability to solve complex logic puzzles is enough to succeed in life or solve real-world problems. It isn't.

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

Whitehall: It seems to me that there are three possibilities as to the origin of the universe: (1) It appeared out of nothing and nowhere for no reason; (2) It created itself; or (3) It was created by something external to itself, leading to an infinite regress. None of these ideas makes a lick of sense – and the idea of a fourth option makes less sense still. Don't waste your time on such questions. Just drink beer and slay pussy instead.

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

Whitehall: It doesn't. Science can't tell us anything about what exists outside our own minds, since it is nothing more than mathematical (mental) models applied to our internal perceptions.

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

Whitehall: I haven't taken any official IQ tests. I took some of those shitty *IQExams* tests, though, and scored in the 150s.

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

Whitehall: The Golden Rule (or Kant's categorical imperative), which is a guard against hypocrisy. If we accept that a person's moral choices proceed from their beliefs, then by showing that some action contradicts a person's own belief system, we can demonstrate its "wrongness" on a logical level. For example, a person who is willing to murder others, but objects to his own murder, is labouring under a contradictory (i.e. false) set of beliefs.

Many moral philosophers have tried to make morality objective by linking it to truth, but it seems to me that the Golden Rule already does this.

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

Whitehall: Good old classic liberalism: every person should be free to do as they wish provided they are not physically inhibiting anyone else's ability to do the same.

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

Whitehall: Retaining a capitalist system, but setting a reasonable limit on the amount of money that a person can accumulate across a lifetime. The resources on this planet are finite, and nobody should have the right to hoard a hundred lifetimes' worth of money while others are struggling to make ends meet. Besides, allowing companies to grow indefinitely large inevitably leads to the emergence of monopolies (e.g. Google, Facebook, Amazon).

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

Whitehall: Any system in which power is decentralised. When power becomes too centralised, corruption and incompetence ensue, and there is little to no accountability. This is true of the national media as well as governments.

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

Whitehall: Lift weights, tap dat ass, and always go against the herd.

Jacobsen: What provides meaning in life for you?

Whitehall: I do. My life has meaning because I damn well say it does.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] High-Range Test-Taker.

[2] Individual Publication Date: January 1, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/whitehall>; 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.

Appendix II: Citation Style Listing

American Medical Association (AMA): Jacobsen S. *Conversation with Gary Whitehall on Drunks, Castro, Kant, and Capitalism: High-Range Test-Taker*[Online]. January 2021; 26(A). Available from: .

American Psychological Association (APA, 6th Edition, 2010): Jacobsen, S.D. (2021, January 1). *Conversation with Gary Whitehall on Drunks, Castro, Kant, and Capitalism: High-Range Test-Taker*. Retrieved from <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/whitehall>.

Brazilian National Standards (ABNT): JACOBSEN, S. *Conversation with Gary Whitehall on Drunks, Castro, Kant, and Capitalism: High-Range Test-Taker*. In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal. 26.A, January. 2021. <<http://www.in-sightjournal.com/whitehall>>.

Chicago/Turabian, Author-Date (16th Edition): Jacobsen, Scott. 2021. *Conversation with Gary Whitehall on Drunks, Castro, Kant, and Capitalism: High-Range Test-Taker*." In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal. 26.A. <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/whitehall>.

Chicago/Turabian, Humanities (16th Edition): Jacobsen, Scott "Conversation with Gary Whitehall on Drunks, Castro, Kant, and Capitalism: High-Range Test-Taker." In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal. 26.A (January 2021). <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/whitehall>.

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Conversation with Chris Cole on Mathematica for Biology: Member, Mega Society

2021-01-01

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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Abstract

Chris Cole is a Member of the Mega Society. He discusses: “How To Prevent Pandemics”; *Mathematica*; the “profound insights into the physical world” garnered through “*Mathematica* and the Internet” unseen before; the pandemic; the human organism “operates on several scales at once”; the knowledge of human beings as a system of nested algorithms; and the development of a *Mathematica*-like system for a human being and in interaction with a virus.

Keywords: Biology, Chris Cole, Mathematica, Mega Society.

Conversation with Chris Cole on Mathematica for Biology: Member, Mega Society

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

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: You are a professional mathematician and physicist. This interview is based on an article entitled “How To Prevent Pandemics” in *Noesis* issue 206 (September 2020). You stated, “As recently as the 1980s, physicists routinely referred to printed journals and textbooks to find the solutions for various mathematical problems. Frequently this was a tedious process – but that was the way physicists had always worked.” *Mathematica* was introduced on June 23 1988 with the most recent update on June 17 2020. Since the 1980s, and the introduction of *Mathematica*, what is the degree of efficiency increase from it?

becomes a living document as Ted Nelson envisioned when he invented hypertext.

Jacobsen: You reference “*Handbook of Mathematical Functions* (Abramowitz and Stegun) and *Table of Integrals, Series, and Products* (Gradshteyn, Ryzhik, et al.)” Were these as widely used among mathematicians in the 1980s as *Mathematica* today? Or were these widely used, but not nearly as much as ubiquitously as *Mathematica*?

Cole: *Mathematica* and its like are as widely used today as these reference texts were used before 1988.

Chris Cole[1],[2]*: It’s much more than a degree of efficiency. Many things that were previously impossible are now routine. Ignoring obvious things like solving large problems, it’s worthwhile to focus on sometimes ignored things, for example, the ability to create a computable text. This is a text in which portions are computed in real time. The text

Jacobsen: What are some of the “profound insights into the physical world” garnered through “*Mathematica* and the Internet” unseen before?

Cole: Through simulations and collaboration many aspects of the physical world have been explored to depths that were not seen before 1988 and this trend is accelerating. Look at the *Mathematica* Web site (

<https://www.wolfram.com/mathematica/>) for myriad examples, and that is only progress directly based on Mathematica.

Jacobsen: You wrote, “At best, there will be a year or so of suffering before the pandemic is brought under control. At worst, the virus may be with humanity for decades.” What seems like the most probable outcome between the aforementioned “best” and “worst”?

Cole: We have seen mutations of the coronavirus and the approaching herd immunity and mitigation measures such as vaccines will cause mutations to survive. The coronavirus will be with us for a long time.

Jacobsen: As the human organism “operates on several scales at once,” what does this layered sense of networks and scales mean for the simulatability of a human being?

Cole: Physicists have evolved techniques such as effective field theory and matching to deal with multiple scales at once. These techniques can be applied to biology.

Jacobsen: Following from the previous question, if achieved in practice, how would this change the

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[1] Member, Mega Society.

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

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knowledge of human beings as a system of nested algorithms, in a sense?

Cole: If we can deal with the system wholistically we can accurately model and predict the etiology of disease and the outcome of interventions.

Jacobsen: You said, “Just as *Mathematica* helped to solve certain problems, a biology platform which contains the details of human biology would help to prevent pandemics. Once a particular pathogen emerges from the ecosystem, its methods of operation would be analyzed and ways to prevent its spread could be synthesized.” What are current advancements in this direction know to you – to the development of a *Mathematica*-like system for a human being and in interaction with a virus?

Cole: *Mathematica* grew out of a recognition that it was not enough to solve each math problem one at a time. What was needed was a platform so that results could be expressed in a unified way, just as the underlying mathematics is unified. The same applies to biology. Solving one disease at a time is not going to get you there.

Harvard: Jacobsen, S. 2021, ‘*Conversation with Chris Cole on Mathematica for Biology: Member, Mega Society*’, *In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal*, vol. 26.A. Available from: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/cole>.

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Conversation with Rickard Sagirbay on the Turks, Self-Defense, Galileo, Mozart, Leonardo Da Vinci, Nikola Tesla, and Languages: Member, World Genius Directory (1)

2021-01-01



Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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Abstract

Rickard Sagirbay is a Member of the World Genius Directory. He discusses: growing up; an extended self; the family background; experience with peers and schoolmates; some professional certifications; the purpose of intelligence tests; high intelligence discovered; the geniuses of the past; the greatest geniuses in history; a genius from a profoundly intelligent person; profound intelligence necessary for genius; some work experiences and jobs; this particular job path; important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses; the God concept or gods idea; science; some of the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations); the range of the scores; ethical philosophy; social philosophy; political philosophy; worldview-encompassing philosophical system; and meaning in life.

Keywords: Ali Rıza Sağırbay, intelligence, IQ, Muslim, Rickard Sagirbay, Rickard Sagirbey, Turkish, Turks, World Genius Directory.

Conversation with Rickard Sagirbay on the Turks, Self-Defense, Galileo, Mozart, Leonardo Da Vinci, Nikola Tesla, and Languages: Member, World Genius Directory (1)

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

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

Rickard Sagirbay[1],[2]*: Nothing to brag about in that regard; I come from very humble family origins. I would rather say we had this tragedy within our family on my father's side. My uncle was in the military serving as a pilot. He was known to be exceptionally intelligent and did a career within the army. One day, he was involved in an accident. His plane crashed, and he died. I have to say, "May his soul rest in peace." My father named me after him, so my name from birth is Ali Rıza Sağırbay. Later as an adult, I changed my name for practical reasons to make it easier to apply for jobs, further I was tired to hear the repeated question: – What did you say your name was again? Further my Swedish Judicial surname is spelled a bit differently, than the Turkish original, due to that the pronunciation in Sweden is different, so we modified it to become Sagirbey. I am not being fussy about my family name, merely explaining it thoroughly since it's listed at WGD as "Sagirbey" and my FB account name says "Sagirbay" (which is my legal Turkish name, double citizenship).

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

Sagirbay: No, I don't think so.

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

Sagirbay: My family is originally from Izmir, Cesme. Well, we are Turks, so we are accustomed to Turkish culture, even though I was born and grew up in Sweden and, of course, acquired a lot of cultural values from there as well. The official language in Turkey is Turkish. In Turkey the majority of the population are Muslims, as are my family. So I grow up in a Muslim family and later during life I formed my own world-view in regards to the theme of religion and philosophy, but I will cover that in the latter section of your questions. My father was a local pub owner and salesman by trade and my mother was a nurse, both retired today.

Sagirbay: Well, this interview and your journal are based on a high level of honesty and integrity as I understood while reading it through. Therefore, I feel I have to be honest. It wasn't a fairy tale or a dance on roses. Before proceeding, I want to emphasize that I seek no pity or redemption, neither do I self-pity. It's all in the past but still shaped me to the man I am today. It was filled with bullying, violent episodes, verbal abuse, and so on. But on the contrary, there were also some nice memories that still stick in my mind as well.

I was a troublesome kid that always went my own way, if some authority at school told me to do tasks in a certain way I could sometimes end up doing them in the opposite way as an act of rebellion towards their authority. As a concrete example during swim school season in the city of Nynäshamn in Sweden, when I was approximately 5-6 years old, when our teacher told us to exercise swimming above the water, I instead, sometimes, exercised swimming below the water.

Sometimes, I speculate if it was a rebellious act towards my parents' upbringing? Would I have been different if I was raised under different conditions or gone to a private school with maximum 3-5 pupils? Of course, these are just philosophical inquiries with the purpose of trying to explain my own personal development; there are no certain conclusions hereby. I was indeed gifted. Even though, I showed signs of insubordination at an early age, and I will get to how I discovered my giftedness and the signs of them later in this interview.

Back to the story of my adolescence in primary school. I did display signs of being a disciplinary problem early on and after getting in to fights with other pupils and having difficulties on focusing on tasks in school, so instead of the classical prodigy example when you skip a couple of grades early on. I was instead transferred into a school for kids considered a disciplinary problem and disruptive.

I spent approximately 2 years in this school where they actually took notes and documented our progress both in terms of behaviour and cognitive progress during the lessons. I finished my time there 2 years later. I began in music class in accordance

with my mother's wish. She was under the impression that it would transform me into a more decent and calm kid. So, at age 10, I began 5th grade in Mikaelsskolan, I did pretty well in school given the civil unrest that was present in terms of fistfights, verbal abuse and bullying.

I have to confess. Sometimes, I was the victim being bullied and sometimes I was responsible for doing the bullying myself. I acted in accordance with my nature and did what I had to in order to survive the years in school, it was a tough period and required a lot of courage and persistence in order to complete this chapter of my life. I put up a good fight when I needed to defend myself physically and have no regrets in regards to this part. Some of the things, I did as a kid; on the other hand, I do regret today, and can put it in perspective and realize it was wrong.

I wish yet again to put emphasis on that as I progressed into adulthood I obviously learned better, even if I did so the hard way. As a rule of thumb, I have established to always be a diplomate primarily and try to solve conflicts using your giftedness, applying the tool of communication. Even better would be a combination of intelligence and wisdom, it is trying to plan your life in a way that prevents and minimize the probability for such events to occur in the first place (for obvious reasons).

To choose fighting as a primary means to solve a conflict is indeed idiocy and will only get you into further trouble, however, I also have to accentuate that I firmly believe that if you have already tried principal 1 and 2 aforementioned; and if you are cornered, then, of course, the use of physical violence would be completely justified. This is called self-defence. Further, it is judicially correct world wide. I would argue. I didn't reach top grades in all of the subjects in school (Einstein didn't either), but I discovered my resources later on.

I had a propensity and talent for head calculation, the multiplication table, head arithmetic in general. We had this competition once a week in school during 7-9 the grade in school in terms of being the quickest head calculator, sort of mind Olympics. I almost always finished in 2nd place to my classmate Lisa Classon. During our holiday in Turkey when I was 8 years old, I used to have this passionate hobby of calculating in my head 3 digit numbers such as 734×459 eventually progressing in terms of speed and accuracy. I recall reading about Ettore Majorana the physicist who also shared similar hobbies as a kid.

I also still remembered an employee at the hotel where we resorted, used to joke and call me by the

nickname "the professor kid" since he took note that I had a very peculiar hobby. Sadly, these skills and hobbies of mine with time faded out. There have been times in my life, when I wonder, "What could have been the result if I had possessed the discipline to nurture and persist my talents better from an early age?" Anyway, I managed successfully to finish primary school and also finished my 3 years in high school. I was also an avid linguistic learner early on, and easily absorbed new languages being taught in school, in this case, German.

I still remember quite well in regards to grammar, vocabulary, etc. I also had a conventionally very good memory as a kid, as an example, we had this examination in music, which consisted of pages of history, important years, names such as Bach, Mozart, etc. Consequently, I memorized the full contents of those pages verbatim. I looked upon it as a game of discipline and wouldn't stop until I knew it all by heart. It felt awesome. My stepfather Dan was surely also impressed when he noticed this. In regards to this theme discussed, I read that Francis Galton quoted whole sentences and paragraphs that he acquired from books when reading at a very early age.

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

Sagirbay: That is a good question and will only be fairly answered when putting it all together in context from a whole perspective. I happen to have a diagnosis of mental illness in terms of being "Bipolar". Consequently, this has made my life difficult due to the condition of depression. So, it has created some gaps during my history of employment in terms of being able to maintain and keeping the job. It has been followed by a lot of sick listing periods from my side. I will approach this topic very humbly and honestly.

I hold no splendid records or qualifications in terms of prestigious university diplomas, Ph.D. candidate, certifications in general, etc. Most of the knowledge I acquired up to this point origin from my own studies and intellectual curiosity. Because of my mental condition, I have gone through a learning curve in life, that has made me dread and be very shy of student life and to apply to a university. So, I enjoy mainly conducting my own research privately from home as an autodidact (I study Spanish currently). I think it is important to highlight this theme with a sense of humour, also from a view that shows that I possess self-distance.

During the setbacks of life, I haven't complained, rather I would say with a smile on my face that you are interviewing an insane man, but still sane and stable enough to participate in the interview. I accepted my mental condition and thereby found peace. There were many other gifted people who were bipolar as well during history, such as Vincent Van Gogh, Beethoven, Edgar Allan Poe, among others. I also have a quote to add from my own personal experience in regards to giftedness as bipolar: – Genius is well-balanced madness and reason, when applying the instrument of imagination flow.

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

Sagirbay: I love brain-teasers and puzzles, but what is above all of that is to discover new ways of thinking, leading to that “AHA” or “EUREKA” (Archimedes). It's an incredible feeling actually.

Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?

Sagirbay: Most prominently at the age of 7-15, I had these different hobbies such as mental head calculation, memorize texts when reading, also a high intellectual curiosity in general. I could ask a question to my friend, “What would you choose if you had to between amputating a leg or an arm? What would you choose between a million-dollar or supernatural powers like superman? Would you rather look like Brad Pitt in physical appearance or to be ugly and extremely rich?”

Existential questions were running in my veins from the very beginning it seems. You constantly think, “Why? Why? Why? What does this person gain from this and vice versa?” And so on, I still have this funny childhood memory from an old friend named Johan, who was actually highly gifted and precocious. During a dialogue, he once stated, “I think this kid Jens only hang out with Tobias, because he is so big and strong as for his own protection.” So, as a summary, I would say this is the way my signs of giftedness started.

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.

Sagirbay: I firmly believe it's because we are highly misunderstood by the average person and therefore people, in general, react with skepticism,

fear, envy, anger and sometimes even hatred. People have a tendency to condemn and fear ideas and concepts they don't fully understand. As a perfect example would be Galileo who faced the Inquisition during his days, he was trialed because his discoveries contradicted the mighty authority of the Catholic Church. This is a very fine example, indeed, how a great mind in history collides with religious dogma and that it still occurs in modern time.

Sadly, even if humanity have progressed scientifically from Galileo's days, there is a lot of progress to be made still today. One of the reasons that many highly gifted individuals might be camera shy and shy in general might be because of past bad experiences such as my own. My endeavour as a student was never entirely successful because of my mental condition, which resulted in gaps and an incomplete education. I completed a third of the education of becoming a radiographical nurse up in northern Sweden, the city of Boden. I managed to complete 38 points out of 120, but dropped out because of my mental problems, I still have the record of it stored.

I also completed a year in the university of Jönköping the school with alignment of communication, it was a basic year of a science program. But to the summary, because of my past unsuccessful experiences of being a student, I learned that school wasn't for me and I decided to return home and pursue studies as an autodidact by myself and in solitude. But I also of course feel I need to shed some light on the contrary. There are, of course, many geniuses in history as you mentioned that were indeed praised and revered during their whole lifetime. We could apply Mozart (1756-1791) as a perfect example, he excelled in music and was considered a child prodigy from an early age. He was admired by a lot of people early on, but sadly he died quite young at age 35.

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

Sagirbay: Leonardo Da Vinci is certainly among the top geniuses on the list. Based on his achievements and that he excelled in a great variety of fields such as art, engineering, inventions, anatomy, physics, etc. I would say he was way ahead of his time. Then we have Nikola Tesla that contributed a lot of inventions to science that we apply in modern times such as alternating current, the remote control and the neon lamp. Then of course it's hard to forget Alfred Nobel who invented dynamite and was the founder of the Nobel prize. I also personally idealize Rudiger Gamm, Dominic O'Brien, the late Tony

Buzan and finally Kemal Ataturk who was the founder of the modern Turkish Republic. These are just a few among many brilliant minds.

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

Sagirbay: Having a more fine-tuned brain and performing at the 99.9 percentage or above in terms of cognition, also in addition having that thing we call imagination to combine with the logic.

Jacobsen: Is profound intelligence necessary for genius?

Sagirbay: I would say, “Yes.”

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

Sagirbay: I worked for several years as a salesman in telemarketing and acquired a lot of experience from it. In addition, I worked as a customer support agent at a fitness-company. When I was younger prior to that, I worked as an assistant nurse helping elderly retired people.

Jacobsen: Why pursue this particular job path?

Sagirbay: I enjoy working with people and learn new things at constant. In sales, you never become complete in regards to this.

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?

Sagirbay: I believe that an important aspect of the idea of the gifted and genius is that society needs to improve (on a global scale) on how to effectively identify giftedness, so that talents could be cultivated and nurtured in the best interest of humanity. This will help science to progress and this, in turn, will help us to solve current world problems such as starvation, lack of clean water, overpopulation, diseases, etc. Well some of the most common myths I feel I have to dispel, is that genius/gifted people usually are autistic, or similar to savants or necessarily have to have some mental impediment or diagnosis (like in my case) and this isn't necessarily so at all.

These myths are widely enhanced and further conveyed to the public in movies like “Rainman” (Dustin Hoffman) and “A Beautiful Mind” (Russell Crow portrait John Nash). These are indeed good movies, but the truth is that in reality there are many very healthy geniuses with no diagnosis or mental conditions at all. Another myth that is present is that

most geniuses are nerds and book worms and so on. Not everybody realises that it can be a wrestler (like Plato) or a martial artist in Karate being very athletic build, etc. But this stereotype doesn't fit the description of a genius that we are fed from media I suppose.

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

Sagirbay: I started my journey as a Muslim, since I was born in a Muslim family, later I converted to Buddhism. I found the whole idea of reincarnation plausible, as did many ancient philosophers and geniuses such as Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, among several others. I took note of that everything in nature seemed to be cyclic and resurrection occurred all the time, for instance, the seasons of the year: Summer, autumn, winter and spring, repetition.

Also, the first law of thermodynamics states that energy is always conserved and can not be created neither destroyed. Today I am leaning towards pantheism with a scientific approach added to it. Further with time I have also found it very reasonable that people lean towards agnosticism since it's extremely difficult to know for sure what is true in regards to existentialism. I definitely still feel that the concept of reincarnation should be taken seriously until it's refuted by scientific means.

I have a very good quote which I feel is very appropriate in order to summarise this question:

If a man leaves with certainties he will end up with doubts; but if he is content to begin with some doubt, he will end up with some certainty.

Francis Bacon

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

Sagirbay: I would say a lot more today than it did during my years as an adolescent.

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

Sagirbay: Here you have a couple of them (verbal, spatial, and numeric):

Alphabet score: 185sd 15

Mach I: 170sd 15

SLSE II: 176sd 15

Jacobsen: What is the range of the scores for you? The scores earned on alternative intelligence tests tend to produce a wide

smattering of data points rather than clusters, typically.

Sagirbay: Range has been between 153-185sd 15 on various tests.

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

Sagirbay: Do your best and try to improve and become a better man than you were in the past. As a human being, we are constantly bound to imperfection within our very nature. Try for example to draw 5 precisely equally sized circles next to each other by hand on a piece of paper (without aiding tool). Do you think they will appear precisely the same? To put it in a funny frame, while serious, I would argue that perfect human beings only exist in fairy tales. The good intention and desire to improve as a human being is more than enough. Here are some quotes to give people something to think about.

For me the struggle to reach perfection as a human being is comparable with the same madness and despair similar to catching your own shadow.

R. Sagirbay

It is a prejudice to think that morality is more favourable to the development of reason than immorality.

Friedrich Nietzsche

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

Sagirbay: Transhumanism.

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

Sagirbay: Libertarianism.

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

Sagirbay: Trying to progress humanity in the right direction and to achieve a more intelligent citizenry, so that we might alleviate the condition of human suffering and make the earth a better place to live.

Jacobsen: What provides meaning in life for you?

Sagirbay: To constantly try to evolve as a human being and be occupied every minute of my life, this is how I keep the depression away and get my kicks. Learning new things has become my great passion in life. For instance, nowadays, I am learning Spanish. Later, I have plans to improve my German that I learned during primary school. I also enjoy theatre lessons, mind games, memorizing a deck of cards, digits, etc. I also exercise physically on a regular basis both weightlifting and running.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Member, World Genius Directory.

[2] Individual Publication Date: January 1, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/sagirbay-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.

Appendix II: Citation Style Listing

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Chicago/Turabian, Author-Date (16th Edition): Jacobsen, Scott. 2021. *Conversation with Rickard Sagirbay on the Turks, Self-Defense, Galileo, Mozart, Leonardo Da Vinci, Nikola Tesla, and Languages:*

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Vancouver/ICMJE: Jacobsen S. *Conversation with Rickard Sagirbay on the Turks, Self-Defense, Galileo, Mozart, Leonardo Da Vinci, Nikola Tesla, and Languages: Member, World Genius Directory (1)* [Internet]. (2021, January 26(A). Available from: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/sagirbay-1>.

Conversation with Paul Cooijmans on Censorship, Freedom of Speech, High-IQ Societies, Moles and Wolves, Cultural Marxism, and “Thoth”: Administrator, Glia Society (2)

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Abstract

Paul Cooijmans is an Independent Psychometitor and Administrator of the Glia Society, and Administrator of the Giga Society. He discusses: the observation of the limitations in the I.Q. societies in terms of speech; the various forms of “editorial changes and vicious manipulations” of content; some manifestations of the permissive admissions policies; how many people like censorship; moles and wolves in high-IQ societies; guarding against moles and wolves; how highly intelligent people can have an anti-intelligence view; mainstream intelligence tests; Cooijmans tests providing the best approximation of general intelligence; testing at an intended level; anomalies at or above 1 in 200 in general intelligence; a common conflation between education and intelligence level; some of the other higher-I.Q. societies founded since 1997; the evidence for having introducing the idea of high-range testing and higher-I.Q. societies to European societies; the main attraction for prospective members; comments on members joining, staying, or leaving; cultural Marxism; the popular Netherlandic saying, “Act normally, then you are already acting crazy enough”; the popular Netherlandic saying, “No one is allowed to stick out above the mowing field”; the effects over 2020 of some of the aforementioned trends; and any earlier gods than Thoth as considered potential names for the journal.

Keywords: censorship, cultural Marxism, freedom of speech, high-IQ societies, moles, Paul Cooijmans, wolves.

Conversation with Paul Cooijmans on Censorship, Freedom of Speech, High-IQ Societies, Moles and Wolves, Cultural Marxism, and “Thoth”: Administrator, Glia Society (2)

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

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: In terms of the observation of the limitations in the I.Q. societies at the

time, what were the forms of “limited freedom of speech” and “censorship”?

Paul Cooijmans[1],[2]*: I suspect these quotations refer to previous answers I gave in the 2020 interview. In the 1990s I observed limited freedom of speech and censorship in several societies with

varying pass levels in the following manners: When, in an article, I criticized a society’s admission policy and procedure, which did not function well in my perception, a response article followed from the society’s psychologist, who was on good terms with the journal editor. In this response, which contained much error on the substantial level, I was personally

attacked and character-assassinated. When I tried to defend myself and correct errors in further responses, these were either not published or delayed and manipulated to make me look foolish, and then the psychologist was given the chance to respond to my manipulated response in the same issue, a few pages further, saying something like, “look what that silly Paul Cooijmans is writing there”. Obviously, I was never given the chance to respond in the same issue to what others wrote about me.

What also happened was that when I submitted an article, the editor removed things that were considered violations, always without my consent. On one occasion, I was even sent the altered version before publication; I contacted the editor at once to say I did not agree with the alterations and forbade publication of the altered version. This was ignored and the altered version was published despite my forbidding this. Then, I knew I was dealing with scum of the lowest kind.

Very telling was also that negative responses to my articles were frequently published, but positive responses only came directly to me from readers. Once, someone told me he had sent a letter-to-the-editor containing a positive remark about me; when the letter was published, he had seen, to his amazement, that said positive remark had been removed. Then, I knew I was dealing with irreparable editorial corruption.

More general observations about that society were that discussions in the journal were cut off (“this topic is now closed”) and that irony and humour seemed forbidden.

In another society with a higher pass level I observed that discussion of certain topics was “edited for length and civility”, which, in practice, meant that some viewpoints were less likely to appear in print, and the published material was biased toward one side of the debate. This concerned matters like tests and admission. Broadly speaking, there was a battle between those who wanted a strict admission policy with tests that actually discriminated at the intended level, and those who (secretly) wanted to admit anyone interested in membership, and therefore wanted as many tests as possible on the list of accepted tests, irrespective of the high-range validity (or absence thereof) of those tests. Only years later would I understand that this battle was, roughly, one between “liberals” and “conservatives”, and that the former group was principally against the concepts of I.Q. societies and I.Q. testing altogether and trying to destroy them from within. To them, the admission policy and

testing were merely symbolic. In societies with formal democratic procedures, the “liberals” tended to win, because they received the votes from those who had only been able to join through the inflated admission policies promoted by the same “liberals”.

Jacobsen: Following the same line, what were the “editorial changes and vicious manipulations”? Also, why the “lack of fora for verbatim communication and publication” if any further reasons apart from the aforementioned?

Cooijmans: I explained a bit about vicious manipulations in the previous question; there were also general editorial changes that I have not yet mentioned, such as changing the title of an article, changing the word order of sentences, changing words, changing, adding, or removing commas, leaving things out, changing the division in paragraphs, removing white space, not italicizing a few words when so requested, removing irony and humour, and more. All of this was done without consulting or informing the author, and the result was often that one’s well-written work appeared in the journal as ungrammatical gibberish. When people complained, the editor would say they were “nitpicking about commas”, which was a pretty stupid thing to say because when you change commas you change meaning. Adding a comma may change a restrictive relative clause into a non-restrictive relative clause, for instance, and then suddenly that sentence says something entirely different!

Another grossly felonious instance of editorial change occurred when I submitted a puzzle, and the editor, without consulting or informing me, left out part of the instruction and changed (ruined) the puzzle itself. Subsequently, when no correct answers from readers had come in a month later, aforesaid editor commented in the journal that this was because I had provided a bad puzzle that had no real solution. No, he did not mention to the readers that he had altered the puzzle single-handedly without my knowledge. I believe these observations show a need for verbatim communication and publication fora.

Jacobsen: What are some of the theoretical and practical manifestations of the permissive admissions policies – “too permissive”?

Cooijmans: I would say that the experiences related in the previous two answers constitute practical manifestations of the results of overly permissive admissions policies. The looser the admissions standards, the more riff-raff is let in. Another such manifestation are the people I have often seen in

these societies who talk about themselves as being “gifted”, or having discovered their “giftedness” through the test that qualified them. My observation is that many of these persons are not “gifted”, let alone intelligent, by very far, and that something has gone horribly wrong in the testing and admission procedure. It gets embarrassing when they speak of problems they have had in life because of being “gifted” and misunderstood; I have to constrain myself then not to tell them that they are not “gifted” and their problems have different causes.

A special case form people like psychologists, who have professional access to the contents and scoring keys of many tests, so that their own scores on the same must be seen in a certain perspective (that was euphemistic) and their presence in I.Q. societies in no way implies that their intelligence is at the intended level. More than once have I had the impression that such unqualified professionals had joined fraudulently with the express purpose to become active as admissions officers and further pervert the society’s admissions policy. This impression has only become stronger in recent years, when I saw some of them, now mostly retired, on social media, still being critical about strict testing and admission practices (read: still foaming at the mouth whenever my name is mentioned). The obvious cognitive decline with age makes it ever harder for them to uphold the mask of hypocrisy, so that their true nature comes out in glowing colours (“loss of decorum” is the precise psychiatric term).

An anecdote illustrating a practical manifestation of admission gone wrong: In the early 2000s, a certain person was active in an abundance of societies, publishing an unstoppable diarrhoea of articles that were notorious for their many errors and extremely bad style of writing. In 2004, an essay on the Madrid train bombings appeared from his capable hand, stating that the attacks had killed some enormous number of people (I believe two hundred thousand was the claimed number). Soon, a few readers gently pointed out to the diligent publicist that the actual death count was 193. Thereupon, the good author provided the editor with a corrected version of his masterpiece, wherein he... had changed something else but left the error intact. In such cases, I have always tried to investigate exactly what went wrong with testing and admission, and to adapt the admission policy to prevent reoccurrence.

Jacobsen: Why do “many people really like censorship and curtailed freedom of speech”?

Cooijmans: This question brings the present coronavirus situation to mind: Much of the world has been living more or less under authoritarian,

fascist rule since the spring of 2020, yet the vast majority of people have absolutely no problem with that. The minority that protest comprise a bizarre amalgam of libertarians, alt-right individuals, conspiracy theorists, anti-vaxxers, small business owners, performing artists, and maverick scientists. Historically, an abrupt move to authoritarianism has been the reflex to outbreaks of deadly infectious diseases (and incidentally, this may be the origin of the habit to call a strict, clean, rule-abiding individual “Nazi”). Reasons that so many applaud the restrictive measures and harsh punishments for offenders include fear of the disease, but also a certain pre-existing dislike of the independent thinkers that make up the protesters.

In I.Q. societies, censorship and curtailed freedom of speech tend to be unilateral, suppressing one side of the discussion. Those on the other side may experience the censorship as beneficial because it protects them from the confrontation with opposing views. Most people prefer not to see opposing views, and to surround themselves with like-minded folks.

Jacobsen: Why do some seem to “only join I.Q. societies to keep an eye on what is going on, or to destroy them from the inside, like a kind of moles or wolves in sheep’s clothes”? Other than the reason stipulated “anti-intelligence attitude.”

Cooijmans: It is a general phenomenon, not limited to I.Q. societies, for organizations to be infiltrated. The moles lie in ambush, waiting for compromising material to fall into their paws, which they may then make public to damage or destroy the organization. Engagement in sado-masochism, attendance of darkrooms or bareback parties, child pornography or paedophilia, eugenics, expressions of homophobia, racism, or – the holy grail – anti-Semitism. The infiltrators may act from a far-left ideological motivation, often belong to activist organizations, or they may even be paid actors; activism has “benefactors” with infinitely deep pockets who will not hesitate to finance this kind of spying, as well as demonstrations, propaganda, riots, terror attacks, or murder.

The first instance of such a scandal in the world of I.Q. societies, in my period of involvement in those societies, took place early 1995. In the journal of a certain I.Q. society, a member advocated the humane killing off of the old, the weak, the stupid, and the inefficient. Although the journal was strictly members-only, this article was instantly leaked out, resulting in an international scandal. The editor who published the article was dismissed, and many local branches of the society apologized to their members

for the reputation damage the society had thus incurred. Never was the contents of the article taken seriously and discussed; the fuss was only about the society being publicly connected to the ideas expressed by the author.

Jacobsen: How can societies guard against these “moles” or disguised “wolves”?

Cooijmans: I am afraid that a bona fide organization, with an objective and fair admission policy such as I recommend, is powerless against infiltration. The moles have it easy to get in. Only advanced lie detection might keep them out. It should also be said that most of the I.Q. societies I have known contain very little “dirt” in this sense, but rather are havens of political correctness. Despite selecting for high intelligence, the societies are transparent to the outer world, and any subversive uttering or activity occurring in them is bound to leak out within hours.

How different is this in criminal organizations, where squealers are dealt with in soundproof rooms using bolt cutters, cigarette lighters, and other such tools of the trade. Not that I would want to threaten any I.Q. society moles with that, mind. Oh no. Such a thing could never occur to me.

Jacobsen: Why do some “highly intelligent people” have an “anti-intelligence attitude”?

Cooijmans: This conspicuous phenomenon has puzzled me for decades. Why do some of the most intelligent people propagate falsehood like “intelligence is not important or valuable in itself” or “a society of higher average intelligence is not a better society”? An obvious explanation would be that they be right, in which case we should all be relieved regarding the current downward trend of intelligence in the West. After all, it will not make society less civilized and more dangerous! There will be no increase of crime, violence, hatred, and misery, no loss of wealth, technology, and happiness. Alas! any objective study of the relation between intelligence and real-world functioning shows this to be false, and that the anti-intelligence propaganda of the intelligentsia is ideological in nature rather than scientific and factual.

The questions remains why highly intelligent individuals would (1) believe these things, or (2) pretend to believe them. Concerning the first, it is conceivable that a highly intelligent person, growing up with the present Marxist indoctrination and never encountering the science regarding intelligence (the “London school”, the hereditarians) keeps believing those doctrines well into adult life. An important factor is the psychological phenomenon of

projection, which I have mentioned before but is so crucial that it bears repetition: The highly intelligent person, by default, involuntarily and unawares, assumes one’s own level of mental ability in all or most other people and is thus innately disposed to believe the Marxist-egalitarian dogmas. Those are attractive to such a person, they “feel right” and “ring true”. It takes some serious study and hard confrontation with reality to overcome this projection, as well as a wide associative horizon. I have long suspected that intelligent persons with narrow associative horizons (who do exist) are inclined to remain in their brainwashed states for all of their lives. Another factor that keeps the truth from these people is that the science of intelligence has been suppressed, pushed to the fringes, expelled from the academic world, as “scientific racism” or “hate”. So, for group (1), the explanation would lie in their personality combined with the indoctrinating environment, to which they have insufficient resistance due to a narrow associative horizon.

Regarding (2), this concerns intrinsically dishonest, evil entities who say one thing but believe the other. Yes, even though intelligence correlates positively and causally with all things good, the direction of causality being from intelligence to goodness, the correlation of intelligence with goodness is not unity (1, perfect). A class of intelligent, evil beings – one hesitates to call them humans – occupy vital segments of society and purposely spread cryptopolitical, pseudoscientific misinformation. They will tell us, “race is a social construct” but live in gated White communities themselves. They do not believe what they say but want us to believe it. Group (2) is really a caste, a set of genetic strains, possibly a species, that live among us in the guise of Homo sapiens. They consist of bloodlines wherein high intelligence has coagulated with evil after centuries of selective breeding; inbreeding (cousin-cousin, uncle-niece) to retain the desired unnatural combination of cognitive ability with insincerity, and occasional outbreeding to incorporate new blood and keep the outward appearance of humans. Without the outbreeding, they would begin to look unhuman, reflecting the fact that their configuration of personality traits is unhuman and anti-human.

Jacobsen: What mainstream intelligence tests seem to provide the best approximation of general intelligence?

Cooijmans: If educational tests like Miller Analogies Test, Scholastic Aptitude Test, and Graduate Record Examination are included, the older forms of those three are the only ones that I have observed to have some loading on general

intelligence into the high range. The newer editions do not seem to have such, and another problem is that when people take those tests purposely (and sometimes repeatedly) to qualify for I.Q. societies, the tests' "g" loadings disappear. They are only "g"-loaded when taken in their proper educational context, and not robust against determined attempts to obtain a super-high score.

I know of no other mainstream tests that have any noticeable "g" loading in the high range. If you are talking about the average range of intelligence, I can not answer from my own observation because I have only dealt with high-range tests.

Jacobsen: What Cooijmans tests seem to provide the best approximation of general intelligence?

Cooijmans: If I limit myself to the currently available tests for which there is enough data to answer this more or less objectively: Reason Behind Multiple-Choice – Revision 2008, The Marathon Test, Associative LIMIT, Test of the Beheaded Man, Cooijmans Intelligence Test – Form 3, Narcissus' last stand, The Nemesis Test, Test For Genius – Revision 2016, Cooijmans Intelligence Test – Form 4, Cooijmans Intelligence Test 5. This is only about the high range.

Jacobsen: How can most other I.Q. societies treat homogeneous tests appropriately, so as to test at "their intended level"?

Cooijmans: If it concerns tests that possess validity around the intended level and there are no further problems with them (such as answer leakage) I would say that the Glia Society's approach is best: Require qualifying scores on each of two such tests with different item types. Do not use methods to compute a "real I.Q." from several test scores; that may result in inflated I.Q.'s.

Jacobsen: What seems to happen with anomalies at or above 1 in 200 in general intelligence rarity – of the more intelligent or the higher end of the curve – who happen to harbour delusions of grandeur, personality dis-order, supernaturalistic tendencies of thinking about the objects and relations in the natural world, or happen to have the inability for scientific rationality, skepticism, and logical reasoning? I am aware. You have written on these.

Cooijmans: I have no idea to which writing by me this could refer, but now that you ask, it is true that my general observation is that the ability to be rational and logical commences around the level of 1 in 200 in intelligence (the high end, not the low end). And indeed are there glorious exceptions, and I

have been trying to understand, for a few decades now, how those come to be. Several causes seem to occur:

Full-blown psychosis is the easiest cause to recognize, also because it tends to subside within weeks or months, after which one may observe the subject in a more rational state.

Mild chronic psychosis is another frequent cause, and harder to identify. Some personality variants are forever on the brink of psychosis, but never develop an acute episode. Very, very evil tongues whisper that for typical women, this is actually the default state of being; of course, it would never occur to me personally, or to any sensible person for that matter, to make such a misogynistic suggestion, not even in jest. A point of concern in diagnosing this near-psychotic condition is that on a bad day, one may find oneself at the wrong end of the stick, that is, one may be delusional oneself while the other person is sane. Therefore it is necessary to frequently revisit and study in depth exactly those viewpoints that are at odds with what one has long believed or been taught. Those with a wide associative horizon possess this habit as an innate reflex, are obsessively drawn toward what violates the status quo of their knowledge, opinions, and attitudes.

Finally, there are entities that have some kind of interest, either financial, ideological, political, or ethnocentric, that discords with truth, logic, and righteousness. This makes them behave and express themselves in contrast with the rationality one would expect at their levels of intelligence.

Jacobsen: Why is there a common conflation between education and intelligence level, or amount of knowledge and general intelligence level?

Cooijmans: The essence is this: The correlations of intelligence with education and amount of knowledge are unidirectional, with the causality going from intelligence to those respective concepts. Higher intelligence is required for higher educational achievement, and higher intelligence causes one to store more knowledge in one's long-term memory. It does not work the other way around; studying does not raise your intelligence, and putting more knowledge in your memory does not raise your intelligence. To believe such is a form of sympathetic magic, it is a reversal of causality.

For better understanding, one should know that part of higher intelligence is having a better working memory. The working memory, in turn, is the device that stores information in the long-term memory.

With a better working memory, you are storing more

in your long-term memory, whether you like it or not. This is why persons of higher intelligence have more general knowledge and a larger vocabulary; those are results, by-products, of the higher intelligence. Knowing this mechanism, it is easy to see that merely increasing one's knowledge and vocabulary will not increase intelligence and working memory. The mechanism goes one way only.

Intelligence, including working memory, rests on physical properties like the number of cortical neurons, neural conduction velocity, the quality of the insulation material around the axons, and the energy-efficiency of the brain (the efficiency of the brain's glucose metabolism). If any improvement to those is possible at all, it will be through physical means, not by mimicking the effects of the intelligence brought forth by them. Not by providing the brain with knowledge. Conversely, intelligence may be reduced by any physical damage to the brain, such as by mechanical impact, shortage of oxygen or glucose, poisons, or hormones.

Jacobsen: What have been some of the other higher-I.Q. societies founded since 1997?

Cooijmans: I have not paid attention, but it concerns a huge number of them. The Epimetheus Society comes to mind. I can not stand to look at the web locations of many of the newer societies; slow-loading, full of spaghetti code produced by contents management systems or what-you-see-is-what-you-get editors. If you are smart enough to start an I.Q. society, learning hypertext markup language should be no hurdle for you. Few things betray incompetence and not-being-at-the-proclaimed-level-of-your-self-founded-society more than that.

Jacobsen: What is the evidence for having “introduced the concepts of high-range testing and higher-I.Q. societies to Europe”?

Cooijmans: The articles and advertisements I published in the mid-1990s in journals of I.Q. societies, regarding my tests and the Glia and Giga societies. Some are shown, for instance, on my I.Q. tests web site in “The history of I.Q. Tests for the High-Range”, and somewhere on the Giga and Glia Society sites.

Jacobsen: As one of “the most interesting and brilliant” administrators in the world with such tantalizing societies on offer to the international community of the higher-I.Q., what seems like the main pull for prospective members?

Cooijmans: I do not understand the phrase “the main pull”, but the circumstance that Glia Society

members can take tests for free appears to be attractive, while for the Giga Society it is mainly prestige.

Jacobsen: Following from the previous question, what seems like the main reason for members who join and stay, and those who leave?

Cooijmans: No Giga Society members have ever left except by passing away. Glia Society members leave rarely; I remember someone resigning after being suspended from the e-mail forum for violating the rules. Another one resigned because he thought I was “far right”, but later rejoined. And a third one left because he felt he no longer deserved to be a member; this one I suspect of having leaked out the complete scoring key of one of my tests, enabling an idiot to qualify for the Giga Society. Oh, and someone resigned, came back, and later resigned again because of misbehaviour and harassment by another member. In hindsight, it seems that roughly one in a hundred members misbehave significantly at some point, and in one case I expelled the culprit. This paragraph contains quite explosive information, but given the length of this interview no one will probably get this far and read it.

Members who stay in the Glia Society do so because they like the free testing and/or the communication fora. But many also simply stay inactive without formally resigning.

Jacobsen: What is “cultural Marxism”? Why is it an “ideological terror”? Why is it “to an extreme degree” in the Netherlands?

Cooijmans: That first question needs a book-length answer in itself. “Cultural Marxism” is a term used by critics of the movements in question. Cultural Marxists do not call themselves that but deem the concept a conspiracy theory. These movements started right after the First World War, as a step up from classical Marxism, which was perceived as having failed. Classical Marxism was about a class struggle, wherein the workers of all countries would unite against Capital. In the war though, the workers of the warring countries had been fighting each other in the trenches rather than uniting, thus revealing that nationalist tendencies were stronger than class divisions.

A variety of projects were then conceived and initiated to destroy all nation states and establish a new world rule with no place for national identity and tradition. These projects involved the purposeful occupation of all vital institutions and industries, and the promotion and facilitation of migration streams (and other genocidal schemes) to permanently alter the populations and cultures of Europe, North

America, and the West in general. The motivation behind this was a burning hatred of nations, Christianity, White people, masculinity, artisanship, and manual labour. The basic strategy was to make the institutions and corporations more powerful than the national governments. This has meanwhile been achieved for much of the world.

The projected world government is not benign. It is a despotic feudal monarchy without citizenship or private property, wherein serfs are kept merrily submissive, lowly fertile, not too long-lived, and feminized (in case of men) by an incessant stream of poisons administered through the air, water, food, recreational drugs, clothing, cosmetics, medication, and vaccination. They can do this because they own and control all the relevant industries. Non-pharmaceutical strategies toward this goal are employed too, such as indoctrination and the propagandizing of pornography, onanism, prostitution, deviant (non-reproductive) sex, and other maladaptive behaviours. The current royal houses will not object to this usurping of the world throne; over the past centuries, the ancestors of our hostile elite have married into the major dynasties and/or financed them so that their bloodlines and interests are interwoven and they can make their move with royal approval. Said elite consists of several thousand to several tens of thousand specimens worldwide. This multiple genocide has progressed slowly but surely, and since the early 1970s, cultural Marxists have held the centre of the political spectrum in all Western countries. Views that were previously “centre” have ever since been denoted “far right”.

It is an ideological terror because it allows no dissent. Any expression that violates its dogmas is suppressed, censored, or made illegal and prosecuted. Cultural Marxism is the epitome of intolerance, tribalism, and xenophobia. It is a tribe aiming to subjugate the world and become the ruling caste in a new era of feudalism.

The Netherlands, small and densely populated, has been a laboratory for the testing of policies intended to be rolled out worldwide. The liberal approach to recreational drugs, prostitution, abortion, and euthanasia; extreme softness on crime; same-sex marriage; exempting multinational corporations from taxation; combining a welfare state with mass immigration; the forced implementation of multiculturalism; the public execution of a conservative politician on his way to power right before election day... it has all been tried in the test tube of the world. Oh, and on an entirely unrelated note, Netherlandic experts and universities have

played leading roles in the development and patenting of the SARS-CoV2 polymerase chain reaction test and corresponding vaccines.

I have been compiling a list of segments of society presently occupied by cultural Marxism; in doing so, I discovered it is quicker to make its complement, that is, a list of societal segments that are still relatively free of cultural Marxism. This latter list would include conservative and/or nationalist organizations; small and medium-sized businesses; fundamentalist and orthodox religion; part of alternative or natural healing; amateur sports; “rogue” states and nation states; agriculture, farming, hunting; barter; rural life; fringe (independent, unconventional) media; independent science (independent of governments and corporations); and traditional art and culture.

I have considered providing the former list too, but believe it would be too depressing for the good readers; suffice it to say that said list contains practically everything else in the world.

Jacobsen: Any Cooijmans response to the popular Netherlandic saying, “Act normally, then you are already acting crazy enough”?

Cooijmans: I fully agree with this saying, when taken literally. But what is meant with it on the idiomatic level is, “you are merely average and nothing better than the rest, no matter how good you may be”. This is carved into the soul of every Netherlander from birth on.

Jacobsen: Any Cooijmans response to the popular Netherlandic saying, “No one is allowed to stick out above the mowing field”?

Cooijmans: The recent death of guitarist Eddie Van Halen, born in the Netherlands, has made this painfully clear. For a few days there was some attention for him in the news on television, but in the four decades up to that, including the heyday of the group “Van Halen”, he and his band had been virtually ignored by the Netherlandic media, despite his being one of the best guitar players in existence. In 1980, when I saw Van Halen at a festival in the Netherlands, I noted already that there was little media attention for them, and if they were mentioned, it was mainly to emphasize how arrogant they were or to ridicule them. Being good at something is not appreciated here. If you are born in the Netherlands as a genius and only publish your work in the Netherlands, chances are you and your work will never be recognized for what they are but always treated as merely average, and even you yourself will keep believing, for all of your life, that

you are merely average, because that is what you have always been told with great emphasis.

Incidentally, other good guitarists I have listened to are Allan Holdsworth, Philip Catherine, and Konrad Ragossnig.

Jacobsen: What will be the effects over 2020 if this trend continues? What will be the effects if this trend is reversed?

Cooijmans: Unfortunately, the question fails to specify which trend is being referred to. Cultural Marxism? But why is the year 2020 mentioned then? Cultural Marxism is a century old and not specific for 2020. The actual trend over 2020 is the pandemic of censorship and restrictions of civil rights implemented in response to virus outbreaks. It does look like cultural Marxists are utilizing the disease to tighten their stranglehold of the world; to strengthen their ownership of it; to replace small businesses with large corporations without ties to local culture and tradition; to abolish cash; to kill off people by suppressing proven effective treatments; to let people accept vaccinations out of fear by hiding the true fatality rate of the virus; in short, to accelerate their rise to world domination. The end game has begun.

If “this trend” is taken to mean cultural Marxism, and the effects need not only be over 2020, the answer is as follows: A period of civil wars will occur as White people realize they are becoming minorities in their own countries. We are seeing the preludes to that in the form of terror attacks by isolated “far right extremists”, as well as well-organized, heavily financed violent “demonstrations” by pseudo-activists who are really paid mercenaries. So, “lone wolves” against crypto-armies. A peaceful defeat of cultural Marxism seems unlikely at this point, since the native populations of almost all Western countries have been diluted such that the nationalist votes can not gain a majority in elections any more (“And good at that?!” will cultural Marxists among the readers utter at this point).

Given the cultural-Marxist occupation of all vital segments of society, the odds look grim; or sublimely favourable, depending on which side one is on. The best one can hope for is that all of this, as cultural Marxists claim, is a conspiracy theory, a

collection of paranoid delusions. I would rather be delusional than right.

In the event that cultural Marxism is beaten, the effect will be a return of nation states populated and ruled by citizens, and a purging of the corrupted institutions and industries. In the opposite case, we end up under the projected world government described a few answers ago. Attentive readers will have understood what the probable outcome is. Perhaps, the time to plausibly stop cultural Marxism, if ever, were the 1920s.

Once the new kingdom has been established, one of its challenges will be to prevent degeneration of its bloodlines. Inbreeding has often been the downfall of dynasties, and the classical approach was to marry royalty from abroad, or rich foreigners if no suitable nobility was available and/or the bottom of the treasury was in sight. As a result, royal families have tended to be genetically different from their subjects (“of different blood”, one says). In the absence of nubile extraterrestrial princesses, the new masters of the world will harvest fresh blood from selected juveniles among their billions of zombie slaves, who are legally their intellectual property as they have been genetically modified by mandatory nano-robot injections. Oh, and a merry Christmas incidentally. Or happy Easter, depending on when this is published.

Perhaps I should explain the reason for words like “kingdom” and “feudal” in this context, where others speak of a “Communist (or globalist) world government”: Without private ownership, and all of the world’s assets being on the balance sheet of a small bloodline-based elite, feudalism and kingdom are the proper terms to use. Our civil rights will be set back to the Middle Ages over the next one or two decades, if this trend continues. Considering how eagerly many are queueing up for that, perhaps it is what they deserve after all.

Jacobsen: Were there any earlier gods than Thoth who came as potential names for the journal – not necessarily connect with “science, wisdom, writing, art, magic” or “writing, mathematics, astronomy”?

Cooijmans: No earlier gods came up. If I were to look for such now, I would look at antediluvian times.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Administrator, Giga Society; Administrator, Glia Society.

[2] Individual Publication Date: January 1, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/cooijmans-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.

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Vancouver/ICMJE: Jacobsen S. *Conversation with Paul Cooijmans on Censorship, Freedom of Speech, High-IQ Societies, Moles and Wolves, Cultural Marxism, and “Thoth”*: Administrator, Glia Society (2) [Internet]. (2021, January 26(A). Available from: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/cooijmans-2>.

Ask Two Geniuses with Dr. Christian Sorensen and Matthew Scillitani on Genius, Mental Health, and Relationships: Independent Metaphysician & Philosopher; Social Media Marketer & Web Developer (1)

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Abstract

Rick Rosner and I conduct a conversational series entitled Ask A Genius on a variety of subjects through In-Sight Publishing on the personal and professional website for Rick. This series with Christian and Matthew build on this idea. Dr. Christian Sorensen earned a score at 185+, i.e., at least 186, on the WAIS-R. He is an expert in Metaphysics and Philosophy. Matthew Scillitani earned a score at 190, on Psychometric Crosswords. He is an expert in Social Media Marketing and Web Development. Both scores on a standard deviation of 15. A sigma of ~5.67+ for Christian – a general intelligence rarity of more than 1 in 136,975,305, at least 1 in 202,496,482 – and a sigma of 6.00 for Matt – a general intelligence rarity of 1 in 1,009,976,678. Neither splitting hairs nor a competition here; we agreed to a discussion, hopefully, for the edification of the audience here. If a higher general intelligence score, then the greater the variability in, and margin of error in, the general intelligence scores because of the greater rarity in the population. This amounts to a joint interview or conversation with Dr. Christian Sorensen, Matthew Scillitani, and myself. They discuss: mental wellness and mental illness; a youth from an adult; a prodigy from a genius; a reasonable point at which to separate an early bloomer from a late bloomer; psychiatric conditions

in relation to genius; genius, dating, friendships, love, and marriage; intelligence from IQ; parts of IQ with intelligence; and desired directions for this meta-analytic discussion.

Keywords: Christian Sorensen, genius, Matthew Scillitani, mental health, relationships.

Ask Two Geniuses with Dr. Christian Sorensen and Matthew Scillitani on Genius, Mental Health, and Relationships: Independent Metaphysician & Philosopher; Social Media Marketer & Web Developer (1)

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

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Some interviewees prefer short, open-ended questions. Other interviewees prefer long prefaces punctuated by a question or a series of questions. Sorry to any readers present or future who happen to read some of the works here or elsewhere, sincerely and gently, with particular preferences in reading kinds and forms of questions, the materials can restrict or constrain some of the reading due to a number of factors. Some relate to the preference of the interviewee or interviewees. Others may have a relationship with the coda statements seemingly requisite to move onto the next part of the interview or to make a final statement about this or that particular topic. So on and so forth, nonetheless, this series, probably, will commit to an admixture of them. Our subject matter, in general, for this mediated discussion are intelligence, IQ, mental wellness, mental illness, youth and adults, prodigy and genius, early bloomers and late bloomers, psychiatric disorders tied to genius, relationships (friendship, dating, and marriage) and genius, while within a 'deep dive' or a meta-analytic framework of comprehension. To begin, let's get some personal opinions or individual definitions of the above categories before moving into the more formal discussion and then trying to bring everything under the same roof, what are mental wellness and mental illness to you?

Dr. Christian Sorensen[1]*: Both, mental wellness and mental illness, from my point of view, are relative and variable categories, since they respectively depend on temporal circumstances, and they are metamorphoseable nomenclatures. In turn, it could be stated, that these are definable, from a perspective, that I will denominate of introjection and of extra introjection, depending on whether it is done, from what I'm going to name, the consciousness of illness, or whether it is effectuated, from an external objectifying typification.

Matthew Scillitani[2],[3]*: *Mental wellness is, to me, more than just the absence of psychiatric disorders or peace of mind or whatever. It's the ability to temper one's emotions, be productive, mature, ethical, and rational, regardless of the*

presence of psychiatric disorders. We have all met someone who, in spite of not having any obvious psychiatric conditions, was lazy, unethical, immature, and so on; so the absence of psychiatric disorders and stress does not mean the person is mentally well.

In contrast, mental illness can be marked as the inability to rationalize well, the presence of delusions, laziness, melancholy, low stress-resistance, a weak ego, immaturity, et cetera. Actually, it's probably that a weak ego is responsible for all of those things in the first place. I've noticed that many people who are mentally unwell seem to have a weak ego, which causes them to be more prone to disturbance and prolonged cognitive dissonance, which is extremely bad for one's mental health.

Jacobsen: What differentiates a youth from an adult?

Sorensen: I think that what differentiates the two of them, is a psychological maturational criterion, that is related to the crystallization of the personality structure, particularly, with regard to the formation, of the identity of the self, and from an ethical point of view, with the capacity of moral judgement, for assuming responsibility, in relation to one's own individual acts, which specifically refers, to the ability to make proper use of personal freedom, in terms of being able, to act in accordance with pre-established social norms, and therefore, to be capable to cognitively understand, the relationship that exists between rights and duties, both in the private and public spheres.

Scillitani: *Biologically, probably just puberty. Psychologically, that is a hard question to answer. We cannot say it is rationality, or intelligence, or emotional maturity, or stress-resistance, or anything else because there are adults who have none of those things and some precocious children who have some or all of them. In an ideal world, all children would grow into smart, ethical, productive, satisfied adults who can live their lives effectively without the aid of others.*

Jacobsen: What differentiates a prodigy from a genius?

Sorensen: A prodigy, is a precocious child in a certain field, who also dominates it, although this area, has already been invented. While a genius, is someone who manages to revolutionize, a certain sphere of knowledge.

Scillitani: *Well, most prodigies are children who have committed thousands of hours towards practicing a learnable skill, like piano or mental math. These are things that are impressive but don't require much intelligence to do. After all, a child can do them! A genius is someone, usually an adult, though there are a few cases of teenage geniuses, who are exceptionally intelligent, talented in their fields of study, and who, like the prodigy, commit thousands of hours towards their work. Many pianists can play Beethoven flawlessly, but only Beethoven was the genius for having written his music into existence. That is a genius. The prodigy can just play well.*

Jacobsen: What seems like a reasonable point at which to separate an early bloomer from a late bloomer?

Sorensen: I think that what separates an early bloomer from a late bloomer, is the existential fact for a genius, of becoming aware about death, and therefore, of stop thinking that he is living life, and rather begin to think, about how long he will live.

Scillitani: *Probably mid-puberty would be a good time to determine that. If a child is very precocious but they fizzle down to normal as a teenager then they were an early bloomer and if a child is behind their classmates but catches up sometime during puberty then they were a late bloomer. It may even be that a child is an early bloomer in some areas and a late bloomer in others. For a personal example, I was a very strong reader from an early age but was weak in math and couldn't understand it no matter how hard I tried. Then, in high school, math was suddenly very easy to comprehend and I skipped four math grades!*

Jacobsen: Any thoughts on more formal, precise psychiatric conditions in relation to genius?

Sorensen: I think that in general, in relation to genius, there are certain psychiatric patterns, that tend to repeat, especially in what concern, schizoaffective and mood troubles, which can manifest themselves, in a wide spectrum, ranging from personality disorders to psychotic syndromes.

Scillitani: *O.C.D. (obsessive-compulsive disorder), O.C.P.D. (obsessive-compulsive personality*

disorder), Asperger Syndrome, Schizophrenia, A.S.P.D. (antisocial personality disorder), depression, and paraphilia are all related to genius. Psychiatric disorders are probably a requisite for genius, and the most common disorder held by nearly all geniuses is Asperger Syndrome. It seems that depression and sexual deviance are also common if not a requisite for genius. In the arts, like music and painting, schizophrenia is also very common, but less so in the sciences.

Jacobsen: Any thoughts on genius, dating, friendships, love, and marriage relevant for the upcoming extended conversation?

Sorensen: I think of -1, since genius, dating, friendships, love, and marriage, not only strongly intersect between themselves, but also they interact each other, perfectly, nevertheless they do so, by an absolutely reverse way.

Scillitani: *Most geniuses never marry, never have children, and have few or no friends, probably because of psychosocial problems related to psychiatric disorders like Asperger Syndrome and Schizophrenia. Some geniuses are lucky and manage to find a romantic partner but it's very rare. The genius is usually also introverted and not interested in socializing anyway, preferring to live in his own world and focus his attention on his hobbies and work, which he excels in.*

Jacobsen: What separates intelligence from IQ?

Sorensen: Everything separates them, since the IQ is not only a consensual unit of measurement, that represents intelligence, in my opinion, as a partial and relative reality which never hits the bottom, but also because both are essentially different, due to the fact, that they have natures, which in addition to being asymmetrical, they are besides, opposite between each other, since while the IQ, is always procedurally discursive, intelligence never is, and irrespectively, if reads reality, then the other does so, but instantly from its inside, without conjugating any sign.

Scillitani: *Intelligence is a quality and I.Q. tests are a measuring tool. The challenge is that intelligence is much harder to precisely measure because it's not as clear-cut as just putting a yardstick next to an object to measure height or something. What makes it even more difficult is that idiots can't recognize high intelligence, and many of them decide to enter the field of psychology because it has almost no barrier for entry. So now we have many psychologists trying to measure intelligence but are not intelligent themselves, which results in less satisfactory measurement tools.*

Jacobsen: What equates parts of IQ with intelligence?

Sorensen: There are no equitable parts between one and the other, since what exists, is rather a noetic analogy, in which through IQ, intelligence, is simply and reductively defined, as an ability to solve problems, in function, of different degrees of complexity, and lastly what the term of IQ signifies, refers to who defined it, since the very first time, that is to say, to what means a metric value, measured by certain refutable instruments.

Scillitani: *I.Q. is a pretty good reflection of one's intelligence when the test taken has high-quality items, is heterogeneous, and has a high g-loading, with a generous ceiling (and floor, in some cases) to allow for outliers.*

Jacobsen: Any particular desired directions for this meta-analytic discussion on these subject matters or points to bear in mind as the conversation continues?

Sorensen: In relation to the term that I proposed, of meta-analysis, and regarding these subject matters, I would follow, an increasingly abstract direction, until getting to nothingness, in order to screen every detail, and fully discern the qualitative aspects of each one of them, since in that manner I would start casting the concept of metaphysics, with another one, that I will denominate meta-philosophy.

Scillitani: *Sure. A good and relevant topic would be on the differences (if any) between the universal genius and the more niche genius, who is exceptional at one or two subjects but average or even bad at others. Does the latter even exist? If so, are they still a genius or something else entirely? We could also talk about the physical characteristics of the genius. For example, it's sometimes said that the genius may have a larger head circumference relative to their body. Perhaps there is some truth to this?*

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Independent Metaphysician and Philosopher.

[2]Member, Giga Society.

[3] Individual Publication Date: January 1, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/sorensen-scillitani-1>; Full Issue Publication Date: May 1, 2021: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

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Conversation with Dr. Katherine Bullock on Internal and External Issues Vis-à-Vis Religiosity and Secularity: Past Chair, Islamic Society of North America-Canada (ISNA-Canada); Lecturer, Political Science, University of Toronto at Mississauga (3)

2021-02-01



Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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Abstract

Dr. Katherine Bullock is a Lecturer in the Department of Political Science, University of Toronto Mississauga. Her teaching focus is political Islam from a global perspective, and her research focuses on Muslims in Canada, their history, contemporary lived experiences, political and civic engagement, debates on the veil, and media representations of Islam and Muslims. She was the editor of the American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences from 2003-2008, the Vice-President of The Association of Muslim Social Scientists (North America) from 2006-2009. Her publications include Muslim Women Activists in North America: Speaking for Ourselves and Rethinking

Muslim Women and the Veil: Challenging Historical and Modern Stereotypes, which has been translated into Arabic, French and Turkish. She is also President of The Tessellate Institute, a non-profit research institute, and of Compass Books, dedicated to publishing top-quality books about Islam and Muslims in English. Originally from Australia, she lives in Oakville with her husband and children. She embraced Islam in 1994. She discusses: the external issues for the various Muslim communities in Canada; manifestations of hate groups; imaginary internal issues in Canadian Muslim communities reified into Muslim-wide; real internal issues in Canadian Muslim communities formulated as Muslim-wide; some external issues coming from secular groups against Canadian Muslims; some external issues coming from other religious groups against Canadian Muslims; external issues created through simply not asking spokespeople for different sects or traditions of Islam within Canada; some federal, provincial, and municipal issues for Canadian Muslims; some solutions to the enumerated external issues; and some solutions to the enumerated external issues.

Keywords: Canadian, Islam, Katherine Bullock, Muslims, University of Toronto at Mississauga.

Conversation with Dr. Katherine Bullock on Internal and External Issues Vis-à-Vis Religiosity and Secularity: Past Chair, Islamic Society of North America-Canada (ISNA-Canada); Lecturer, Political Science, University of Toronto at Mississauga (3)

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

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Now, to the external issues for the various Muslim communities in Canada, what are the core issues externally, as in imposed from the outside making ordinary religious life more difficult as fellow Canadians?

Dr. Katherine Bullock[1],[2]: The most important external issue for the various Muslim communities in Canada is anti-Muslim racism, usually called “Islamophobia.” I personally prefer the term anti-Muslim racism because it locates the issue as hate and discrimination targeted towards Muslims, rather than a ‘phobia’ which locates the issue as an emotion in the perpetrator. Muslims are from many ethnic backgrounds but are homogenised and racialized as a group. Racism can be subtle -what are called ‘microaggressions’- such as a nasty look, refusing to serve in a timely manner, refusing to greet; it can be subtle discrimination in the workplace, such as not hiring a woman in hijab or a man with the name Muhammad by saying there are no positions available, not renting an apartment and so on. Racism can be overt, such as getting spat on, yelled at, hijab pulled off, rammed with a car, graffiti on mosques, receiving hate emails or voicemails. Schools are challenged for allowing prayer on site. Quebec’s Bill C21 which bans public employees from wearing religious headgear is an example of institutionalised racism. Hate crime statistics show that Muslim women are disproportionately targeted.

Jacobsen: We can be explicit here. There has been a history of neo-Nazi and White Supremacism in Canada who adhere to a twisted formulation of European-Canadian ethnic identity, primarily, and, often, the Christian

religion, secondarily. How are these groups, as manifestations of hate groups, making life as Muslims more difficult than necessary in Canadian society?

Bullock: It’s not just a simple matter of white/non-White, in Canada we have to note that Hindutva and Coptic groups are joining forces with white supremacist groups targeting Muslims. These groups threaten the personal safety of Muslims. They organise rallies and demonstrations preaching the exclusion of Muslims from public and private sectors; sometimes at these rallies they dress in army fatigues, sending a militarised message of hate; they send hate mails to Muslim leaders or online comments sections; some of them tragically assault, even murder, Muslims. The White Supremacists have an extremely narrow notion of what it means to be a “Canadian.” Trudeau has called Canada the first “post-national state,” meaning that it is a nation-state composed of citizens from many different ethnic groups. We must remember too how all of this settlement has displaced the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island, but that is a different topic.

Jacobsen: How are particularized imaginary internal issues in Canadian Muslim communities reified into Muslim-wide, as in stereotyping, issues and used by misinformed, ignorant, or downright bad actors, to attack Canadian Muslims?

Bullock: The most important particularized imaginary internal issue that is reified into a stereotype is the notion that “Islam oppresses women.” This blanket assessment is then used to drive policy, both foreign and domestic – eg support

for the war against the Taliban or the regional authoritarian rulers like Sisi in Egypt; or setting up a 'barbaric cultural practices hotline' or banning niqab at citizenship ceremonies. Quebec's Bill C21, which has wide support across Canada (and in which the Federal government is complicit as it didn't take action to prevent it, fearing the loss of votes in Quebec) is premised on the idea that the hijab/niqab represent the inequality of women, hence must be banned in Canada which is committed to gender equality.

Young women can be forced by both fathers and mothers, and some women forced by their husbands, to wear hijab, but Muslim women should be respected as equal citizens in Canada. Blanket stereotyping from the wider society that makes Muslim suffer racism and discrimination is oppressive too.

Jacobsen: How are specific real internal issues in Canadian Muslim communities formulated as Muslim-wide, as in stereotyping, issues and used by misinformed, ignorant, or downright bad actors, to attack Canadian Muslims?

Bullock: Muslim women can face misogynistic practices such as genital mutilation, honour killings, or being confined to the home. But these practices are specific to some families in some ethnic groups. They are not based in textual scriptural injunctions, rather in cultural customs. They are broadened into a stereotype and then used against all Muslims.

Non-Muslim Western women can face misogynistic practices too, such as the beauty myth that can lead to anorexia or dangerous cosmetic surgery, domestic violence, and jealousy killings. These customs are not broadened to all "Western culture" and all Westerners.

Jacobsen: What are some external issues coming from secular groups against Canadian Muslims, broadly speaking?

Bullock: Broadly speaking there are some secular groups including the "progressive/left side" of the political spectrum that believe in a very rigid separation of Church and State. They are opposed to Muslim religious practices, such as five daily prayers or the need for halal food, in public institutions, including schools and universities. They believe that Muslim women are oppressed and need saving or Westernising to be empowered and free. Quebec's hijab ban is the most extreme example of this, as it bans state employees from wearing religious headgear. But there are other more subtle pressures. Political circles on both the right and left, though for different reasons, can have a negative or

unwelcoming demeanour towards Muslims. (Some would say that the Left also has a negative attitude towards practicing peoples of all faiths.)

Jacobsen: What are some external issues coming from other religious groups against Canadian Muslims, broadly speaking?

Bullock: Although I am active in several different kinds of interfaith groups, from Protestant, Catholic, Evangelical, to Jewish, and am very grateful for the respect and recognition I receive as a fellow believer, there are religious groups who support an anti-Muslim agenda because they see Islam as a false and threatening religion. These groups support policies that limit Muslim engagement in the public space including racial profiling at airports and anti-veil policies.

Jacobsen: What are external issues created through simply not asking spokespeople for different sects or traditions of Islam within Canada about Muslim Canadian concerns on specific issues for their particular tradition?

Bullock: Since externally Muslims are not recognised as being organised into sects or different traditions, we are treated the same when it comes to the negative policies and discrimination I have mentioned. In fact, Hindu and Sikhs are often attacked because of the inability of the perpetrator to recognise the difference between a Muslim, Hindu or Sikh.

The most serious issue about not asking Muslims about their specific concerns is that the disproportionate media focus on terrorists who make religious references to justify their behaviours are assumed to be spokespersons for the rest of us.

I don't think the various sects and traditions have different concerns that are created through not being asked. Irrespective of their sect, people want to be able to practice their version in peace, pass their faith along to their children and be employed and contributing citizens to Canada, just like peoples of other faiths and ethnic groups in Canada, including the White Nationalist Christians, who would like to be the only ones to exercise that ability.

Jacobsen: What are some federal, provincial, and municipal issues for Canadian Muslims, so policy, political statements, party platforms, and the like? Some of more clear; others are more amorphous.

Bullock: In general, Canadian Muslims have the same concerns as other Canadians, as established by the National Survey on Canadian Muslim opinion from Environics, especially related to the economy

and their ability to find work. Now, of course, they are, like everyone else, dealing with the pandemic and lockdown and the personal and professional fallout from that. So, employment and healthcare, which are provincial. Municipal issues relate to discrimination from neighbours or being prevented from building a new house of worship, or graffiti and hate rallies. Ending police practices such as racial profiling, excessive force and killing innocent Muslims during an encounter with the police is high on the agenda of needed reforms.

For the Federal level, Canadian Muslims are deeply concerned that Canada help their brethren who are being slaughtered or squeezed to death, such as the Uighur in China; the Rohingya in Myanmar, the Kashmiris in India/Kashmir, the Palestinians in Israel/Palestine.

Jacobsen: What are some solutions to the enumerated external issues already being discussed and/or implemented now?

Bullock: The Black Lives Matter movement has put the spotlight on anti-racism. While most Muslims are not Black, and can unfortunately practice anti-black racism of their own, the anti-racist lens gives them the opportunity to spotlight anti-Muslim racism too. Ameliorating racism for one group can help improve the situation for other groups.

The Canadian discourse on multiculturalism/interculturalism, diversity,

Appendix I: Footnotes

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

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

Appendix II: Citation Style Listing

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inclusion and reasonable accommodation are very precious and need to be not only protected from being whittled down but deepened.

In addition, the interfaith or multifaith movement is a very important part of addressing these solutions because it allows for empathic education creating deeper understanding for all peoples involved, including Muslims.

Jacobsen: What are some solutions to the enumerated external issues not already being discussed and/or implemented now?

Bullock: In general, extended relations between people can lead to better understanding. Even though we know that politics, hatred and disagreement is everywhere, including within single ethnic groups (Euro-Canadians are no different in this regard), the more that Canadian Muslims are part of the ordinary fabric of Canadian life, the better: political representation, CEOs, ordinary workers, homemakers, volunteers, students, sports and arts, and so on. Our habits and practices will become more known and recognisable; our strengths and foibles will make us just like other human beings – sometimes generous and noble, sometimes cantankerous and greedy.

Bullock would like to thank colleague Fayaz Karim for insightful comments on an earlier draft.

Chicago/Turabian, Author-Date (16th Edition): Jacobsen, Scott. 2021. *Conversation with Dr. Katherine Bullock on Internal and External Issues Vis-à-Vis Religiosity and Secularity: Past Chair, Islamic Society of North America-Canada (ISNA-Canada); Lecturer, Political Science, University of Toronto at Mississauga (3).* "In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal. 26.A. <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/bullock-1>.

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Free of Charge 6 – “Amsterdam Declaration” (1952), Unifying the Front, Religious Fundamentalism, and State Totalitarianism

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Abstract

Dr. Herb Silverman is the Founder of the Secular Coalition for America, the Founder of the Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry, and the Founder of the Atheist/Humanist Alliance student group at the College of Charleston. He authored [Complex variables](#) (1975), [Candidate Without a Prayer: An Autobiography of a Jewish Atheist in the Bible Belt](#) (2012) and [An Atheist Stranger in a Strange Religious Land: Selected Writings from the Bible Belt](#) (2017). He co-authored [The Fundamentals of Extremism: The Christian Right in America](#) (2003) with Kimberley Blaker and Edward S. Buckner, [Complex Variables with Applications](#) (2007) with Saminathan Ponnusamy, and [Short Reflections on Secularism](#) (2019), [Short Reflections on American Secularism's History and Philosophy](#) (2020), and [Short Reflections on Age and Youth](#) (2020). He discusses: the development of empirical philosophies; a larger contingent of secular voices; post-WWII ideological reflections; the *Amsterdam Declaration* (1952); and democracy, creative uses of science and not destructive uses of science, Humanism as ethics, personal liberty above tied to social responsibility, and cultivating ethical and creative living.

Keywords: Herb Silverman, Free of Charge, freethought, Humanism, religious fundamentalism, state totalitarianism.

Free of Charge 6 – “Amsterdam Declaration” (1952), Unifying the Front, Religious Fundamentalism, and State Totalitarianism

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

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: The *Amsterdam Declaration* (1952) was another huge stepping stone in the development of Humanism within the earlier discourse of modern secular freethought. Before asking those main questions, I had a side question important to this educational series, actually two. You seem like a great person to ask these questions because of the longevity of leadership in the movement and the efforts at collaboration and unification of efforts through the Secular Coalition for America. First, how much does the development of empirical philosophies create a basis for modern formulations of Humanism, instead of a straightforward focus on *eudaimonia*, the humanities, moral education, and the like? I understand Andrew Copson, Chief Executive of Humanists UK and the President of Humanists International, has spoken on the spotted nature of Humanism in the historical record akin to the manner in which Professor Noam Chomsky speaks of Anarchism as a philosophical trend in

the history of human thought and action. As in, no one owns them, as they, Humanism or Anarchism, amount to facets of human nature (to one degree or another) and, therefore, express themselves without regard to the culture or the geography, merely transforming superficially while manifesting the same fundamentals.

Dr. Herb Silverman[1],[2]: As I understand the question, you are asking if I more favour empiricism or eudaimonia when it comes to Humanism. To answer, I'll first define the terms as I understand them.

Empiricism is a theory that knowledge comes only or primarily from sensory experience. Empiricism is a fundamental part of the scientific method, which requires that all hypotheses and theories must be tested against observations of the natural world, rather than resting on intuition or revelation.

Eudaimonia describes virtuous activity in accordance with reason, which gives us happiness and pleasure. To illustrate, if you're a doctor, you should excel at healing people; if you're a philosopher, you should excel at gaining knowledge and wisdom. Of course, each person plays many roles in life, and by excelling in all of them one achieves eudaimonia.

As to whether I favor empiricism or eudaimonia, I can say confidently—that depends. If I want to look at scientific questions, empiricism is the way to go. But I don't think everything should be viewed through a scientific lens. Aesthetics, without science, makes sense to me. Different people can find different pleasures using only reason. For instance, not everyone might think like I do that my wife, Sharon, is the most wonderful person in the world.

Of course there are times that empiricism and eudaimonia work in combination. To illustrate, empiricism is used to help find a vaccine for Covid-19. Then an individual can make a rational choice to take the vaccine to safeguard his or her health, and this expresses eudaimonia.

Jacobsen: Second, I have worked to bring together some of the voices in Canadian Humanism in one voice with some group discussions, so to speak, e.g., “Humanism in Canada: Personal, Professional, and Institutional Histories (Part One)”[3]. The series incorporated the leadership voices of most of the secular organizations in Canada, i.e., at the time: Cameron Dunkin as the Acting CEO of Dying With Dignity Canada, Dr. Gus Lyn-Piluso as the President of Center for Inquiry-Canada, Doug Thomas as the President of Secular Connexion

Séculière, Greg Oliver as the President of Canadian Secular Alliance, Michel Virard as the President of Association humaniste du Québec, Dr. Lloyd Hawkeye Robertson as the Vice-President of Humanist Canada, and Seanna Watson as the Vice-President of Center for Inquiry-Canada. As far as I am informed on the issue, that's a first. I have been interviewing a large contingent of the ex-Muslim community. In the midst of them, in March of 2019, something occurred to me. So, I decided to write down the idea succinctly for an article for *News Intervention*. I made a proposal in “An Immodest Proposal: International Coalition of Ex-Muslims (ICEM)”[4]. I was informed by a British colleague the International Coalition of Ex-Muslims[5] was formed in early 2020, about a year after the proposal. It's hard to track the history of these things because it can be a bubbling in communities of the same ideas and then the formulation of them into a convergent creation of an organization. Also, a single proposal can be the source of the formation of these things. Nonetheless, they're there, present, and active. Why was the Secular Coalition for America a necessity to bring together a larger contingent of secular voices?

Silverman: Scott, I'm so pleased that you are working to bring the voices in Canadian Humanism together. However, I doubt that you can get them to speak with just one voice, except on selected topics. Humanists speak with many voices and have a lot of opinions on countless topics. That's one way humanists are different from some religious cults.

I do think most humanists would agree that humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment for the greater good of humanity. Humanism also promotes democracy, civil liberties, human freedoms, separation of religion and government, and elimination of discrimination based on race, religion, sex, age, or national origin. Humanists respect the scientific method and recognize that we are an integral part of nature, the result of unguided evolutionary change, and that ethical values are derived from human need and interest as tested by experience.

You asked about the importance of bringing a large contingent of voices together within the Secular Coalition for America. In 2002, I helped form the Secular Coalition for America, whose mission is to increase the visibility of and respect for nontheistic

viewpoints, and to protect and strengthen the secular character of our government.

Our 19 national member organizations cover the full spectrum of freethought. Members don't argue about labels. People in the Coalition call themselves atheists, agnostics, humanists, freethinkers, whatever. They cooperate on the 95% they have in common, rather than bicker about the 5% that might set them apart. Interestingly, four of the member organizations are classified as religious (nontheistic). They are the American Ethical Union (with Ethical Culture Societies), Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations, Society for Humanistic Judaism (with atheist rabbis), and UU (Unitarian Universalists) Humanists.

All the Secular Coalition member organizations have strict limits on political lobbying, so the Secular Coalition incorporated as a political advocacy group to allow unlimited lobbying on behalf of freethought Americans. The Secular Coalition also collaborates with organizations that are neither theistic nor nontheistic, like the American Civil Liberties Union, and Americans United for the Separation of Church and State. It cooperates on some issues with theistic organizations, like the Interfaith Alliance, the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, and Catholics for Choice. Working with diverse groups provides the additional benefit of gaining more visibility and respect for our unique perspective. Improving the public perception of freethinkers is as important to many of us as pursuing a particular political agenda.

Jacobsen: To the first *Amsterdam Declaration* (1952)[6], it opens starkly on “an alternative to the religions which claim to be based on revelation on the one hand, and totalitarian systems on the other.” What made these post-WWII ideological reflections important on secular fundamentalism in totalitarianism and in religious revelatory fundamentalism? Something of a third alternative to the loggerheads of the aforementioned.

Silverman: We have to remember that this 1952 document was written during the Cold War, and represents an alternative to both religions based on revelation and totalitarian regimes like the atheistic Soviet Union. Not that there is anything wrong with atheism, but it should not be government-sponsored or imposed. The document promotes ethics and the right of the individual to the greatest possible freedom of development compatible with the rights of others. Such a third way opposes religious indoctrination and totalitarian regimes. It advocates

the creative use of science with humanistic principles.

Jacobsen: The framers of the *Amsterdam Declaration* (1952) did not view Humanism as a sect, but as an eventuation of long traditions of thinkers leading to the scientific revolutions of the time. They continued, “Ethical humanism unites all those who cannot any longer believe the various creeds and are willing to base their conviction on respect for man as a spiritual and moral being.”[7] How does this point connect to the previous response about science, in a 20th-century understanding and development, relate to this mid-20th century stipulation?

Silverman: I think we all agree that science should play an important role in the life of an ethical humanist. Sometimes, though, there is a question about where ethics come into science. One example is the use of nuclear power, which generates about a fifth of our nation's energy supply. Nuclear energy reduces greenhouse gas emissions and produces far less waste than conventional energy. On the other hand, nuclear fuel and waste are highly radioactive, which can pose many threats to public health and the environment. I favour the use of nuclear power, though I know many humanists who don't. I don't think scientific research should be restricted, even though certain findings might eventually cause harm. It is up to those in the field to discuss and help us decide how we can use science for good, which is not always easy.

Also, I don't like some of the terminology used in 1952, for example, respect for “man,” rather than for “people.” And there is confusion when we call ourselves “spiritual.” I understand that some humanists define the word “spiritual” in ways that make them comfortable, but I leave that word to religious people believing in “spirits” who inhabit an unseen spiritual world.

Jacobsen: The five principles mentioned democracy, creative uses of science and not destructive uses of science, Humanism as ethics, personal liberty above tied to social responsibility, and cultivating ethical and creative living.[6] These seem, at a minimum, in part or on the whole, 69 years ahead of their time and more needed than ever. Now, we may have mentioned this before with the statements on Ethical Humanism as a faith, etc. The ways in which this was removed in later formulations of the various declarations of humanists with the most recent moving as far as a rejection of supernatural. In fact, I would extend the previous opinion. These are still far ahead of their time in

the reach and implications. The ideals of the Renaissance permitted to a small coterie of individuals could become something to relish for a not-insignificant minority of people. So, more to the point, if you reflect on these five principles, what are some cases in the end of the Trump-Pence Administration and the transition into the Biden-Harris Administration showing the greater necessity of humanist values, simply as formulated in 1952?

Silverman: I agree with eliminating the word “faith” from the definition of ethical humanism. I must confess, though, that I once had a bumper sticker that said, “I have faith in reason.” There is no question that the Biden-Harris Administration is a giant leap forward in support of these humanist values. Democracy took a hit under President Trump when he failed to concede after he lost a fair election, and encouraged his supporters to riot. Trump also supported some undemocratic and authoritarian regimes, including Russia, Saudi Arabia, and North Korea. Trump’s actions have emboldened other countries, including Myanmar, China, Rwanda, Iran, and Turkey to violently silence campaigns, causing global democracy to backslide.

President Biden, in his short time in office, has reversed many of Trump’s executive orders, which includes recommitting to the US Paris Climate Accord, rejoining the World Health Organization, and promoting racial equality in health care and other areas. Biden also signed orders to halt construction of Trump’s US-Mexico border wall,

reverse Trump’s environmental deregulation, affirm the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival Program (DACA) that protects from deportation people brought illegally to the US as children, and create a task force to reunite migrant families separated at the border. Biden reversed Trump’s 2017 travel ban that targeted primarily Muslim countries. Biden repealed a ban on transgender people serving openly in the military and he expanded protection of LGBTQ people around the world by revamping the offices at the State Department and the US Agency for International Development (USAID), which supports LGBTQ rights. He also re-established the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology and directed agencies to make decisions on the best available scientific evidence.

These actions of the Biden-Harris administration are consistent with the 1952 principles of ethical humanism. Though President Biden is a religious Catholic, he tries to separate religion from government. I hope he includes secular voices when he does interfaith outreach. Biden’s Catholicism seems to be grounded in social justice, rather than exclusively in church doctrine, which is why he has been criticized by conservative Catholics for some of his positions, like a woman’s right to choose.

Jacobsen: Thank you for the opportunity and your time, Dr. Silverman, we will cover the 2002 version of the Amsterdam Declaration in the next session.

Silverman: Thank you.

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Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Founder, Secular Coalition for America; Founder, Secular Humanists of the Low Country; Founder, Atheist/Humanist Alliance, College of Charleston.

[2] Individual Publication Date: February 8, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/free-of-charge-6>; Full Issue Publication Date: May 1, 2021: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

[3] Jacobsen (2020).

[4] Jacobsen (2019).

[5] Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain (2021).

[6] Humanists International (1952).

[7] Ibid.

[8] “Amsterdam Declaration 1952” states:

- i. **It is democratic.** *It aims at the fullest possible development of every human being. It holds that this is a matter of right. The democratic principle can be applied to all human relationships and is not restricted to methods of government.*
- ii. **It seeks to use science creatively, not destructively.** *It advocates a world-wide application of scientific method to problems of human welfare. Humanists believe that the tremendous problems with which mankind is faced in this age of transition can be solved. Science gives the means but science itself does not propose the ends.*
- iii. **Humanism is ethical.** *It affirms the dignity of man and the right of the individual to the greatest possible freedom of development compatible with the right of others. There is a danger in seeking to utilise scientific knowledge in a complex society individual freedom may be threatened by the very impersonal machine that has been created to save it. Ethical humanism, therefore, rejects totalitarian attempts to perfect the machine in order to obtain immediate gains at the cost of human values.*
- iv. **It insists that personal liberty is an end that must be combined with social responsibility in order that it shall not be sacrificed to the improvement of material conditions.** *Without intellectual liberty, fundamental research, on which progress must in the long run depend, would not be possible. Humanism ventures to build a world on the free person responsible to society. On behalf of individual freedom humanism is un-dogmatic, imposing no creed upon its adherents. It is thus committed to education free from indoctrination.*
- v. **It is a way of life, aiming at the maximum possible fulfilment, through the cultivation of ethical and creative living.** *It can be a way of life for everyone everywhere if the individual is capable of the responses required by the changing social order. The primary task of humanism today it to make men aware in the simplest terms of what it can mean to them and what it commits them to. By utilising in this context and for purposes of peace the new power which science has given us, humanists have confidence that the present crisis can be surmounted. Liberated from fear the energies of man will be available for a self-realisation to which it is impossible to foresee the limit.*

Ethical humanism is thus a faith that answers the challenge of our times. We call upon all men who share this conviction to associate themselves with us in this cause.

Humanists International (1952).

Appendix II: Citation Style Listing

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Conversation with Masaaki Yamauchi on Esoteric, ESOTERIQ Society, JAPANIQ Society, OlympIQ Society, and Standards of Admission: Administrator, ESOTERIQ Society (2)

2021-02-15

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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Abstract

Masaaki Yamauchi is the Administrator of ESOTERIQ Society. He discusses: other meanings or hidden properties of the title; the ESOTERIQ Society connected with the World Intelligence Network; the World Intelligence Network; ESOTERIQ membership; the Giga Society of Paul Cooijmans; the OLYMPIQ Society (member or subscriber) and the World Genius Directory (member) as a requirement for membership; WAIS-IV and Stanford-Binet-V rejected as membership qualifiers; membership free in ESOTERIQ Society; current members of the ESOTERIQ Society; the oldest member and the youngest member; the norms to the tests; and verifying the scores.

Keywords: administrator, admissions, background, ESOTERIQ, intelligence, IQ, Japanese, JAPANIQ Society, Masaaki Yamauchi.

Conversation with Masaaki Yamauchi on Esoteric, ESOTERIQ Society, JAPANIQ Society, OlympIQ Society, and Standards of Admission: Administrator, ESOTERIQ Society (2)

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

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: You created the ESOTERIQ Society/Esoteriq/ESOTERIQ with “esoteric” in the implied meaning of the title with “ESOTER” containing the number of sigmas related to the number of letters above the mean for the qualification of membership in the society, which means approximately “1/1,000,000,000” people or 1 out of 1,009,976,678. Are there any other meanings or hidden properties of the title unstated so far?

Jacobsen: How has the ESOTERIQ Society connected with the World Intelligence Network founded by Dr. Evangelos Katsioulis on January 1, 2001, as a “regeneration of the High IQ Community applied mainly on an internet basis with more interactive, meaningful and productive functions”?

Yamauchi: To tell the truth, I founded the JAPANIQ society for only Japanese high IQ people as the 22nd WIN society, but one unexpected trouble

Masaaki Yamauchi[1],[2]*: None. Origin of almost occurred between the last member and me. English words comes from Latin or Greek. Esoteric has its roots in a Greek word “ἑσωτερικός”.

Therefore, I had to make the society be defunct.

That was a private issue, so no further information would be opened. After that, the ESOTERIQ was created instead of the society.

Jacobsen: Any thoughts on the World Intelligence Network?

Yamauchi: Greatest project from bottom of my heart.

This is one of my reasons to live in this life.

I will never leave the WIN by the end of my life.

Jacobsen: ESOTERIQ membership is separated into Giga Society members and non-Giga Society members. Why?

Yamauchi: The Giga society has a reliable strict policy as a 6SD IQ society, so I automatically accept a member from the society..

Jacobsen: Any thoughts on the Giga Society of Paul Cooijmans?

Yamauchi: I really look up to him as a test creator and society administrator. My Esoteriq purpose should be to build a high authority next to the Giga society.

Jacobsen: Why focus on the OLYMPIQ Society (member or subscriber) and the World Genius Directory (member) as a requirement for membership in the ESOTERIQ Society, where some can be considered outside of these on a case by case basis?

Yamauchi: Standardized level, reliability and validity are highly variant at each test. I have no idea that which tests should I accept as the membership because I am ignorant of psychometrics and tests creating process. It may sometimes cause losing the authority of the society. Hence, I almost depend on Paul, Dr.Katsioulis and Dr.Jason respectively to reduce my misjudgement risk. I can approve a candidate after each administrator accepts the one to each society. This is simple.

I can avoid the membership trouble. "on a case by case basis" would be applied to a non- belong candidate to the Giga, Olympiq and WGD due to a specific personal reason, but holds a credible score.

Jacobsen: Why are WAIS-IV and Stanford-Binet-V rejected as membership qualifiers for ESOTERIQ Society? Was this an issue in the past with extrapolated norms submissions from actual members or prospective members?

Yamauchi: Sorry, it was occurred by my own ignorance.

I have no purpose to be opened further information.

Such tests like WAIS and SB can indicate a positive correlation with high range IQ tests, but have different concepts, not suitable to sustain my society authority in my decision.

Exceptionally, I admit SB to only the 6th member, Dr. Christopher Harding who can be kept a membership of the Esoteriq society because he was officially recorded as "the smartest man in the world" on the Guinness World Record a long time ago.

Jacobsen: Why is membership free in ESOTERIQ Society?

Yamauchi: The ESOTERIQ is just my own collection, not for my monetary business.

Jacobsen: The current members of the ESOTERIQ Society includes the following 15 people: [Evangelos Katsioulis](#), [Kenneth Ferrell](#), [Mislav Predavec](#), [Richard Rosner](#), [Dany Provost](#), [Christopher Harding](#), [Junxie Huang](#), [Jose Molinero](#), [Wen Chin Sui](#), [Marios Prodromou](#), [Dong Khac Cuong](#), [Matthew Scillitani](#), [Thansie Yu](#), [Heinrich Siemens](#), and [Yukun Wang](#). **The web page on the members of ESOTERIQ Society list the following members in the society:**

Since 01/01/2001 ESOTERIQ society accepted 15 members : The qualified IQ score (SD16), the test name, the test author and the taken year must be reported next to each member`s name as an undoubted evidence for the membership credential.

1. **Evangelos Katsioulis (Greece) : 197 (raw 100/100)on QMC#3 by Paul Cooijmans in 2003**
2. **Kenneth Ferrell (U.S.A) : 196 (raw 32/32)on HIEROGLYPHICA by Mislav Predavec in 2010**
3. **Mislav Predavec (Croatia) : 198 (raw 19/24)on LS24 by Robert Lato in 2010**
4. **Richard Rosner (U.S.A) : 198 (raw 13/16) on MATHEMA by Dr. Jason Betts in 2012**
5. **Dany Provost(Canada) : 196 (raw 46/46) on PIGS-1° by Paul Cooijmans in 2004**
6. **Christopher Harding(Australia) : 197 on SBIS-Oxford-Analysis-New-Zealand in 1976**
7. **Junxie Huang (China) : 196 (raw 37/40)on CHALLENGER IQ TEST by Zoran Bijac in 2019**
8. **Jose Molinero(Spain) : 196 (raw 15/15) on FREE FALL PART-II by Ivan Ivec in 2017**

9. **Wen Chin Sui(China) : 196 (raw 36/36) on** Just I approve of anybody who archived the **NUMERUS CLASSIC** by Ivan Ivec in 2017 qualified score.
10. **Marios Prodromou(Cyprus) : 196 (raw 30/30) on** **MACH** by Nickolas Soulios in 2018
Jacobsen: Who is the oldest member? Who is the youngest member?
Yamauchi: I do not care about each age.
11. **Dong Khac Cuong(Vietnam) : 196 (raw 29/30) on** **NUMERUS** by Ivan Ivec in 2019
Jacobsen: Does the ESOTERIQ Society membership listing change the scores with the changes in the norms to the tests?
12. **Matthew Scillitani(U.S.A) : 196 (raw 80/80) on** **PM-QROSSWORDS** by Paul Cooijmans in 2019
Yamauchi: Any membership would be not cancelled after an updated norm report becomes lower than before. However, if an updated norm report becomes higher than before, the new norms would be valid for the membership. For example, a member holding IQ190 on the 1st norm and IQ185 on the 2nd norm at the same raw score can keep the Esoteriq membership. No matter what updated norm report becomes lower than before, it does not affect the continuation of the membership. On the contrary, an individual holding IQ185 on the 1st norm and IQ190 on the 2nd norm or the future norm at the same raw score can join my society.
13. **Thansie Yu (China): 196 (raw 48/48) on** **N-WORLD** by Mahir Wu in 2020
14. **Heinrich Siemens(Germany) : 201 (raw 28/40) on** **CIT-5** by Paul Cooijmans in 2020
15. **Yukun Wang(China) : 201 (raw 0.9/1.0) on** **RIDDLES** by Konstantinos Ntalachanis in 2020

Any comments on each particular member of the society, whether the individual, the age, the test, the test score, the test creator, professional accomplishments, and so on?

Yamauchi: None. I do not care each member's background.

This rule must be a common principle in almost all high IQ societies as far as I know.

Jacobsen: How do you verify the scores?

Yamauchi: By a certificate candidates sent me.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Administrator, ESOTERIQ Society.

[2] Individual Publication Date: February 15, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/yamauchi-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.

Appendix II: Citation Style Listing

American Medical Association (AMA): Jacobsen S. *Conversation with Masaaki Yamauchi on Esoteric, ESOTERIQ Society, JAPANIQ Society, OlympIQ Society, and Standards of Admission: Administrator, ESOTERIQ Society (2)*[Online]. February 2021; 26(A). Available from: .

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Conversation with Entemake Aman (阿曼) on Family, History, Education, Intelligence, and Dreams: Member, OlympIQ Society (1)

2021-02-15



Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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Abstract

Entemake Aman (阿曼) claims an IQ of 180 (SD15) with membership in OlympIQ. With this, he claims one to be of the people with highest IQ in the world. He was born in Xinjiang, China. He believes IQ is innate and genius refers to people with IQ above 160 (SD15). Einstein's IQ is estimated at 160. Aman thinks genius needs to be cultivated from an early age, and that he needs to

make achievements in the fields he is interested in, such as physics, mathematics, computer and philosophy, and should work hard to give full play to his talent. He discusses: growing up; a sense of an extended self; the family background; the experience with peers; 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; some work experiences and jobs held; particular job path; the more important aspects of the idea of the gifted and geniuses; the God concept or gods idea; science play into the worldview; some of the tests taken and scores earned (with standard deviations); the range of the scores; ethical philosophy; social philosophy; economic philosophy; political philosophy; metaphysics; worldview-encompassing philosophical system; meaning in life; meaning; an afterlife; the mystery and transience of life; love; some ordinary aspects of the “very ordinary family”; being a Kazakh living in Xinjiang, China; the ability to speak three languages; introversion common among the gifted; challenge the world master in memory; the goal for the next 5 years; Grade 6; Newton among all geniuses; imagination and creativity necessary for genius; pursuing “physics, mathematics and computer fields”; the non-use of an “IQ of 180 (SD = 15)” considered a “waste”; scientific knowledge; only believing in science; Leo Strauss’s economic philosophy; the Western philosophical system over the Eastern; an afterlife as impossible; and being in love with appearance, outlook, and character.

Keywords: Entemake Aman, intelligence, IQ, OlympIQ Society.

Conversation with Entemake Aman (阿曼) on Family, History, Education, Intelligence, and Dreams: Member, OlympIQ Society (1)

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

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

Entemake Aman (阿曼)[1],[2]*: I don’t have a famous family story. I live in a very ordinary family.

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

Aman: There is no story.

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

Aman: I am more introverted, and get along with peers in general, not many friends.

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

Aman: I’m trying to challenge the memory of the world Master, and I can get it in the next five years.

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

Aman: I want to prove that I have an IQ above 180 (SD = 15). I like to use my brain.

Jacobsen: When was high intelligence discovered for you?

Aman: Grade 6 (11 years old)

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.

Aman: The reason for ridiculing genius is that most ordinary people can’t understand the idea of high intelligence. Most geniuses are introverted and lonely. The reason for worshiping genius is that their learning ability and creative ability are amazing, and they will make achievements in a certain field for many days.

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

Aman: Newton.

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

Aman: The intelligence quotient of smart people is between 120 and 150, and the intelligence quotient of genius is above 160. They all have excellent learning ability (especially in the fields of mathematics, physics and computer). Genius has more excellent imagination and creativity.

Jacobsen: Is profound intelligence necessary for genius?

Aman: Need.

Jacobsen: Why pursue this particular job path?

Aman: Because I have an IQ of 180 (SD = 15), I don't want to waste my talent and make achievements in physics, mathematics and computer.

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?

Aman: Talent can refer to music, memory, sports and so on. Genius means having excellent intelligence.

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

Aman: These myths include Adam and Eve, the struggle between Greek mythology and the God of heaven, Pangu's creation of man by Nuwa. Scientific knowledge dispels them. Philosophy is the study of the relationship between thought, behavior and social activities. Like philosophy, religious science is independent of theology, but it is one of the important auxiliary Sciences of theology. On the one hand, philosophy once had a great influence on theology; God and human beings have all kinds of shortcomings, and God is stronger than human beings, and this power is mainly in strength.

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

Aman: I love science. I only believe in science

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.

Aman: I think my IQ is between 180 and 185 (SD = 15), and I will prove it in the future.

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

Aman: Gilbert's Law: the signal of a job crisis is that no one talks to you about danger.

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

Aman: Fresno theorem: people have two ears but only one mouth, which means that people should listen more and speak less. The purpose of foreknowledge is to know.

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

Aman: Leo Strauss's economic philosophy is meaningful to me.

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

Aman: Practice is the source of knowledge.

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

Aman: Causality, is there causality in everything? Is it because it has decided the outcome?

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

Aman: Western philosophy system.

Jacobsen: What provides meaning in life for you?

Aman: Think and be happy.

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

Aman: Internally generated.

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

Aman: I don't believe in afterlife because I believe in science.

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

Aman: Life is short, so we should constantly strive for self-improvement and lifelong learning. Life is mysterious, so we should believe in science and explore hard.

Jacobsen: What is love to you?

Aman: Love is selfless to me. I will fall in love with someone because of one's appearance, three outlooks and character.

Jacobsen: What is it like being a Kazakh living in Xinjiang, China?

Aman: I feel very good.

Jacobsen: Does the ability to speak three languages help personal and professional life for you?

Aman: I am learning English.

Jacobsen: Is introversion common among the gifted?

Aman: Common.

Jacobsen: Why decide to challenge the world master in memory?

Aman: Because it's a brain field, it's cool.

Jacobsen: What happened in Grade 6 (11-years-old) with the discovery?

Aman: I like to use my brain.

Jacobsen: Why Newton among all geniuses?

Aman: Because Newton's contribution is great, his IQ is more than 190.

Jacobsen: Why are imagination and creativity necessary for genius?

Aman: Excellent imagination and creativity are the foundation of inspiration. Mozart, Shakespeare are geniuses.

Jacobsen: Why do you want to pursue "physics, mathematics and computer fields"?

Aman: Because physics, mathematics and computer need to use their brains more.

Jacobsen: Why is the non-use of an "IQ of 180 (SD = 15)" considered a "waste"? Are gifted people obliged to use their talents for mankind? In short, are they supposed to use them?

Aman: We should make full use of our intelligence to achieve something in a certain field.

Jacobsen: With scientific knowledge dispelling these myths of "Adam and Eve, the struggle

between Greek mythology and the God of heaven, Pangu's creation of man by Nuwa," and so on, what does this mean for the world's supernatural philosophies and dominant religions?

Aman: I only believe in the truth.

Jacobsen: Why do you "only believe in science"?

Aman: Because science is rigorous.

Jacobsen: What makes Leo Strauss's economic philosophy meaningful to you?

Aman: Some of his famous sayings, you can Google.

Jacobsen: Why choose the Western philosophical system over the Eastern?

Aman: No answer.

Jacobsen: What makes an afterlife impossible as 'you believe in science'?

Aman: I believe in science.

Jacobsen: What is important in love with appearance, outlook, and character?

Aman: Beautiful appearance and good character made me fall in love at first sight.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Member, OlympIQ Society; Member, Mensa International.



[2] Individual Publication Date: February 15, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/aman-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.

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

2021-02-15



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Abstract

Luca Fiorani is the first member of [ReallQ 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.

Keywords: consciousness, love, Luca Fiorani, meaning, Partigiani, philosophers, soul, virtues.

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

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

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 quiditate»

(*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. Difficulty is there, I mean, that's unquestionable, but his complexity is also epiphany, brainwave 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 ἐστιν 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 Cristopher 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: Theodosios 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, ReallIQ 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.

Appendix II: Citation Style Listing

American Medical Association (AMA): Jacobsen S. *Conversation with Luca Fiorani on the Partigiani, Virtues, Love, Meaning, Philosophers and Geniuses of Note, and Consciousness and the Soul: First Member, ReallIQ Society (2)*[Online]. February 2021; 26(A). Available from: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/fiorani-2>.

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Chicago/Turabian, Author-Date (16th Edition): Jacobsen, Scott. 2021. *Conversation with Luca Fiorani on the Partigiani, Virtues, Love, Meaning, Philosophers and Geniuses of Note, and Consciousness and the Soul: First Member, ReallQ Society (2)*." In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal. 26.A. <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/fiorani-2>.

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Conversation with Clelia Albano on Italy, Catholicism, God, Poetry, Dawkins, Dante Alighieri, and Genius: Member, Capabilis (1)

2021-02-15

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Abstract

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.

Keywords: Catholicism, Clelia Albano, Dante Alighieri, genius, Italian, Latin, Naples, Richard Dawkins.

Conversation with Clelia Albano on Italy, Catholicism, God, Poetry, Dawkins, Dante Alighieri, and Genius: Member, Capabilis (1)

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

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

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, schoolmates, 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 realms 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 Scwob, 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 wikipedian 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.

Appendix II: Citation Style Listing

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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



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Abstract

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.

Keywords: bioengineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Puerto Rico, Ricardo Rosselló Nevares, University of Michigan.

Conversation with Dr. Ricardo Rosselló Nevares on Family History, Catholic Schooling, Being Alone, Mathematics, Bioengineering, and Gifted Identification: Former Governor, Puerto Rico (1)

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

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 well. 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

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.

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Year of the Virus: Understanding the contagion effects of wokism

2021-02-22

Author: Dr. Lloyd Hawkeye Robertson

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Abstract

Wokism has become a major force in Western political culture with manifestations in Black Lives Matter, transgenderism, cancel culture, political correctness and various social justice movements. Examinations of this phenomenon have focused on its expression in Critical Race Theory and its postmodernist, social activist and Marxist precedents, all of which assumes rational agency on the part of the actors involved. Using criteria previously developed and applied to suicide cults and terrorist organizations (Robertson, 2017b), this paper examines wokism for the characteristics of a mind virus. In preparation for that examination, the self is described as the body that could be infected by such a virus. The mechanisms by which such an infection could occur are described using clinical case studies and an evolutionary account of the development of the modern self. The author concludes that the four conditions used for diagnosing a mind virus have been met in this instance. The discussion section includes suggestions for inoculation. Further research is recommended.

Keywords: woke, wokism, self, mind-virus, postmodernism, social justice.

Year of the Virus: Understanding the contagion effects of wokism

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

Updated June 19, 2022.

Lloyd Hawkeye Robertson[1],[2]

The novel coronavirus had not yet been recognized when Yasmin Mohammed (2019) published her memoir blaming “Western Liberalism” for failing to protect her from forcible confinement and beatings she suffered as a child. Following an intervention by child welfare authorities, a Canadian judge acknowledged her suffering but refused to intervene in her parent’s “cultural (Muslim) ways.” Early the following year journalist Margaret Wenthe was removed from an honorary position with a Canadian university following a social media mobbing in which she was accused of being a racist

and anti-feminist (Wenthe, 2020). “Due process” which would have allowed her to defend herself from the allegations was not given. In March, 2020, demonstrations spread throughout North America and into other continents following the death of George Floyd while he was in police custody in Minneapolis, USA. Systemic racism was assumed to be the cause. During the same year many schools and colleges in the United States ended achievement testing as a requirement for admittance, and employers paid for employee re-education sessions.

Pluckrose and Lindsay (2020b) named the movement behind these interconnected events “Critical Social Justice,” but this paper develops an argument that these events were influenced by an underlying social contagion that can be better understood as a mind virus. In developing this argument, it is first necessary to describe the “body” that may be infected by such a virus. The self is proposed as that body in the next section along with an evolutionary account of its development. In the second section of this paper I apply a model that allows us to recognize a mind virus to the modern cultural phenomenon of “wokeness.”

The self as a mental analogue to the body

The self is core to such psychological concepts as self-esteem, self-concept and self-empowerment. In this section, I describe how this evolved cultural construct became the paradigm of practice within the profession and how cultural units may attach themselves to this self. I discuss the historic tension between collectivism that gives definition to ourselves as a social species and the individualism inherent in a self capable of volitional planning and consciousness. I conclude this section by reviewing how we might determine this self has become infected by other units of culture that serve to appropriate the self’s resources.

Most current schools of psychotherapy emphasize individual choice with respect to personal development with the implication that selfed individuals are making these choices. Classical behaviourists (Skinner, 1974) presented an alternative view that consciousness and the self that has it are unnecessary distractions preventing a scientific examination of behaviour. In keeping with this deterministic view, behaviourism focused on helping patients using classical and operant conditioning as opposed to cognitive processing. Behaviourism delivered impressive results in treating such conditions as depression, anxiety, alcoholism, trauma and conduct disorder, and in so doing, providing concrete evidence that we are a species whose behaviours are determined by genetic and environmental factors. Despite these successes, behaviourism failed to become dominant in the profession. As we shall see, this failure was grounded in a species-wide consensus on the mental attributes of humanness. Its successes, however, suggest a way that mind viruses could operate to undermine those attributes.

Thomas Kuhn (1970) described psychology as a “proto-science” for failing to develop a unifying paradigm that would take it out of the domain of philosophy and into the domain of science.

Hutcheon (1996) identified three “formations” that potentially could have become such a paradigm: Psychoanalysis, genetic developmentalism, and behaviourism. She identified behaviourism as the most fruitful of the three; however, she concluded it failed “because it attacks the very roots of our cultural assumptions” (p. 261). These cultural assumptions include: 1) human beings have minds, 2) minds presuppose the presence of beliefs, and 3) beliefs are only possible if there is the notion of objective evidence by which we can determine truth.

Many academics have endorsed the determinist alternative to these cultural assumptions, that consciousness, free will and the self are illusions (Blackmore, 1999; Coyne, 2012; Cronin, 2003; DiCarlo, 2010), but the practice of psychotherapy has proceeded in the opposite direction. By the twenty-first century, even those who still called themselves behaviourists were talking about personal choices and cognitive distortions, thus sounding very much like the therapists who now called themselves cognitive-behaviourists. Classical behaviourism had encountered an already-established paradigm that humans are thinking animals with minds capable of logical consistency and rational evidence-based assessment. While a profession that is united by these notions could assimilate deterministic methods, it could not capitulate to a determinist ontology because to do so would undermine the foundational assumption of that we are thinking, rational beings.

A mind capable of having beliefs necessarily posits evidence for those beliefs—evidence that, in turn, presupposes a reality that the mind can understand. Moreover, a mind with the ability to assess evidence, independently and temporally, could not exist without self-awareness. But the self, defined by these capabilities, represents a relatively recent cultural adaptation (Robertson, 2020) that embodies a tension between individualism (with its sense of volition, uniqueness, constancy and reflectivity) and collectivism (with its sense of community, social interest, attachment and productivity). The two case studies that follow illustrate the self in map form, and how that self may change.

Therapeutic change to the self of two clients

“Suzie” (Robertson, 2011) had attempted suicide five times before I saw her. When established methods of treating suicide ideation failed to bring necessary results (cognitive behavioural therapy, Adlerian psychotherapy, narrative therapy, and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing), I suggested that we map her self to find out what was blocking treatment. We began by identifying units of

culture that represented who she was. Each referent word, or meme, included connotative meaning, affect and associated behaviours. Using the idea that connotative, affective or behavioural similarities between memes could be represented as links, we produced the map in figure 1.

Few memes in figure 1 suggest individual volition or social interest. A meme labeled “depressed person” is central and attempts to remove it prematurely had destabilized the entire structure. We began to move or remove memes supporting the placement of “depressed person” as central while building a new core with a focus on social interest and volition. Suzie could now visualize a better self and accept evidence that it was true. Her suicide risk receded. She found achievement and recognition when she relocated to a new community.

When I presented this case study to a doctoral class, one participant declared that I was simply doing cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). From that point of view, the map suggested cognitive re-framing, supplemented by behavioural “homework assignments.” These challenged negative memes such as “ugly” and supported a new “human rights” core. A narrative therapist in class disagreed, suggesting that memes provided the outline of a story, and I had helped my client write a better one. Actually, I began my career as an Adlerian psychotherapist. This anecdote illustrates that the self, as pictured here, is fundamental across psychotherapeutic schools of practice.



Figure 1: Initial self-map of a youth with suicide ideation, showing memes in relation to each other

About a decade after I worked with Suzie, another client, “Olivia” came to me with symptoms of PTSD after being raped by a friend during a night of heavy drinking (Robertson, 2016). After a month of CBT-informed treatment, she was able to return to work. Nonetheless, she acknowledged a personal history that included failed relationships, alcohol abuse and the loss of child custody. She asked for further psychotherapy, focused to become a better decision-maker. We began by developing the self-map represented in figure 2.

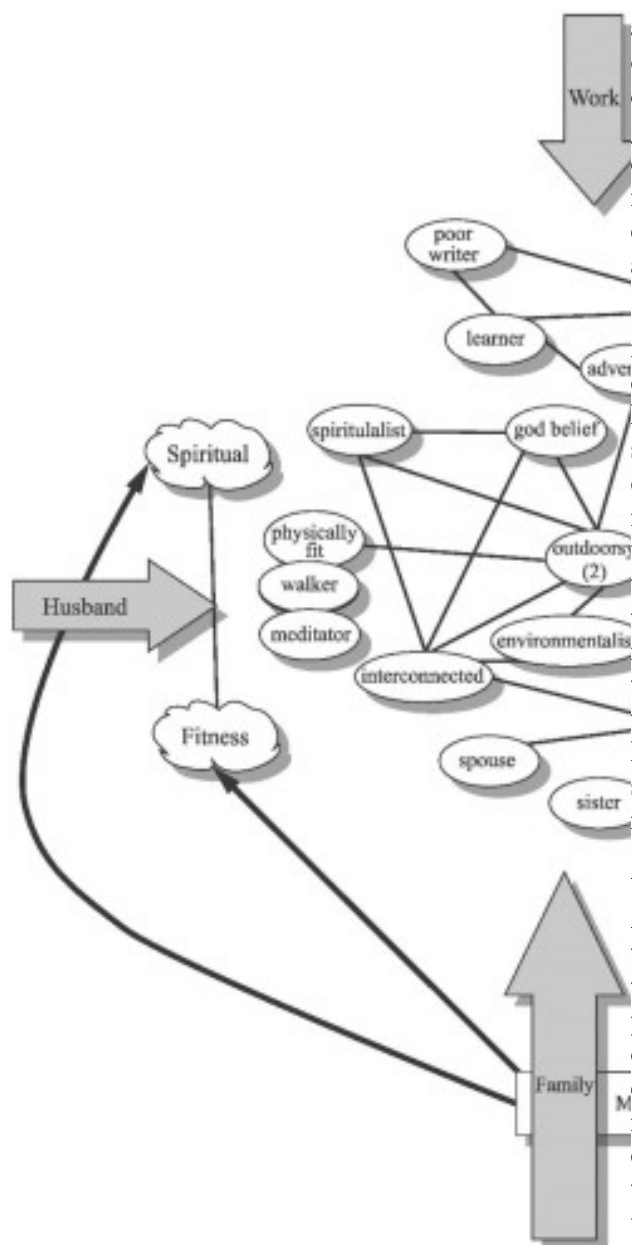


Figure 2: A self map of a woman suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder

Link to more legible image [here](#).

The bottom bar represents the biological forces that sometimes triggered various clusters of memes labeled “imperfect,” “spiritual / fitness” and “social self.” Thick arrows represent the influence of her family, spouse and work on her self-definition. To the extent that biological and environmental forces control the structure of the self, we can say that it is “determined.” During the course of treatment, we were able to add or modify several memes in Olivia’s “imperfect self” giving her a more balanced identity. She developed a sense of empowerment and volitional control, both of which she used to maintain her commitment to behavioural change. She no longer defined herself as a depressed person,

although she acknowledged that everyone experiences sadness and depression on occasion. She developed new associations between clusters that gave her the ability to choose to not ruminate on her deficiencies. We added a second bar, below the menu of emotions, to recognize her “psychological characteristics” such as intelligence, introversion and self-assurance.

Significantly, Olivia now found restrictive the very relationships that she had found to be supportive during her bout with PTSD. Her spouse now accused her of wanting to be better than him, possibly when she refused to join him on his drinking binges. Her employer refused to allow her enough latitude to make decisions on the job. Her mother would unexpectedly enter her house searching for the drugs that she assumed were stashed there. Olivia came to the insight that her spouse, employer and parents had not changed—but that she had changed. If she wanted to keep her newly minted self, therefore, she would have to move to another community. With the help of distance-counselling and some new friends, she re-established herself elsewhere and even negotiated new boundaries with her family.

A determined species unchained and re-chained

As can see from the examples of these two clients, the social environment is a powerful determinant of who we are. Determinists would say that psychotherapists, directed by their programming, overpower the other determinants that keep their clients’ old selves in place. Determinists would have more difficulty, however, in explaining why both clients chose to move to other communities *without* the advice of their therapist. To argue that therapists unconsciously push their clients in such directions requires the assumption of unseen forces. A simpler explanation would be that *most* of our decisions are determined but that, with hard work and mental resources, we can make decisions at variance from our memetic and genetic programming (Robertson, 2017a).

In *The Evolved Self* (Robertson, 2020), I argue that volition and temporal constancy combined with a more primal self as recently as the beginning of the first millennium BCE. Our sense of constancy, that we are in some important sense the same person over time, allows us to think about our selves in remembered events while considering how we might have influenced alternative outcomes. Using a similar mechanism, we can imagine our selves in the future and predict outcomes on the basis of available evidence. What constitutes evidence will necessarily, at least in the first instance, be learned. If having a better grasp of reality ultimately favours

better outcomes than cultures will evolve in that direction. For example, the scientific method, which originated in post-Enlightenment Europe, has brought about a revolution in new knowledge. The method itself has been appropriated by most non-European cultures where “culture” is defined as current practices, values and artifacts.

Beliefs are possible only in the mind of someone who accepts that there is some way to differentiate truth from falsehood; and that implies an objective reality. To change a belief about oneself, one must first take oneself as an object that can be examined. Unfortunately clients cannot change who they are at will. Like Suzie, they often resist changing even dysfunctional selves. They need evidence to support desired changes; otherwise it feels as though they are merely play-acting.

The rejection of classical behaviourism by psychotherapists, despite its demonstrated efficacy, flowed from deeply held cultural assumptions about what it means to be human. The combination of behaviourism with cognitivism suggests a form of compatibilism, that the concepts of free will and determinism are not mutually exclusive. The ideal of free will became part of our self-definition flowing from culturally evolved changes to the self (Robertson, 2020). While assumptions of personal volition, continuity, and reason became the benchmark of what it means to be human, we do not always attain this ideal. Psychologists are in the business of teaching clients the skills that they need to approximate this self. To Sagan (1996) that ideal involved doing science: “Every time we exercise self-criticism, every time we test our idea against the outside world, we are doing science. When we are self-indulgent and uncritical, when we confuse hopes with facts, we slide into pseudoscience and superstition” (p. 27).

Taking the objective view, as is necessary in science, does not come naturally to the human species. Jaynes (1976) said pre-Homeric Greeks relied on pre-programmed cultural responses to triggering events and when an event occurred that had not been prepared for in their cultural programming they reacted in a random, sometimes schizophrenic way. After a study of early Egyptian hieroglyphics, Johnson (2003) concluded that the early Egyptians did not have minds, as we would now define the term. A simpler explanation is that they did not have the kind of self that we take for granted today.

The individualism that forms a part of what I call “the modern self” (Robertson, 2020) was a potential threat to the stability of pre-modern societies made

up primarily of people with a different kind of self. Since the self is a culturally mediated construct, by controlling available memes, collectivist societies can limit the possibilities available for self-construction. Acceptance of such constraints can be supported by appeals to authority, particularly religious authority. The Axial Age of the first millennium BCE (Jaspers, 1951; Mahoney, 1991) produced major world religions that were concerned with regulating the self in some ways. Early Confucian thought dealt with the moral development of the self in relation to the collectivity infusing it with a sense of duty to ancestors (Wu, 2017). Hindu thought divided society into a series of castes with a full education available only to the Brahmin caste. The Buddhist doctrine of “no-self” required initiates to place themselves under the direction of masters who represent the Buddha himself. Like Judaism, Christianity, has held that people must renounce the self, because human reasoning is faulty and true knowledge is divinely inspired. These teachings are consistent with a hypothesis that while the presence of people who could engage in individual volition and planning were valued, their abilities needed to be regulated.

Although the medieval Roman Catholic Church encouraged the practice of science that was consistent with its theology, the Protestant Reformation coupled with the re-learning of classical Greek philosophy in the scientific Renaissance of the sixteenth century led to the Enlightenment that began with Descartes, Bacon and Newton in the seventeenth. This Enlightenment did not invent individualism; it proclaimed that the individualism already inherent in the self that allowed for the determination of objective reality was good. Since a healthy self also requires relationships with others in the form of social interest, collective identity and intimacy, this development did not spell the end of collectivism, and each “individualist” society has retained or created ways of expressing communal or group identification.

In *The Evolved Self*, I argue that the struggle between collectivism and individualism occurs, in the first instance, within each person’s self. I argue also that, for the most part, we remain the determined beings that we have been throughout most of our history as a species; but also beings with the capacity to reflectively reprogram ourselves by acting on reasons that matter to us as individuals. If we view this conscious self that is capable of such reflective thought^[3] as analogous to the body, then we need to consider that memes and meme complexes (which are not part of the self but

nonetheless exist in culture) can be deleterious to it. These meme complexes would be analogous to viruses that can enter the body.

The emancipation of the self was not welcomed by everyone. People with functional selves face responsibility, after all, for their own well-being. They must realistically assess their circumstances, selecting those that would provide meaning and purpose, but also implement plans to assure their own happiness. My private practice is beset with clients who would rather place the responsibility for their own well-being on others. In his examination of totalitarian movements following World War II, Eric Hoffer (1966/1951) noted, “The frustrated follow a leader less because of their faith that he is leading them to a promised land than because of their immediate feeling that he is leading them away from their unwanted selves” (p. 110).

Building on the religious trope that our selves are inadequate, Martin Heidegger (1962) deconstructed science and reason by claiming that only one who is “Dasein” could know ultimate truth. “Dasein,” in Heidegger’s idiosyncratic usage, includes being present simultaneously in the past, present and future which only a few can achieve. He named himself and the fuhrer as Dasein. German psychologist Eric Fromm (1969) described the relationship between the totalitarian dynamic and the self:

There is the wish to submit to an overwhelmingly strong power, to annihilate the self, besides the wish to have power over helpless beings. This masochistic side of the Nazi ideology and practices is most obvious with the respect to the masses. They are told again and again: the individual is nothing and does not count. The individual should accept this personal insignificance, dissolve himself to a higher power, and then feel proud in participating in the strength and glory of this higher power. (pp. 257, 256)

It is frightening to consider that if Suzie had lived in pre-war Germany, a Nazi sympathizer could have suggested not only that she needed to accept her sense of personal insignificance but also that she could do so most effectively by identifying her self with glory of the Aryan race. Incorporating a new ideological or religious meme into one’s self, moreover, includes incorporating whatever attaches to that meme. In this example, Suzie would have felt Nazi militarism, anti-Semitism, and fuhrer worship as essential to her self. If both the Nazi and Suzie were caught in the same contagion, then we could say that one passed a mind virus to the other. In an

earlier article (Robertson, 2017b), I listed four conditions necessary for diagnosing such a virus:

- A mind virus will result in an observable change or transition in self-definition, one that is neither planned nor related to self-betterment;
- The change must involve a diminution or negation of the modern self or its component parts;
- The change must involve an appropriation of personal resources for the purpose of spreading the meme cluster in question; and,
- The change is likely marked by considerable and uncharacteristic emotional valence.

Is wokism a mind-virus contagion?

The first section of this paper examined the structure of the self. I then proposed an evolutionary understanding of that structure and concluded with four conditions that are needed to satisfy a diagnosis of a mind virus that could be said to infect this self. Before applying those conditions to wokism in this second section, I define the term and explain why it is preferred to other labels sometimes used. Each of these labels are examined in turn: (1) postmodernism; (2) identity politics; (3) neo-Marxism; and (4) social justice (as a movement).

Postmodernism, the view that all knowledge is “socially constructed” and a product of power relationships, provides a method for the woke to attack and discredit competing beliefs. Objective evidence cannot be used to counter these woke beliefs since it is assumed that even science and reason amount to nothing other than a “white, male way of knowing” (Strong, 2002) and is, therefore, a conspiracy to oppress others. Tellingly, however, since they never deconstruct wokism itself, it cannot be said that it is completely postmodern. It is more like a religious faith, something postmodernists considered to be a grand meta-narrative.

Identity politics incorporates the tenet that that people are defined by the oppression that they have endured as members of their own races or other identity groups. Advocates do not apply this analysis to all groups. They describe Jews as white oppressors despite 2,000 years of anti-Semitic oppression. They describe East Asians as “honorary whites,” moreover, because in the United States these U.S. Americans are statistically ahead of actual whites on measures of academic achievement and income. Since identity politics is selectively applied, wokism cannot contribute to a general understanding of racism or oppression.

Most woke people identify with “the Left” and are sometimes referred to as “Neo-Marxists,” but postmodernism classified Marxism as a modernist “grand narrative” (Lyotard, 1984). Wokism appropriated Marx’s theory of class conflict where the “white race” is assigned the place of the capitalist or ruling class. By replacing Marx’s idea of class conflict with cultural warfare they ascribe class solidarity to one’s racial, gender or other assigned oppressed group. Thus, a black person who identifies with non-black workers might be accused of “false consciousness” which is, of course, a reversal of actual Marxism. Instead of striving to eradicate the capitalist class the logic of woke-Marxism would be to eradicate “whiteness” or “maleness.”[4]

The social-justice movements that began in the 1960s aimed at eliminating barriers faced by members of disadvantaged groups. The goal of equal opportunity would permit people, irrespective of sex or racial background to advance on the basis of their motivation and ability. Wokism appropriated the rhetoric of social justice. But by insisting on equal *outcomes*, instead of equal opportunities, they have devalued merit and work thus reversing the original goals of the social justice movements.

Wokism represents an inconsistent application of various historical, and sometimes conflicting, conceptual paradigms. I now examine this movement for the four conditions outlined in the previous section for determining the presence of a mind-virus.

Condition One: Change in Individual Self-Definition

The form of identity politics, on which wokism relies heavily, gives high status to recognized victim groups—which is to say non-whites, non-heterosexuals and non-males. Moreover, it gives even higher status to people who are simultaneously members of several victim groups under the rubric “intersectionality.” Competition between victim groups for greater recognition rewards people for identifying and fixating on perceived grievances (Noor, Shnabel, Halabi, & Nadler, 2012). One study of university students (Gabay, Hameiri, Rubel-Lifschitz, & Nadler, 2020) identified an emergent interpersonal-victimhood personality type characterized by a pathological need for recognition, difficulty empathizing with others, feelings of moral superiority, and a thirst for vengeance. The study noted that those who have this personality type “lash out” when others question their victimhood or challenge their self-image of moral superiority. Increasing numbers of these self-identified victims

create a culture of victimhood in which “the aggrieved actively seek the support of third parties as well as those that focus on oppression” (Campbell & Manning, 2014 p. 692). This culture of group victimhood is gradually supplanting a culture based on individual dignity.

Woke identity politics holds that members of the “white race” are *collectively and innately* oppressors, which makes them analogous to the capitalist or bourgeois class in Marxism (Campbell & Manning, 2014; Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2002; Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020b). Because it is assumed, in wokism, that white males have benefitted from “privilege” both racially and sexually, they are not allowed to claim victim status even though they may be victims in many ways. Yet, white males are visibly active in the woke movement. I would expect their personalities and self-definitions to vary from those of other woke people. Here is a case study of woke white male personality based on my personal “lived experience” as a moderator of two humanist discussion groups in 2020.

The first discussion group was “open” in that any member of the group was allowed to post any article or topic providing they had not been previously banned from doing so. Although membership in the group varied between 1,500 and 1,600, active participants on any given post rarely numbered more than 20 except for the most controversial ones. Wokists were active on most controversial posts, and most of these activists were, judging from their profile pictures, white males.

When I actively began to moderate this group, I found woke members swearing at people who disagreed with them, calling them racists, “alt-righters,” and “white supremacists.” The woke members frequently suggested that the moderators should ban such people for not being true humanists. I scrolled through the relevant conversations and found that no one had posted anything that advocated racism or white supremacy. I developed a set of rules to encourage civil discourse and announced that I would delete posts that expressed hatred toward any person or any group. I announced that name-calling would be considered a form of expressed hatred.

“Bill” was probably already angry with me for deleting a post in which he called someone “a racist piece of shit” for suggesting that the authorities should not remove statues of Canada’s first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald. Macdonald, who gave Amerindian people in Ontario the vote and provided food to ward off starvation, also contracted

with four Christian denominations to provide education. Malnutrition, physical and sexual abuses were subsequently found in many of these Indian Residential Schools. I suggested to Bill that Macdonald should not be judged for events that occurred without his knowledge well after his death. His reply was that I was “completely without conscience” and that I favoured “raping and torturing children.”

In a second humanist discussion group,[5] a Humanist Canada board member posted an article about a woke mobbing of a retired professor who had suggested there should be limits to abortion. The woke demanded that this professor lose his emeritus status at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, but the board member suggested that humanists need to fight for the freedom of speech of those even with whom we may disagree. “Jason” replied:

I don’t want anti-choice misogynists to have a platform. Voltaire’s quote you used is nice when you have the privilege to utter it, but it doesn’t mean much to oppressed and marginalized voices to know that their oppressors will continue to get a seat at the table because of some bizarre equivocation around free speech.

Within wokism, Bill and Jason are powerful white males who are assumed to have “voice” and a duty to speak for recognized victim groups whose “voices” are “oppressed and marginalized.”

Disagreement with some aspect of a woke narrative identifies oppressors who are to be confronted by the aspects such as volition, uniqueness, continuity and special-status white males. At any point, however, a member of a victim group could find their voice and investigate of external reality. A negation of either accuse those who have adopted a saviour role of our collectivist or individualist qualities would patronizing them. I observed this in the open diminish this capacity. humanist discussion group. A board member had created a post with the theme “trans rights are human rights.” A transperson accused the board member of using trans issues to further a political agenda. The member both apologized deferentially and explained, without evidence, that humanists had been posting many transphobic statements which is why his post was needed.

Members of the woke movement who are also members of victim groups and who adopt a personality type consistent with woke narratives will assume a posture of moral superiority. Woke advocates who are white males can forestall negative intervention by these morally superior people by vigorously pursuing attacks on the non-woke coupled uncomplicated by nuance or compromise. We also need to consider the psychological benefits whites may obtain from a process Rene Girard described as “scapegoating” (Girard, 1989). Wokism

has labeled whites to be an “oppressor race” with all members presumably guilty of benefiting from this oppressor status. White woke can temporarily transfer this guilt to a named scapegoat who then takes on the sins ascribed to this race. We have seen this process in the example of John A. Macdonald in Canada, attacks on Winston Churchill in Britain and on the founding fathers in the United States. As we will see in the subsequent discussion of woke mobbing, the process of scapegoating can be applied to anyone but in all cases it can only provide temporary psychological relief. While white males are more likely to be selected as a sacrificial scapegoat, as the sacrificial crisis becomes more severe categories start to break down and the actual victim selected by mimetic violence could be anyone. During the height of the sacrifice, it will seem that the victim is to blame for everything.

As can be seen from the foregoing, wokism has the effect of assigning specific personality characteristics to identity groups. While it may be that some people enter the woke movement with such personalities already expressed, the internal logic of wokism pressures individuals to conform to the personality assigned to their particular status.

Condition Two: Diminution of the Modern Self

The first section of this paper outlined how a healthy modern self includes the capacity for relationships with others in the form of social interest, collective identity and intimacy as well as more individualist aspects such as volition, uniqueness, continuity and reason. Combined, this self allows for the objective investigation of external reality. A negation of either our collectivist or individualist qualities would diminish this capacity.

In the humanist discussion groups that I monitored, woke members dismissed as racism or “transphobia” scientific research into the heritability of intelligence and rapid onset gender dysphoria. In doing so, they rely on the critical-social-justice trope that all knowledge is a function of power and is perpetrated by oppressive “discourses.” There is, of course, a contradiction in this argument in that if there is no objective reality, as has to be the case where what is taken as knowledge is a function of power, then there can be no basis to believe that critical social justice is true. In this, the woke are similar to Heidegger who also put limits on science and reason but advocated a “higher authority” to inform the masses as to ultimate truth. The woke present themselves as that higher authority.

A functioning society is impossible if everyone were to uniquely determine their own subjectively held

individual realities. If objective knowledge is impossible, then an alternative reality acting in the place of a Dasien must be imposed on non-believers. Free speech is irrelevant in arriving at truth if truth is determined by that higher authority. Indeed, free speech, in such circumstances, is potentially dangerous for allowing other understandings of reality to compete for the minds of those who are to be led. Therefore, the woke have journalists fired, have books and articles withdrawn from publication, “de-platform” speakers, and have professors fired for replacing ideological orthodoxy with heresy. The woke accuse those who fail to conform to their “reality,” of racism, sexism or a host of new “phobias” that no psychologist would ever diagnose. All this is done in the name of those who allegedly lack “voices.”

The voice of former Sacramento Kings broadcaster Grant Napeer was also silenced. Asked his opinion of Black Lives Matter, he said that “All lives matter, every single one.” In an apology, he stated that he had never imagined how the phrase could be offensive to anyone. He was fired on June 2, 2020. Anyone who believes that all lives matter, of course, cannot be racist, but people to whom the woke had given this label had chanted the phrase at counter-demonstrations. As a sports broadcaster, Napeer could be forgiven for not knowing this history. Entertainers, writers and politicians have also been forced to apologize for uttering this *anti-racist* sentiment. On October 8, 2020 an aboriginal Inuit cabinet minister, Patterk Netser, was removed as housing minister in the territory of Nunavut after posting “all lives matter” on his Facebook page.

The woke list of proscribed phrases includes “sexual preference,” “colour blind” (when referencing racism), “not racist,” and “sex change.” New words such as “intersectionality,” “heteronormativity,” “cisgender,” “microaggression” and “LGBTQ+” are de rigueur. Old words and phrases, moreover, take on new meanings. During the 1970s, for example, “systemic racism” was used in connection with organizational policies and practices that resulted in discrimination. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) during that era had a policy that police officers had to wear a standard issue hat. The effect of that policy was that devout Sikhs, who wear a turban, could not become police officers. That policy was changed. A policy of racially profiling people to be stopped to be searched would also be an example of systemic racism.

In June 2020 RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki said she had looked at her organization’s policies and procedures and could not find any examples of

systemic racism. The prime minister’s office, using a different definition, forced her to recant her views. This more recent woke definition of systemic racism is that if there are differential outcomes, for example in arrest rates, then systemic racism must be the cause. Such a simplistic analysis ignores the need to research complex socio-economic factors that could lead to a higher crime rate over which the police have no control.

The picture that emerges is wokism as a kind of filter, an overlay on actual events. Because we think primarily in words when interpreting events, the woke emphasis on language and language policing is an attempt to force the general public to accept the interpretations this filter produces. Thus, wokism is not merely about restricting freedom of speech, it is about restricting freedom of thought. In trying to control, restrict or inhibit our ability to reason, wokism diminishes these very capacities of the self, returning us to a form of pre-Enlightenment collectivism. From this perspective, wokism is not revolutionary but reactionary.

Condition Three: Appropriation of Individual Resources

When a woke participant in one of my humanist discussion groups amended his comments after others had already responded, I viewed it as a personal idiosyncrasy. After three participants did the same thing, however, I took notice. These actions pointed to a psychological means by which wokism appropriates time and resources.

The term “woke” originated as a self-referent by adherents of this odd mixture of postmodernism, Hegelianism, Marxism, “social justice” and religion. Appropriated from African American slang, it represented a slur against those who were not sufficiently “awake” to accept their belief system. Like early Calvinists, who believed that they are predestined to join the “elect” and end up in heaven but still needed to continually demonstrate their piety as a way of proving their claim, the woke need to continually demonstrate their superior insight. In this example, they did not need to change the record to help the unwoke, with whom the conversation had already ended, but to demonstrate to other woke who might come across that record that they are indeed one of the elect. In “cancel culture” individual posts and records are examined dating back decades so that enemies of wokism can be eviscerated and publically shamed. This results in an impulse for woke advocates to not leave any record that might imply they are not sufficiently woke.

One can display one's woke virtue by participating in internet and media mobbing. In November 2019, Don Cherry, a sports broadcaster who had been baiting liberals for decades on his *Hockey Night in Canada* program, decided to promote Canada's Remembrance Day tradition of buying poppies to support programs for veterans. He lamented that no one from Toronto was buying poppies anymore and opined, "You people, you love our way of life, you love our milk and honey, at least you can pay a couple bucks for a poppy or something like that." Within two days, the Canada Broadcast Standards Council received so many complaints about Cherry's "racist" comment that their website went down. But this was not a popular public reaction. Only those using the woke mental filter can see racism in a request to buy poppies. Because the woke were not politically predisposed to watching Cherry in the first place, it is unlikely that many of those who complained actually listened to the program. But Cherry lost his job.

Another venue for virtue signalling involves participation in anti-racist demonstrations. Not all members of Black Lives Matter (BLM) are woke, but those who are, given their allegedly superior understanding, try to occupy its leadership positions. Within three days of the killing of George Floyd by police on May 25, 2020, BLM demonstrations occurred in at least 30 U.S. American cities and others around the world. Eight thousand protesters demonstrated in Portland, Oregon, on May 28. Rioting that included breaking store windows, looting, starting fires, and hurling projectiles at the police began the day after. A pattern of peaceful demonstrations by day and riots by night soon solidified. "Riots," in this instance, were planned in advance. On Facebook and Twitter, the rioters found locations, times and instructions. They were provided food, medical attention, gas masks and shields to protect them from rubber bullets and tear gas. They were armed with modified lasers, fireworks, clubs, hockey sticks, hammers, and in one case, a chain saw.

Portland city council responded to demands to defund the police by cutting \$15 million from its police budget in June. On July 2, several federal policing agencies arrived in Portland to protect federal buildings and monuments. On July 15, Mayor Ted Wheeler said that the federal "troops" were responsible for provoking the violence and demanded their withdrawal. On July 18, rioters broke into the Municipal Police Association building, setting it on fire. On July 30, the federal police were withdrawn. Except for serious offences, rioters went free without bail. According to reporter

Andy Ngo, some rioters were charged and released as many as five times.

In August, Wheeler stated that President Trump had caused the riots through his policies. On September 10, in keeping with the demands of protestors, Wheeler banned the use of tear gas by police. Trump was defeated in November, but the riots continued. Following a riot on New Year's Day, 2021, Wheeler stated that his "good faith efforts at de-escalation have been met with ongoing violence and even scorn from radical Antifa and anarchists."

Real revolutions are led by real revolutionaries who believe there is an objective reality outside of themselves, and they use that reality to plan. Violence in their world is connected to goals. It may be difficult but not impossible to negotiate with these realists. But Wheeler could not deal with people who have rejected the realist approach. A virus does not recognize compromise, only an opportunity to grow. From a viral perspective, that is what Wheeler provided with his various appeasements. Not that they would thank him. A woke group assaulted him in a Portland restaurant on January 6, 2021.

In this section I outlined a psychological mechanism explaining the extreme attention to detail exhibited by woke in making their presentations. I also reviewed part of a massive social upheaval that is only made possible through a substantial time and financial commitment by woke. Those woke who participate in riots are also risking their physical well-being. It is clear from this account that wokism involves the appropriation of considerable personal resources.

Condition Four: Emotional Valence

Wokism is a morality play involving an epic and enduring struggle between the forces of good and evil. In this respect, it resembles a fundamentalist form of religion. As Eric Hoffer (1966/1951) noted following World War II, "A mass movement can get along without a god but not without a devil. An abstract devil won't do, it must be tangible. This is why Christians must demonize and dehumanize opponents."

In *True Believers*, Hoffer (1966/1951) described a subset of people in each religion or ideology who cannot accept the idea that others, with very different beliefs, could have an equal claim to goodness. Minions of the devil in wokism are given names such as "alt-righters," "racists" and "gender traitors." But few people actually advocate white supremacy, support racism, or see themselves as traitors to their own genders. Wokists try to resolve

the resultant cognitive dissonance by declaring statistical evidence itself to be a product of racism and by resorting to what Nathanson and Young (2006) called “linguistic inflation.” We have already discussed how calling on people to buy Remembrance Day poppies was seen as the hate crime of “racism.” The linguistically inflated hate crime of being a gender traitor was illustrated with an article by a transwoman posted on the “open” humanist discussion group previously mentioned. The article describes J.K. Rowling’s view that sharing safe spaces between women and transwomen is threatening for women as “overblown.” The author conceded, however, that some predatory men could potentially use their access (as transwomen) to gain access. She recommended that trans and feminist communities should negotiate a solution. A fellow moderator deleted the article on the grounds of “hate speech.” If suggesting even negotiation makes one a “gender traitor,” then any deviation at all from woke dogma is tantamount to complicity in evil. This cynical mentality creates a problem for woke people, because conventional wisdom necessarily changes over time. With no central organization to define or authorize such change, woke people protect themselves from internal criticism by being hyper-alert and over reactive.

Compassion and social interest are likely the initial factors by which the woke memplex attaches itself to the selves of most woke people. But the driving force behind their activism flows from a *moral panic*—which relies on the assertion that evil people, who must be stopped, are bent on oppressing others. A similar moral panic emerged in 1966 as the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

China’s policies had produced economic failure and widespread famine. A cadre around Chairman Mao Zedong concluded this was the fault of “bourgeois elements” in industry, in government circles and even in the Communist Party. Believers conceded that many of these people were unconscious of their revisionism. Mao organized idealistic students, his “Red Guards,” to save the revolution. They began by revolting against their respective schools and cancelling classes. When huge demonstrations failed to produce the desired change, they began rooting out the evil, identifying members of the “bourgeoisie” by their lifestyle, use of language, family backgrounds, and how well they applied Chairman Mao’s “little red book” of quotations. The Red Guards publically humiliated offenders, who typically lost their jobs. Mob violence was common and killed many people. Academics and intellectuals ended up in remote “re-education camps.” Vandals

destroyed books, statues, monasteries, museums and anything associated with “old culture.”

Moral panics in the United States and Canada show some affinity with wokism. Even though almost everyone agreed in the 1920s that drunkenness was a problem, the Prohibition movement claimed that even a little alcohol was evil. Despite good intentions, Prohibition was a windfall for criminal gangs. And with the authorities confiscating alcohol, it became logical to quickly drink all one had resulting in an upsurge in binge drinking.

Fear of communism drove the McCarthyism of the 1950s. Associates, friends and relatives reported on each other to the House Un-American Activities Committee, which made sure that suspected communists were publicly humiliated and lost their jobs and that those who refused to cooperate spent time in jail. The Satanic abuse and sexual abuse scares of the 1990s, aided by the dubious science of Repressed Memory Syndrome, resulted in lost jobs, broken families and many innocents in prison. These North American moral panics intended to change culture in some ways, but they did not require a *diminution of selves* and thus would not satisfy the definition of a mind-virus used here.

Discussion

Wokism meets the four criteria used for identifying a mind virus. Because those criteria include the diminution of the self, it should not be surprising that wokism is heavily deterministic. By controlling the outer world of the cultural environment, it seeks to control the inner world of thought. As classical behaviourists in psychotherapy discovered, behaviourism works. Psychologist Susan Blackmore (1999) described humans as “meme machines” with illusions of free will. But she is only partially correct. Ordinarily, we modern humans follow patterns that our parents, teachers, religious leaders or other significant others mandated. Or we perform some behaviours habitually. Nonetheless, we have the capacity to *re-program* ourselves by focusing our attention, examining evidence, selecting alternatives, predicting results, and changing our behaviours (Robertson, 2017a). This is hard work and time consuming. Wokism seeks to become our significant other, replacing the role of such people as parents, teachers and religious leaders in generating our behavioural programming, while limiting our capacity for self-programming. That a mishmash involving the partial application of often competing philosophies could accomplish this in a largely educated population invites discussion as to its

We can speculate about how a group of old Stalinist academics, sufficiently traumatized by the collapse of the Soviet Union to ignore the postmodernist attack on Marxism as a grand meta-narrative, began experimenting with pieces of various philosophies. Shaped by the reactions of their students, these professors hit on a combination that, though not philosophically consistent, was highly emotive: implanting a feeling of superior knowledge and urgency in their charges along with built-in “attack memes” that prevented them from easily assimilating non-sanctioned points of view. From the perspective of a mind-virus, people become vectors for the purpose of infecting new hosts (Bjarneskans, Gronnevik, & Sandberg, 1997). I doubt that many of the woke have actually read Jacques Derrida let alone Marx, Heidegger, Hegel or the other white males that grandfathered their worldview. Irrespective of its actual origins, this mind-virus has demonstrated a capacity to mutate that defies placement on the political spectrum.

A virus has no ideological loyalty. New mutations can rapidly overtake older ones. While initial varieties of wokism were anti-capitalist, the corporate media and transnational high tech companies (including some of the world’s richest people) have adopted a new strain. Whereas the Left has traditionally challenged the concentration of corporate power, particularly with respect to corporations controlling news, the woke have embraced the rights of private companies to censor viewpoints. We have to consider, therefore, how wokism serves monopoly capitalism. Globalization has lowered the real wages of working class people and reduced the job prospects of anyone with a high school education or less in the United States and Canada. The jobs that these people once held have been largely outsourced to low-wage economies. If the working class is racially divided, which is guaranteed by identity politics, then it cannot be

effectively organized by unions or political parties as a class. Wokism provides the capitalists who benefit most from globalization with opportunities to signal their own virtue while cementing in place the very system that created their huge profits in the first place.

Inoculation against a mind-virus is possible through self-education. We need to recognize the code words that woke people use and the contradictions that are inherent in their assertions. This virus normally begins by appealing to our social conscience. If we happen to be members of an identified minority, it appeals to our group loyalty. If that does not work, then the woke typically lash out, as I have shown. We need to recognize the pattern. I recommend a sense of humour to maintain perspective. I do not recommend apologies, because wokists see these as admissions of moral deficiency, and these “admissions” can be used to manipulate others. Instead, we should focus on the deficiencies in wokism and on objectively verifiable facts. Remember that the world has become a much better place in the last 50 years. Poverty, disease, infant mortality, racism, sexism and the murder rate have all declined worldwide. We need to celebrate these advances and protect science and reason that have made them possible. Pluckrose and Lindsay (2020a) said:

We do not believe that bad ideas can be defeated by being repressed, especially when they are as socially powerful as postmodern ideas are right now. Instead, they need to be engaged and defeated within the marketplace of ideas, so that they may die a natural death and be rightly recognized as defunct. (p. 264)

To defeat a mind-virus we must first re-assert the Enlightenment ideal that human beings, through the use of evidence-based processes, can indeed begin to discern objective reality and truth. I hope that I have contributed to this process with this paper.

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Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Dr. Robertson is Lead Psychologist, Collaborative Centre for Justice and Safety at the University of Regina, Canada. He has published on the structure of the self, the use of prior learning assessment in self-construction, self-mapping in therapy, memetic mutations in religious transmission, and "residential school syndrome" as a form of post-traumatic stress disorder. His recent book *The Evolved Self: Mapping an Understanding of Who We Are* was published by the University of Ottawa Press.

[2] Individual Publication Date: February 22, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/wokism>; Full Issue Publication Date: May 1, 2021: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

[3] As used here, reflective thought is a kind of thinking involving situating one's self in past events.

[4] In 2017, a founder of Black Lives Matter, Toronto was reported as posting on her Facebook page "Whiteness is not humxnness, in fact, white skin is sub-humxn. All phenotypes exist within the black family and white ppl are a genetic defect of blackness" (Curl, 2017).

[5] This second group is Humanist Canada's official Facebook page. Only Humanist Canada board members and designated employees could post to this page although all members can respond.

Appendix II: Citation Style Listing

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Children Burnt for Witchcraft in Central Nigeria

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Children Burnt for Witchcraft in Central Nigeria[1][2]

Dr. Leo Igwe is the Founder of the Humanist Association of Nigeria, the Founder & CEO of Advocacy for Alleged Witches, and the Convener of the Decade of Activism Against Witch Persecution in Africa: 2020-2030.

Some months ago, some national dailies reported the case of two children who were accused of witchcraft and subsequently set ablaze in Plateau state in Central Nigeria. The incident happened in December 2019. Images of the two children with various degrees of burns and bandages on their hands and heads outraged members of the public. After reading the story, I contacted police officials in Jos, and they confirmed the incident. They stated that the matter was under investigation. I tried reaching the relatives of the victims through various channels. I contacted former colleagues at the University of Jos, and one of them confirmed that the children were treated at the state hospital, but were later discharged. The children returned to their community with the mother. I planned to visit Plateau state to interact with the victims and their families and better understand what transpired on that fateful day, including the nature and patterns of witchcraft allegations in Plateau state. Allegations of child witchcraft have been linked to states and communities in Southern Nigeria, especially Akwa Ibom and Cross River states. Not much is heard about child witch allegations elsewhere in the country. I wanted to understand if the incident was part of a pervasive phenomenon that has largely been ignored or new development in the region.

I wanted to understand the different actors in the field of Plateau witchcraft and how to work with them in tackling this vicious phenomenon. My local contacts told me that the affected community was not in Jos metropolis. They pointed out that there were security challenges in the area. In March, the outbreak of COVID19 led to a lockdown and restriction of movements, including interstate transportation. So I decided to work with local contacts in the state to support these child victims until the time that I could visit and meet with them in person. Through the contacts, I got the phone number of a human right lawyer handling the case, and she promised to link me up with the families of victims. Due to the COVID19 restrictions, she was unable to make the connections for some months. However, in July, she sent me the phone numbers of the relatives of the children. I spoke to one of the relatives, Mrs. Tina, and she recounted the tragic incident to me once more. According to Mrs. Tina, a family member fell ill and was taken to a private hospital in the area. But he was not responding to treatment. At a point, the sick person claimed that a boy in the family was responsible for the ailment; that the boy wanted to kill him. And one day, another relative came to the family house and took the boy to the hospital. This relative asked the 7-year old boy to undo what he had allegedly done, to untie the man so that he could recover from the ailment. But the boy denied knowing anything about the ailment and the allegation. But this relative was not satisfied. Later, he took the boy and a girl from the same family to another old woman who was also being suspected. They brought a Christian evangelist

who came with some fuel in a small gallon. The evangelist threatened to set the children ablaze if they did not confess. The children repeatedly denied the allegations and started crying. According to Mrs. Tina, somebody from the crowd snatched the gallon of fuel from the evangelist and poured it on the two children. Another person with a box of matches set them ablaze. The children were screaming and struggling to run away, but some people were pushing them back into the fire.

Another woman came and used some sand to put off the fire but by this time the children had been seriously burnt on their faces and hands. Other children at the scene ran to inform the mother of the children who came and took the children home. Mrs. Tina said that she got a call from the mother of the children who informed her about the incident. On getting to her house, Mrs. Tina found out that the children sustained serious injuries and needed immediate medical attention. She advised the mother to report the matter to the police. But the mother refused. She has been under intense pressure not to report to the police. They took the children to a local hospital but the hospital staff refused to treat them without a police report. They eventually reported the case to the police, and a policewoman accompanied them to the hospital, and the children were subsequently admitted. The children stayed at the state specialist hospital for two weeks before they were discharged. I was told that the police went to the community to arrest the suspects but the people stoned them, and they withdrew and went back to the station. In February, the police invited the head of the community to their office, and they arrested and detained him for two days. While in detention, he provided the names of the suspects who were arrested and then charged to court. I have reliably

gathered that the family of the victims has been under pressure from the defendants to withdraw the case so that they could settle out of court. It is important that the court sends a strong message to those who perpetrated this heinous abuse. There have been similar cases of witch burning across the country. And perpetrators are seldom arrested or punished. For instance, in Cross River state, the police have yet to arrest Thomas Obi Tawo (aka General Iron) and those who burnt 15 suspected witches in Boki in May.

According to Mrs. Tina, witchcraft allegations are common in Plateau state. The belief in occult harm is pervasive in rural communities. People use witchcraft and magic to make sense of their existential challenges. She said that people did not believe that misfortunes such as death and sickness occur naturally; they habitually suspect that somebody must be responsible for these unfortunate experiences. Mrs. Tina noted that there was a need for intense public enlightenment in the communities to reason people out of these mistaken beliefs and harmful practices. The Advocacy for Alleged Witches will explore the possibility of sending advocates to the community to meet and interact with the leaders whenever the security situation in the area improves. AFAW will work with the family of the victims to support and rehabilitate the children and make them less vulnerable to allegations of witchcraft and the practice of witch persecution. The support program will focus on two areas- medical treatment and education. AFAW will help defray the costs of the medical treatment and support the education of the children. There is an urgent need for a national action plan against witch persecution in Nigeria.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Founder, Humanist Association of Nigeria; Founder & CEO, Advocacy for Alleged Witches; Convener, Decade of Activism Against Witch Persecution in Africa: 2020-2030.

[2] Individual Publication Date: February 24, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/children-burnt>.

Stop Hassan Patigi's Witchcraft Exorcism and Show of Shame in Mokwa, Niger State

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Author: Dr. Leo Igwe

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Stop Hassan Patigi's Witchcraft Exorcism and Show of Shame in Mokwa, Niger State[1]'[2]

Dr. Leo Igwe is the Founder of the Humanist Association of Nigeria, the Founder & CEO of Advocacy for Alleged Witches, and the Convener of the Decade of Activism Against Witch Persecution in Africa: 2020-2030.

The Advocacy for Alleged Witches (AFAW) urges the Inspector General of Police, through the Commissioner of Police (Niger State), the Divisional Police Officer (Mokwa), the Director of State Security Service, the Governor, and Government of Niger state, the Chairman of Mokwa Local Government Area, the *Ndalile* of Mokwa, the Health Ministry and the COVID19 management committee in Niger state to take immediate measures to stop the planned 'healing' and witchcraft exorcism session in Mokwa.

AFAW has reliably gathered that the self-acclaimed healer and witchcraft exorcist, Muhammad Hassan Patigi, who traveled for the Sallah celebrations, is now back in Mokwa town and is planning to commence his 'healing' activities. AFAW has also been informed that Hassan Patigi's planned 'healing' session in Lafiagi in Kwara state was canceled after some people protested to the government.

Now back in Mokwa, Mr. Patigi is expected to hold 'healing' activity in Mokwa in the coming days. Without the intervention of relevant authorities, this activity will go ahead. Videos of revulsive images

and scenes from the previous 'healing' and witch exposing activities of Mr. Patigi have been circulating on social media. Some of the videos contain scenes where Hassan Patigi asked alleged witches to go naked, fight and urinate on themselves. Look, this show of shame is an indictment on traditional as well as state authorities and other stakeholders on governance and maintenance of law and order in Mokwa, Niger state. The authorities in Niger state should not allow a repeat of these disgusting scenes in Mokwa. They should not permit a recurrence of this spectacle of national disgrace and embarrassment in Nupeland.

AFAW urges members of the public to call the following numbers and ask these officials to take urgent steps and ensure that the planned 'healing' and witchcraft exorcism activities in Mokwa by Hassan Patigi do not hold:

Niger State Commissioner of Police 08066933529

**Niger State Police Public Relations Officers
08032233454**

Divisional Police Officer Mokwa 08032076047

Director State Security Service 07035065411

Ndalile of Mokwa 08035890274

**Director Primary Health Centre Mokwa:
08035911956**

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[1] Founder, Humanist Association of Nigeria; Founder & CEO, Advocacy for Alleged Witches; Convener, Decade of Activism Against Witch Persecution in Africa: 2020-2030.

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Religion as a Biological and Geographical Accident

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Religion as a Biological and Geographical Accident[1][2][3]

Being a person of a certain religion, denomination, or sect may be caused by a number of factors but for purpose of this article the main ones are biological and geographical reasons. Many religious members if asked why do they belong in the religion they are; answers are going to be because they were born in a family or parents who prophesize that particular religion. For example, many of the kids from Muslim parents will automatically be Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists will influence their faith to their families, Christians will do the same to their children. Hence it is wrong to think that one religion is better than the other or members of one religion are honesties and knows the truth than those who belong to a different religion. In fact, a bigger number of religions do teach beliefs of things which rationally cannot be justified, but someone may find himself or herself in a particular religion only because was born and grow up in that religion ushered by the parents, that is a biological reason.

The other thing is geographical reasons; being born and raised up in a certain geographical location may

influence someone being a member of a certain religion. If a person is born and rise up in the Middle East is likely to be a Muslim in high percentage when it comes to probabilities, a person born in Israel is likely to be a Judaist in bigger percentage, a person born in the western world is likely being a Christian, Indians will be Hindus, and far east is most likely be a Buddhist, Shinto or a Taoist, while in some parts of black Africa a practice of African traditional religions will be of much influence, as well as Christianity and Islam. On the other hand, main of these big religions like the Abrahamic ones did spread to other parts of the world like Africa in specific through colonization and enslavement of the conquered ones, serving the purposes of imperialism and nothing more from them, a part of being an opium of the people (Karl Marx).

So someone's belongingness to a certain religion is greatly influenced by biological causes as well as geographical aspects, even though there are other minor factors.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] A Founder, Member, and Secretary, Jicho Jipya think Anew.

[2] Individual Publication Date: February 25, 2021: <https://in-sightjournal.com/2021/02/25/religion-as-a-biological-and-geographical-accident/>.

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Can Non-Belief and Islam Co-Exist in Black Communities?

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Can Non-Belief and Islam Co-Exist in Black Communities?[1][2]

Dr. Leo Igwe is the Founder of the Humanist Association of Nigeria, the Founder & CEO of Advocacy for Alleged Witches, and the Convener of the Decade of Activism Against Witch Persecution in Africa: 2020-2030.

The growing visibility of nonbelief in the black community is a welcome development especially in challenging the stereotype that conflates being black and being religious. It is pertinent to adequately situate the discourse on Black religiosity/irreligiosity because for too long blacks have largely been associated with religious belief and devotion. The black culture has been conceptualized as estranged from irreligious freethinking elements and sentiments. So, it is worthwhile to recognize trends of irreligiosity and the growing influence and possibilities of nontheism in black communities.

In highlighting the phenomenon of nonbelief, it is necessary to highlight the associated risks and challenges, dangers, and constraints that blur the vistas and visibility of unbelief in the black world. From the Nigerian end of the spectrum, the culture of nonbelief is endangered, and gasping for breath and survival. Competing indigenous, Christian and Islamic faith traditions find in religious infidelity and infidels a common target and enemy. Every religion is hardwired against unbelief and unbelievers.

The danger linked to nonbelief is not because there has been a radical change in the configuration of the black god or an ontological shift in the status of deities. The invisibility of unbelief is not a validation of some black-specific god gene or some culture-

specific religious epiphany. Black religiosity is predicated on socialization and cultural orientation that has refused to yield to the demands and dictates of curious, inquisitive, and questioning minds. Black communities have caved in to religious pressures and are being held hostage by surging over layers of violent supplements from believers who are unable to bear opposing views; coercive currents from godly individuals disinclined, or indoctrinated to detest ideas and sentiments critical of their gods or prophets. This climate of acute intolerance and scorched earth hostility towards on belief has led to a dimmed climate of freethought, and a pervasive surface religiosity in the black communities. The god-belief establishment has, out of mischief, instituted a prize for neutralizing nonbelief. The reward of enjoying eternal bliss in the hereafter, with some obvious worldly here-and-now appeals, pleasures and accessories, has become a life long aspiration of believers. It has turned the godly, young and old, rich or poor, educated and uneducated into qualms-less, desperate questers and coveters, ready and willing to break any law, defy any moral code, breach whatever social norm, violate any form of decency with impunity in an attempt to claim and possess this elusive and illusive bounty.

Even with its enormous potential as an antidote to extremisms and superstition based abuses, nonbelief is facing a severe threat from Islamic theocrats and jihadists that leverage on the suffocation of free thought, and free expression of ideas and beliefs. Islamic orthodoxies seek to maintain absolute control over the lives and conduct of individuals

including Islamic outsiders or non-muslims. They have usurped the powers of their immortal deity vesting them on clerics, on Sheikhs, Ulama, Imams, associated punishable offences. Islam uses the and other paradise aspiring mortals. They have made weapons of apostasy and blasphemy to hold the 'almighty Allah' redundant and inconsequential in the scheme of things, policing and judging thoughts and morals, everyday conduct including the comments and posts that people make on Facebook and verses of songs that they circulate on social media. They have arrogated to themselves the functions of an all-seeing, all-knowing, and all-powerful superhuman, and decide who lives and who dies. They openly and publicly threaten attack and violence against any real or imagined enemy or offender with impunity. These Mujahideens have wittingly and unwittingly turned Islam into an ideology of terror, hate, and division. They have emptied out the fiath contents of the Shahada, turning lā 'ilāha 'illā llāhu muḥammadun rasūlu llāhi, and Allahu Akbar, into war songs and an open invitation to mindless violence and bloodletting.

They pronounce fatwas at the slightest provocation; sanctioning anyone whom they judge to have transgressed or deviated from their Allah's perfect path of speech and expression, belief, and behavior, online and offline. They take the license to feel offended on behalf of their deities, divine messengers and emissaries, and go to the extent of seeking redress and revenge, avenging supposed wrongs, insults, and disrespect using sharia judicial and extrajudicial means and mechanisms as fronts to justify the perpetration of heinous crimes.

Intolerance of nonbelief in Muslim-dominated societies rests on two main pillars- apostasy and

blasphemy. Apostasy and blasphemy make doubt, disbelief, questioning, and other associated habits associated punishable offences. Islam uses the weapons of apostasy and blasphemy to hold nonbelievers hostage, and to compel nonbelievers to pretend to believe or risk imprisonment, judicial or extrajudicial murder. Apostates run the risk of being designated as mentally unsound as in the case of Mubarak Bala in 2014. Bala's family consigned him to a psychiatric hospital when he came out as an ex Muslim. Or Mohammed Salih from Sudan in 2017 who was accused of apostasy but a court acquitted him on the ground that he was mentally incompetent. Islam penalizes and pathologizes apostasy. So as an apostate, one is either a criminal or a mentally sick person.

Blasphemy law makes an expression of nonbelief a crime, not a legitimate exercise. It forces doubting, critical and disbelieving minds to speak or write as if they believe. The Islamic establishment leaves nonbelievers with only two options: Be quiet and remain alive or speak out and die. Blasphemy has made religious disbelievers to live falsely, pretending to believe to avoid being killed (suffer physical death) or being disappeared (suffer social death), as in the case of Mubarak Bala. For nonbelief to be visible and impactful, thoughts and ideas must be freely expressed; individuals must be able to communicate their beliefs without fear of being arrested. Nonbelievers and believers are to be treated with equal dignity and respect.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Founder, Humanist Association of Nigeria; Founder & CEO, Advocacy for Alleged Witches; Convener, Decade of Activism Against Witch Persecution in Africa: 2020-2030.

[2] Individual Publication Date: February 26, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/can-non-belief-and-islam-co-exist-in-black-communities>

Atheism and Humanism in Africa and African Diaspora

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Atheism and Humanism in Africa and African Diaspora[1][2]

Dr. Leo Igwe is the Founder of the Humanist Association of Nigeria, the Founder & CEO of Advocacy for Alleged Witches, and the Convener of the Decade of Activism Against Witch Persecution in Africa: 2020-2030.

Thank you, Clive and Mandisa, the Association of Black Humanists and Black NonBelievers Inc. for convening this historic meeting, for creating this platform to highlight black atheist and humanist pride. It is exciting to be part of this event and to be connected with the growing network of black non believers, skeptics and freethinkers. Historical, cultural and social encumbrances have made it difficult for nonbelievers in the black communities to come out and openly identify as atheists or humanists. But as this online event and other recent developments have shown, the freethought landscape in Africa and the African Diaspora is changing and this is a cause for celebration even amidst the gathering clouds.

The growing visibility of nonbelief in the black community is a welcome development especially in challenging the stereotype in academic and popular literature that conflates being black and being religious. This event is yet another step toward adequately situating the discourse on Black religiosity/irreligiosity, it is a step towards highlighting black freethought specifics-black freethought pride, solidarity, art and fellowship. For too long blacks have largely been associated with religious belief, magic, spiritism and occult. The black culture has been conceptualized as estranged

from irreligious nontheistic elements and components. Some years ago, while I was doing my field work in Ghana, I travelled to a beach in Accra. I met a man wearing a white robe. He wanted to do some magical display for me. And in the course of our conversation, I told him that I was an atheist. The man stared at me for a while and asked: Are you not an African? From time to time, one confronts this narrative that says, a black person or an African is essentially religious or theistic. But we know this not the case and that the black/African culture is diverse. So with events like this explode the myth; fault the proposition and occasion some cognitive dissonance in the minds of many.

Atheism, skeptical rationality and humanism have a long history and deep roots in Black/African culture. Incidentally these cultural currents are seldom emphasized, and are often designated as alien, western or white. So it is worthwhile to celebrate or at least recognize trends of irreligiosity and non belief in Africa and African Diaspora. It is in order to take pride in the history of freethought and the growing influence and possibilities of nontheism in black communities.

I hope this event will not be a one off program and that in the months and years ahead, black non believers will have occasions like this to meet and interact online and offline, to congregate and take pride in black freethought history and struggles. We need platforms to send important messages, first to people of the world, that black non believers exist and are citizens and neighbours, friends and

partners, children and parents, and yes fellow human beings. To people of faith, we seek to live in peace, equal dignity and respect. We seek an end to situations where discrimination and persecution of non believers is seen as an article of faith or implemented as a state policy.

And to other nonbelievers who feel lonely or alone; who find themselves in places and societies where they are persecuted, imprisoned, threatened with execution or treated as mentally sick people, we want you to know this: you are not alone and you will not walk alone. We stand with you and we will walk with you all the way to freedom!

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Founder, Humanist Association of Nigeria; Founder & CEO, Advocacy for Alleged Witches; Convener, Decade of Activism Against Witch Persecution in Africa: 2020-2030.

[2] Individual Publication Date: February 27, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/atheism-and-humanism-in-africa-and-african-diaspora>

Thought Project: Dare To Question

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Thought Project: Dare To Question[1][2]

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Today I announce an exciting program for schools in Nigeria, the Thought Project. The objective of this project is to foster critical and creative thinking skills in pupils and students and to introduce critical thinking and creative reasoning as subjects in primary and secondary schools. Critical and creative thinking skills are among the most sought after skills by employers. While there has been much emphasis on the need for critical and creative thinking, there are no subjects or programs that are devoted to inculcating these intellectual virtues. To realize a critical and creative thinking society, these thinking skills have to be taught and learned. The thought project is an effort to fill this gap in education and learning in the country.

The thought project has been several years in the making-since 2003/2004. Unfortunately, it has been postponed or set aside for some reason. This year, I decided to go ahead with the project, then came the COVID19 pandemic. Schools have been closed. There has also been a delay in incorporating an NGO that will facilitate the project. Despite all these challenges, I have decided that the thought project can no longer wait. Efforts to promote critical and creative thinking in schools and the society at large will go on, COVID19 or no COVID19. The project will release books on critical reasoning and then books on creative thinking. The books are in a

workbook format with ample spaces for additional exercise.

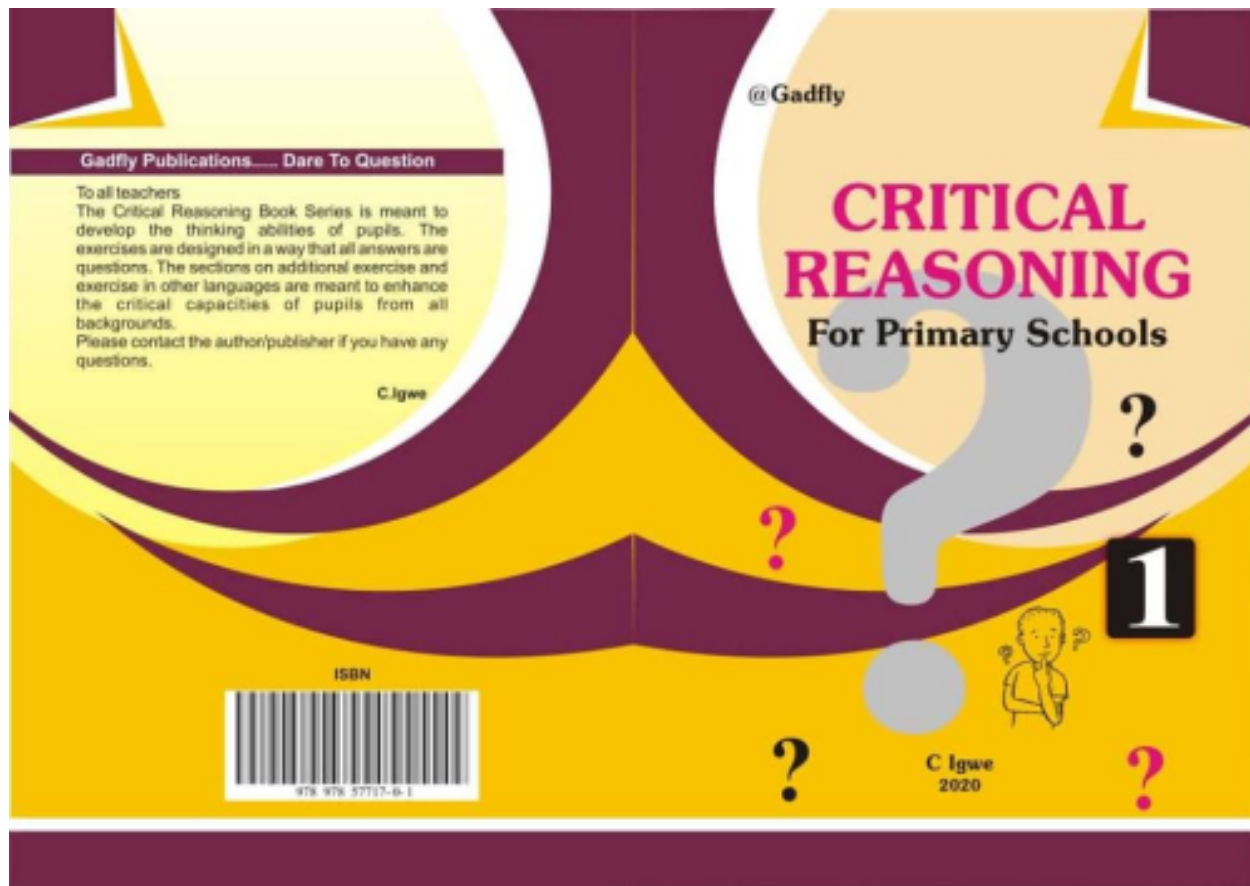
The publication of critical reasoning books has started. The books will be released based on the availability of funds and the resumption of schools. In the first phase, we are publishing books 1 to 3 for the lower basic primary classes. Book 1 will be out next week. Books for the upper basic primary classes 4 to 6 will follow. We shall then embark on publishing creative reasoning books for primary schools.

Critical thinking has been defined as the ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information. But to introduce this topic to primary school pupils, an operationalized definition is needed. To this end, critical reasoning is defined as asking questions. Modules have been created to encourage pupils to ask questions and express their curiosity. Children are taught to be inquisitive and to interrogate whatever they see, hear touch or smell, or taste. The target pupils are those who speak English as a second language. So, there is a provision to deliver the lessons and conduct exercises in languages other than English.

Besides, thought laboratories will be organized. A thought laboratory is both a program and an infrastructure. As a program, a thought laboratory is a workshop where pupils are taught to exercise their critical thinking skills. Schools are also encouraged to erect buildings or designate a room or an apartment as a thought laboratory. I am looking forward to opening the first thought laboratory building in Nigeria very soon- this year or next year.

At the moment, the critical thinking workshops, including training for teachers, will be organized free of charge. The thought project will raise funds to defray the costs of the workshops. Participants in the thought laboratory will receive free copies of the

books. And if the program succeeds in Nigeria, it will be extended to other African countries. The thought project is in its pilot phase. So criticisms are welcome and will help improve the quality of the books and the entire program.



Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Founder, Humanist Association of Nigeria; Founder & CEO, Advocacy for Alleged Witches; Convener, Decade of Activism Against Witch Persecution in Africa: 2020-2030.

[2] Individual Publication Date: February 27, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/thought-project-dare-to-question>

Tanzania: A Secular State, Secular Education But With Some Elements of Religious Influence?

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Tanzania: A Secular State, Secular Education But With Some Elements of Religious Influence?

Isakwisa Amanyisye Lucas Mwakalonge[1],[2]*

Dar es salaam, Tanzania – East Africa.

Since independence the government of Tanzania was committed to provide to Tanzanians a kind of education which is secular, this government commitment is demonstrated by a speech of the first president of Tanzania Julius Nyerere when speaking to heads of schools in Tanzania on 3rd March in 1975 at Kivukoni College in Dar es salaam as a head of state by then when addressing to them about the government position on a type of education the government was aiming to offer in public schools(government schools). He said that his government was dedicated to provide secular education in public schools, which will largely focus in researches that are scientific. He further added that the purpose of education acquired from secular schools is to help human being to solve problems in life, therefore he insisted that education and knowledge imparted from secular schools to be applied in solving problems in life. This indicates that the government of Tanzania was enthusiastic to provide secular education to the population. In order to help the government succeed in fulfilling this good intention then the specific law was enacted so as to support government obligation of providing secular education to the people from primary to universities, this is the Education Act [Cap 353 Revised Edition 2009] also the law regulates all educational affairs and provides for the better development of the system of education in the nation. But somehow this government determination is controverted by the same law. Despite the good purpose of making this law yet there are some sections in this law needs to be debated in a very neutral perceptiveness, because somehow these sections do rise some illogicalities to the government determinations of providing secular education to the population targeted. For instance it is undeniable fact that Tanzania is a secular state, dedicated to provide secular education, yet section 2 and section 57(3) of the education Act poses some ambiguities.

(a) To start with section 2 of the Education Act in defining the concept education among other things the law has some elements of religious influence, for example the section defines education as “*the instruction of or training of persons of all ages in various fields of learning designed to contribute to the **spiritual**, moral, mental and physical development of the community and to the attainment of the wider national goods.*” Cambridge International Dictionary of English defines the term **spiritual** as something that is not physical (religious). Then the question is how comes a secular state, with secular education can offer a kind of education with one among of its aims is to prepare some ones to spiritual development? Does secular state with secular education believes in spiritual development of the one acquiring such secular education? Why this? This section contradicts article 3 of the Constitution of the United

Republic of Tanzania, 1977 which articulates that Tanzania is a secular state.

(b) Furthermore section 2 of the Education Act with this term **spiritual** is moreover contradicting article 19(1) of the constitution, the article provides that: *“Every person has the right to the freedom of conscience, faith and choice in matters of religion, including the freedom to change his religion or faith.”* A good description of this quoted article 19(1) is from page 9 of the Civics Manual for Secondary Teachers and College Tutors, a hand book is from the ministry of education and vocational Training in Tanzania through Tanzania Institute of Education.[3] The manual describes article 19(1) of the constitution as follows *“Freedom of religion and conscience this right means that no person should be required to profess any religion or other belief against his or her desire. Additionally, no one should be punished or penalized in any way because he or she chooses one religion over another or indeed opts for no religion at all.”* Therefore if this article 19(1) of the constitution gives freedom on matters of believing or even not believing, then why section 2 of education Act is designed to contribute to the spiritual development of a learner? It is a bit perplexing to witness that secular education is there to prepare someone for spiritual development.

(c) Section 57(3) of the Education Act directs that *“Every school shall provide in its curriculum for the provision of religious instruction to its pupils on the premises of the school, but no pupil shall be compelled to attend any particular religious class or worship against his will if he is above the age of eighteen years or against the will of his parent or parents, if he has not yet attained the age of eighteen years.”* These words **“every school shall”** indicates that it is mandatory to do so, then why the obligatory

term is used here? For a religious curriculum to be provided? While Tanzania is a secular state, with secular education? Maybe this could be left for religious schools or schools owned by religious organizations and not public schools which are owned by the secular state. Therefore section 57(3) contradicts article 3 and article 19(1) of the constitution. Why section 57(3) of the law requires every school to provide in its curriculum for the provision of religious instructions to pupils on the premises of the school? In a nation which is secular one, with secular education? Is this law or these sections not contravening the constitution? Even though the law has given an exception that no pupil shall be compelled to attend any particular religious class or worship against his will if he is above the age of eighteen years or against the will of his parent or parents, if he has not yet attained the age of eighteen years. Yet the law was not supposed to require every school to provide in its curriculum matters of religious instructions, this was to be left free to be decided by the one who believes because this is a secular state, and matters of faith are private affairs of the person concerned. This is also emphasized in article 19(2) of the constitution.

Grounding on the fact that since Tanzania is a secular state then it is expected to provide secular education which is regulated by secular laws and not a vice-versa. confusing sections which are section 2 and section 57(3) of the Education Act especially those statements or words which in one way or another do contradict constitutions as it has been revealed in this essay, they must be removed or changed very immediate by the authorities vested with powers of either reform or amend laws so as to remove these ambiguities and leave Tanzania to flourish as a total free secular state.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Assistant Editor African Freethinker / <http://www.in-sightjournal.com> (Tanzania) a Lawyer, a Teacher, an Advocate of the High Court of Tanzania, a Notary Public and Commissioner for Oaths, Member of the Bar Association of Tanzania Main Land (Tanganyika Law Society.) He holds Degree of Bachelor of Laws (L.L.B), Degree of Master of Laws In Information and Communication Technology Law (L.L.M – ICT – LAWS), Post Graduate Diploma In Legal Practice (PGD – LP), Diploma in Education (DIP – EDUC), Certificate of Admission of Advocate (High Court of Tanzania).

[2] Individual Publication Date: February 27, 2021: <https://in-sightjournal.com/2021/02/27/tanzania-a-secular-state-secular-education-but-with-some-elements-of-religious-influence/>.

[3] Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE) – Is a Parastatal Organization under the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (M0EVT) charged with the responsibility of ensuring the quality of education in Tanzania at the Pre-School, Primary, Secondary and Teacher Training Levels. Civics Manual for Secondary Teachers and College Tutors, by Tanzania Institute of Education is a guide to Teachers and Tutors of Civics to prepare Civics lessons (Lesson modules) basing on the authorized syllabus in

Tanzania. The manual aimed to add skills and knowledge of Civics Teachers and Tutors in the Teaching of Civics.

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Combating Witch Persecution in Africa: Looking Ahead to 2021

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Combating Witch Persecution in Africa: Looking Ahead to 2021[1][2]

Dr. Leo Igwe is the Founder of the Humanist Association of Nigeria, the Founder & CEO of Advocacy for Alleged Witches, and the Convener of the Decade of Activism Against Witch Persecution in Africa: 2020-2030.

Although the coronavirus pandemic dealt a heavy blow to global public health and economy, this year has seen some positive developments, and some signs of hope for humanity and pointers to a better future. One of such developments is the launching of an advocacy campaign against witch persecution on the continent of Africa. Witchcraft allegations constitute a form of death sentence for the accused in the region. And this should not be the case because witchcraft is a form of superstition. Since January, the Advocacy for Alleged Witches (AFAW) has been working to fill in the gaps in activism against witchcraft allegations in the region. Witchcraft belief has been associated with the African continent for too long. Western anthropologists designate witchcraft as the gatekeeping concept for Africa, which is the frame to study and understand Africa including African thought and culture. This designation is no longer helpful if it ever was and it is time that the concept was discarded.

While there have been reports of egregious abuses linked to witch persecution in Africa, very little is being done to eradicate this social menace. Local and international programs to combat witch

persecution leave much to be desired on all fronts. Western NGOs dominate and drive efforts to end witch persecution in the region. Unfortunately, many of these NGOs have some hidden agenda that is incompatible with dispelling witchcraft fears and anxieties in the region. In the name of what they call “respect for African religious and cultural beliefs”, these organizations have betrayed the cause of ending witch persecution in Africa because these organizations cannot call African witchcraft by its name: superstition. So these Western NGOs organize wishy-washy programs that paper over the problem of witchcraft allegations.

Look, to end witch persecution in Africa, the region needs robust and effective campaign programs with a clear and categorical position against witchcraft imputation and witch-hunting. Africa needs NGOs that operate without double standards, organizations that are genuinely committed to eradicating this dark and destructive phenomenon without reservations.

In its Decade of Activism 2020-2030, AFAW outlined a vision to end abuses linked to witchcraft allegations in 2030. It aims to realize a critical mass of advocates against witch persecution in all African countries. AFAW proposed an expiry date for witchcraft imputation in the region to ensure that witch persecution is approached with the urgency that it deserves. Expectedly, this Decade of Action has elicited mixed reactions. Some people think that the target is unrealistic and cannot be achieved given

the enormity of the problem. These persons welcomed the vision to end witch persecution by 2030 but wondered where AFAW would get the resources to achieve this objective. Others were of the notion that the target of 2030 was realizable and that ending witch persecution in Africa was long overdue. British scientist and humanist, Richard Dawkins tweeted saying that we should not wait that long to end this violent and horrific abuse.

Since January, AFAW has hit the ground running. Despite the restrictions occasioned by the global pandemic, the campaign has made progress on various fronts. AFAW has been visible in local and international media. It has used reports and articles, press releases, and statements to challenge the narratives of witchcraft. Witchcraft belief persists in Africa because witchcraft narratives are seldom questioned or critically examined. AFAW exists to change this culture of dogma and blind faith. AFAW's declaration that witchcraft was a myth and a form of superstition was widely reported in the media. Media outlets found the declaration newsworthy because the predominant notion was that witchcraft was real and witches existed. In churches and mosques, schools, colleges and universities, over the radio and television, on print and electronic media, Africans are taught that witches and other demonic and occult forces are facts, not fantasies. Many of those who promote these narratives are priests, pastors, and mallams, quasi clerics and spiritualists who claim to speak in the name of the traditional, Christian, or Islamic God. The largely unchallenged dubious views of these godmen and women are reported in the media. And they reinforce witchcraft beliefs and fears in the minds of the people. AFAW has been critical of the preaching and questionable claims of witch-hunting clerics. AFAW has challenged witch-hunting pastors who claimed that they healed or could heal Covid-19 patients. The skeptical challenge generated debates and discussions on social media for weeks. AFAW will continue to use its media statements to educate and enlighten, and to persuade Africans to question and critically examine witchcraft ideas.

In the past one year, AFAW has intervened in several cases of witch persecution. It has rescued and helped relocate accused persons. AFAW continues to support child victims while urging the police and other state authorities to arrest and prosecute suspected witch hunters. Beyond Nigeria, AFAW has petitioned the police and other state authorities in Kenya, Zambia, Ghana, Malawi, and Liberia urging them to take action against witch killers and witch-finders. Unfortunately, 2020 has been marked by tragic incidents linked to witchcraft

beliefs. Alleged witches have lynched and stoned to death in various African countries. In Ghana, a local mob set an alleged Akua Denteh ablaze. In Nigeria, some witch hunters including a local politician lynched 15 persons suspected of witchcraft in Boki, Cross River state. Mobs burnt alleged witches in the Kisii region in Kenya and stoned them to death in Dedza, Malawi. In fact the list of victims goes on. That these horrific incidents continue to happen in this 21st century is a cause for concern and more cogent actions. Proactive measures are urgently needed locally and globally to address this problem.

Looking ahead to 2021, AFAW will continue the public education and enlightenment of the African public. It will continue to pressure state authorities to take necessary measures to dispel witchcraft fears and anxieties. AFAW will work to end impunity for crimes linked to witchcraft beliefs and ensure that witch-killers and witch hunters are brought to justice. The internet has helped in getting advocates to alert AFAW of cases of witch persecution in the region. AFAW will liaise with its partners, families of victims, community leaders across the region to ensure a rapid response to any instance of witch persecution. It will strive to extend support to the victims, educate and enlighten witchcraft accusers and believers. Witch persecution happens more often in rural communities where there is a limited presence of state institutions and services.

AFAW will work with all affected communities to specifically address the root causes and drivers of witchcraft allegations. AFAW is aware of some complex underlying drivers of witch-hunting in the region. In *A Short Textbook of Preventive Medicine for the Tropics*, Lucas and Gilles(1982) noted some development features in African countries: "Limited central organization of services, scattered populations living in small self-contained units, low level of economic development, limited educational facilities, and inadequate control of common agents of diseases". They noted that "Some of these communities are still held tightly in the vicious circle of ignorance, poverty, and disease".

Unfortunately these observed features of the African society of the 70s and 80s apply to Africa today. One must add superstition to that circle because ignorance, poverty, and disease provide a subsoil for the proliferation of irrational fears and anxieties. As AFAW's Decade of Activism enters its second year, the movement will press ahead with its vision and mission. It will draw attention of global, regional, and local institutions to this vicious circle and other dire socio-economic situations and stressful conditions that breed witch persecution and killing.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Founder, Humanist Association of Nigeria; Founder & CEO, Advocacy for Alleged Witches; Convener, Decade of Activism Against Witch Persecution in Africa: 2020-2030.

[2] Individual Publication Date: March 28, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/combating-witch-persecution-in-africa-looking-ahead-to-2021>.

No Safe Place for Alleged Witches in the Central African Republic

2021-03-26

Author: Dr. Leo Igwe

Numbering: Issue 1.B, Idea: African Freethinking

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Words: 966

Keywords: alleged witches, Central African Republic, Leo Igwe, superstition, witches.

No Safe Place for Alleged Witches in the Central African Republic[1][2]

Dr. Leo Igwe is the Founder of the Humanist Association of Nigeria, the Founder & CEO of Advocacy for Alleged Witches, and the Convener of the Decade of Activism Against Witch Persecution in Africa: 2020-2030.

An [Al Jazeera report](#) has revealed the dangers that alleged witches face in the Central African Republic. But is that really news? Not at all. CAR is one of those African countries where witch persecution is pervasive. There have been several reports and studies of how this country of 4.6 million people has grappled with the destructive phenomenon since independence. This report is replete with many gaps and misleading insights.

The report links witch persecution to social disintegration occasioned by a brutal civil war in the country. That is a valid point, isn't it? But if one may ask: Was CAR socially integrated before the war? CAR did not have a socially robust system before the conflict, did it? So one needs to take a critical look at a report that draws a connection between witch persecution and the conflict in the CAR. No doubt, the war has destroyed institutions that could have been used to protect and defend elderly persons especially women. Thus there are no effective mechanisms to guarantee the safety of this vulnerable population. So the report concludes that alleged witches are attacked and killed with impunity in the CAR. Now, since witchcraft allegations and witch persecution predate the civil war on the CAR, it is pertinent to look beyond the conflict for a more persuasive explanation of the

manifestation of witch persecution in contemporary CAR. Some of the factors linked to the war had been there before the war- a dearth of medical personnel, poor health infrastructure, witch finding chiefs, etc. The war could only have exacerbated the social conditions and made the target population more vulnerable. Now let us look at the issues raised in the report.

Sentence Without Appeal

The report quoted the president of the female lawyers association in the CAR, Nadia Carine Fornel Poutou who said that the existing law was unhelpful in resolving witchcraft matters. State laws in the CAR do not recognize mystical matters so state authorities cannot intervene in witchcraft issues. But this is nonsense. Must state laws acknowledge the reality of witchcraft before it can effectively tackle related crimes? This often-repeated proposition in African witchcraft literature is sterile and misguided. It has been advanced to give witch persecution as in the case of the CAR a free pass and to exoticize African witchcraft. State authorities should be pressured to enforce the law and tackle witch persecution. There is an ample provision under the law for the prosecution and punishment of those who make false allegations or those who take laws into their hands by attacking or killing alleged witches. Criminals should not be excused or exonerated on the ground that the state law does not deal with mystical issues as the report suggests. State laws deal with murder, assault, and abduction. Don't they? In cases where the state

authorities are failing in their duties, measures must be taken to compel state actors to fulfill their responsibility to protect citizens.

Unsafe At Home and In Prison

The report notes that death is inescapable for alleged witches in the CAR. Alleged witches could be killed by the mob. They also suffer death while locked up in their homes or in prison. Alleged witches have to choose between self-imprisonment at a family house or voluntary state imprisonment.

While imprisoned at home, they seldom venture outside because they could be attacked or killed. But family imprisonment is effective in situations where some family members support the accused. Otherwise alleged witches flee to the state prisons. Even in public prisons, alleged witches are not safe. As the report says, they could also be attacked and killed by witch believing prison guards or other prisoners.

In linking witch persecution to the conflict, the report states that thousands of persons who have been traumatized by the war are prone to be accused of witchcraft. But there is an oversight in drawing this connection. The report ignores the state of mind of the accusers. It overlooks the fact that those traumatized by the conflict are likely to indulge in witchcraft allegations. Trauma engenders irrational fears and anxieties. Witchcraft allegations originate from the accusers, not the accused, and should be explained in relation to the mental state of the accusers, not the accused. So it is the imputers of witchcraft who need psychiatric attention and care.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Founder, Humanist Association of Nigeria; Founder & CEO, Advocacy for Alleged Witches; Convener, Decade of Activism Against Witch Persecution in Africa: 2020-2030.

[2] Individual Publication Date: March 26, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/no-safe-place-for-alleged-witches-in-the-central-african-republic>.

Incidentally, the report rehashes the mistaken position of some western anthropologists who explain the manifestation of witchcraft allegations in relation to the state of mind of the accused. The field of African witchcraft is in need of an analytical shift.

This shift in focus from the accused to the accusers is vital in properly situating witchcraft allegations and in understanding the precarious state of alleged witches in the region.

The Advocacy for Alleged Witches urges the authorities in the CAR to take administrative and legislative measures to combat witch persecution in the country. Given the pervasiveness of witchcraft-related abuse, CAR needs to declare witch persecution a humanitarian emergency because witchcraft allegation poses a serious threat to the life, health, safety, security, and well being of the citizens. CAR should prosecute a national awareness program to educate and reorient witchcraft believers and accusers in the country. The people of the CAR need to realize that witchcraft is superstition and that alleged witches are innocent. State authorities and community leaders should cooperate in dispelling witchcraft fears and anxieties. The practice of witch-hunting – witch trial and forced confession- should stop. Local chiefs should use their positions to educate and enlighten the people in their various communities. They should stop the practice of using potions to establish the guilt of occult harm or to coerce alleged witches to confess. CAR should get its citizens to abandon the belief in witchcraft and other superstitions and embrace science, reason, and critical thinking.

Conversation with Dr. Ricardo Rosselló Nevares on Democratic Participation, Colonialism, and Former President Donald J. Trump: Former Governor, Puerto Rico (3)

2021-03-22



Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Numbering: Issue 26.A, Idea: Outliers & Outsiders (21)

Place of Publication: Langley, British Columbia, Canada

Title: In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal

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Individual Publication Date: March 22, 2021

Issue Publication Date: May 1, 2021

Name of Publisher: In-Sight Publishing

Frequency: Three Times Per Year

Words: 2,181

Abstract

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.

Keywords: colonial territory, Donald Trump, Puerto Rico, Ricardo Rosselló Nevares, Trump Administration.

Conversation with Dr. Ricardo Rosselló Nevares on Democratic Participation, Colonialism, and Former President Donald J. Trump: Former Governor, Puerto Rico (3)

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

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. I think, obviously, this is my opinion; the man is flawed. Essentially, President Trump had about a 100% approval rating in Puerto Rico. 10% for and 80% (or talk to him about policy: didn't care, didn't even try so) against. Not very different from the rest of the States. I don't think he cared about policy. I tried to to hide the fact that he didn't care. But I think a lot of people underestimated him, as well.

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 have never 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.

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. 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 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. 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?

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. 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.

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?" 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.

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, 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.

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. 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 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. I think there needs to be patience, time to heal, and time to understand the phenomena that was this presidency. It is an interesting one.

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.

Appendix II: Citation Style Listing

American Medical Association (AMA): Jacobsen S. *Conversation with Dr. Ricardo Rosselló Nevares on Democratic Participation, Colonialism, and Former President Donald J. Trump: Former Governor, Puerto Rico (3)* [Online]. March 2021; 26(A). Available from: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/rossello-3>.

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Chicago/Turabian, Author-Date (16th Edition): Jacobsen, Scott. 2021. *Conversation with Dr. Ricardo Rosselló Nevares on Democratic Participation, Colonialism, and Former President Donald J. Trump: Former Governor, Puerto Rico (3)*. In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal. 26.A. <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/rossello-3>.

Chicago/Turabian, Humanities (16th Edition): Jacobsen, Scott “*Conversation with Dr. Ricardo Rosselló Nevares on Democratic Participation, Colonialism, and Former President Donald J. Trump: Former Governor, Puerto Rico (3)*.” In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal. 26.A (March 2021). <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/rossello-3>.

Harvard: Jacobsen, S. 2021, ‘*Conversation with Dr. Ricardo Rosselló Nevares on Democratic Participation, Colonialism, and Former President Donald J. Trump: Former Governor, Puerto Rico (3)*’, In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal, vol. 26.A. Available from: <<http://www.in-sightjournal.com/rossello-3>>.

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Conversation with Paul Cooijmans on Glia Society, Games, Tests, Puzzles, Thoth, Policy, and Absolute Freedom of Speech: Administrator, Glia Society (4)

2021-03-22



Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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Abstract

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.

Keywords: copy, Douglas R. Hofstadter, Field of eternal integrity, font, games, Glia Society, Paul Cooijmans, publications, Thoth.

Conversation with Paul Cooijmans on Glia Society, Games, Tests, Puzzles, Thoth, Policy, and Absolute Freedom of Speech: Administrator, Glia Society (4)

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

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 astrologer 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 childish 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 aforesaid 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.

Appendix II: Citation Style Listing

American Medical Association (AMA): Jacobsen S. *Conversation with Paul Cooijmans on Glia Society, Games, Tests, Puzzles, Thoth, Policy, and Absolute Freedom of Speech: Administrator, Glia Society (4)* [Online]. March 2021; 26(A). Available from: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/cooijmans-4>.

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Conversation with Gulalai Ismail on Father's Rights Activism in Pakistan, Humanism, and the International Humanist and Ethical Union/Humanists International: Co-Founder, Aware Girls (1)

2021-03-22

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Numbering: Issue 26.A, Idea: Outliers & Outsiders (21)

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Abstract

Gulalai Ismail is a Co-Founder of Aware Girls. She has been awarded the Democracy Award from the National Endowment for Democracy, the Anna Politkovskaya Award, and recognized as one of the 100 Leading Global Thinkers of 2013 by *Foreign Policy*. She discusses: rights activism and her father; Humanism; and the International Humanist and Ethical Union/Humanists International.

Keywords: Aware Girls, blasphemy, Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Convention of the Rights of the Child, Gulalai Ismail, Humanism, Islam, Pakistan, Sunni, Wahhabi, Zia-ul-Haq.

Conversation with Gulalai Ismail on Father's Rights Activism in Pakistan, Humanism, and the International Humanist and Ethical Union/Humanists International: Co-Founder, Aware Girls (1)

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

Interview conducted April 24, 2020.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: So, let's start from very early age, even before, your father was – and is – a human rights activist well-known in Pakistan. What kinds of rights activism was he involved in while growing up and while you were also observing him as a youngster?

Gulalai Ismail[1],[2]: As a child, I saw my father as a human rights activist. He was working on the issues of democracy, even before I was born. He was involved in resistance against the military dictatorship of Zia-ul-Haq in Pakistan.

He is in political history as one of the darkest military dictatorships of Pakistan. My father worked for democracy, even during the military dictatorship there. He was put in prison many times.

Growing up, I saw him working on economic inequality and the economic empowerment of women. He was running a program to economically empower women through small loans. It was a fabulous program. You could see how it was helping women in the rural areas to run their own businesses and become economically empowered.

He was working against terrorism and violent religious extremism. He was very vocal against extremism. I was very young, maybe 10-years-old. We had to leave our village. He was attacked for his beliefs, his ideas, and issues related to blasphemy and religious extremism.

Because of that situation, my father decided to move to Peshawar. He didn't want us to live in an

environment where there are risks to life and livelihood based on your opinion. He moved to Peshawar and continued to work for democracy and human rights.

A lot of his work was around peacebuilding and strengthening democracy and local governments. He worked on issues of domestic abuse. He worked on issues of child marriages. He worked on a range of issues.

I remember when he was working on corporal punishment. He was doing research. My father used to run an NGO for children's rights. It was working on child rights and doing research on corporal punishment.

Right as my father was working on it, my brother was badly beaten in his school. It was all over the news. My father made sure to not let this go; a child should not get beaten in school.

As a child, I viewed my father resisting oppression, resisting against class oppression. If his children were badly treated, then he was not simply letting this go away. He was making the world better for women, children, and other people.

He was vocal on the state's policies regarding extremism and jihad. It was a time after 9/11. Now, Jihad is known as terrorism around the whole world. Back then, it was not viewed as terrorism as the whole world.

When it happened in Afghanistan, it was in the 1990s when the Taliban were ruling Afghanistan. Pakistan as a state had been supporting the Taliban and the jihadis. My father used to speak out against this saying the jihadism is terrorism. He was given a blasphemy case.

This was the most difficult time for us. Our father was booked for blasphemy. He was put in prison. He got released on bail later. He fought the case for seven years. After 9/11, of course, many things changed in the world. The Taliban were no longer seen as religious leaders, but as terrorist leaders.

My father's case was dropped as a result. He was released. But it continues. One thing he taught us. You have to speak up for your rights. If you do not get your rights, in communities like this, you have to fight hard and speak for your rights. I was living in this kind of household.

My father was engaged in political movements, in civil society movements. He was working against class inequalities. He was working against religious extremism and for human rights. I was a child grown in an environment of human rights.

Our childhood story books were about equality. They were about rights. I read the *Convention of the Rights of the Child* when I was 11 years old or 12-years-old. I learned the CEDAW, the *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, from a very young age. My father taught the human rights perspective. This helped a lot in what I am doing today.

Jacobsen: Was the word "humanism" floating around at all?

Ismail: The word "humanist" has been known in different connotations in Pakistan. My father introduced me to the word "humanist." I do not know when this word was floating in Pakistan. It was not an era of social media. It was not a tech-savvy time.

My father introduced me in 2005. I attended a human rights leadership course organized by an organization for women and girls. This course helped me unlearn so many things and boxes; I had learned or internalized growing up in my community.

This helped me unlearn stereotypes and vices. It was an amazing human rights course. Also, the course gave the questioning of everything, even questioning religion, questioning status quo, questioning institutions. I engaged in a lot of debates on religion with my father.

He was like, 'It is time to introduce Humanism.' He introduced me to the website. Now, it is known as Humanists International. Before, it was known as the International Humanist and Ethical Union or IHEU. He introduced me to the website of IHEU.

That's when I was introduced to Humanism. Also, I became a member of the organization. I was running an organization called Aware Girls. We became a part of IHEU. That's how I became introduced to the word Humanism.

In online spaces, the word may have been floating. These are very difficult times in Pakistan. These are the times when the religious extremism was increasingly growing in Pakistan. It was a time when 9/11 happened.

It was a time when the militant organizations were organizations themselves in Pakistan and organized themselves. It is not simply extremist organizations advanced narratives. Our state policy has been actively promoting religious intolerance and religious parties.

The Taliban were organizing, targeting, and killing people. By 2007, the Taliban had already occupied

parts of Pakistan. Their suicide attacks already began in Pakistan. By 2007, our city was almost facing daily suicide attacks. Targeted killings were happening. Abductions were happening.

It was really a non-peaceful decade in our region. It was not an easy time to be there, to be openly a humanist or openly a non-religious person. Because if you're openly a humanist, you could easily have been killed.

Even now, if you look at the statistics of Pakistan, you cannot come out as a non-religious person in Pakistan. You will be accused of blasphemy. You can be killed in mob violence. Many people have lost their lives in mob violence. The blasphemy laws in Pakistan are very regressive laws.

They are used against people who are critical of religion or who do not fit into the box of Wahhabi Islam, Wahhabi Sunni Islam. Sometimes, even to settle some scores, the law is used there. Then it was not easy to be a humanist and talk about it. It has never been easy.

There weren't any humanist networks. It was much later when social media became very common. People started using Facebook and social media. Different social media groups were formed. We started connecting with other humanists and other non-religious people.

A few years ago, the person was behind – you know the story Scott – who was protesting and then was later arrested. The networks were disrupted later as well.

Jacobsen: When people think about the term atheist or agnostic, they more readily assume: if something negative is happening, then it is more serious. When people hear the term humanist and something negative happening to a humanist, my sense is there is less urgency around it.

Even though, there can be as much or more discrimination against them. You're perfectly well-aware of this on a personal level. Why is that?

Ismail: In Pakistan, it doesn't matter if you identify agnostic, atheist, or humanist. It doesn't matter. You will face similar kinds of hostility. Mashal Khan who was killed in mob violence in university. He

was killed three years ago. This young student, his Facebook profile is online to this day saying, "Humanist."

He was accused of blasphemy. He was killed in mob violence by his own class fellows, by his own university fellows, brutally. It doesn't matter as long as the box is non-religious, and the box is not Wahhabi Sunni Muslim. Then you are in danger in Pakistan.

Even if you are from a minority sect of Muslim, your life will be in danger. Ahmadi community in Pakistan recognize themselves as Muslim. The constitution of Pakistan states the Ahmadi sect is non-Muslim. It forbids them from saying that they are Muslims.

It forbids them from reading the Quran. They can be charged with blasphemy. There have been many riots in Pakistan against the Ahmadi community where the houses were burned, the Ahmadis were killed.

There were labels on shops in some parts of Pakistan saying, "Anyone, but Ahmadis and dogs, can enter here." There is a huge persecution of Ahmadi Muslim communities in Pakistan. There are terrorist organizations, which can be banned terrorist organizations.

Nonetheless, they keep declaring the minority Muslim sect, Shia Islam, as non-Muslims. They keep saying, "They are non-Muslims. Therefore, they are apostates. Since they are apostates, they can be killed." If you are in Pakistan in this box of Wahhabi Sunni Muslims, you are okay.

If any other box, then you are in trouble. If you are in any box that is non-religious, whether humanist, atheist, or agnostic, you will be in a difficult situation in Pakistan. In Pakistan, people are not aware of "humanism" as a term.

They will believe this is someone who believes in human values, human wellbeing, and for the betterment of humanity. They do not necessarily understand the meaning of humanist. If I say, "I am a humanist." There will be *very few* people who would understand what the word "humanist" means, actually.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Co-Founder, Aware Girls.

[2] Individual Publication Date: March 22, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/gulalai-ismail-1>; Full Issue Publication Date: May 1, 2021: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

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American Medical Association (AMA): Jacobsen S. *Conversation with Gulalai Ismail on Father's Rights Activism in Pakistan, Humanism, and the International Humanist and Ethical Union/Humanists International: Co-Founder, Aware Girls (1)* [Online]. March 2021; 26(A). Available from: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/gulalai-ismail-1>.

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Conversation with Saba Ismail on Family History in Pakistan, Gulalai Ismail, and Aware Girls: Co-Founder, Aware Girls (1)

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Abstract

Saba Ismail is a Co-Founder of Aware Girls. At the age of 15, she co-founded Aware Girls for the empowerment of young women in leadership capacities and to advance social change. She completed a Masters in Biotechnology from COMSATS University Abbot Asad and the Hurford Youth Fellowship with the National Endowment for Democracy. She has worked as Youth Ambassador for Asia Pacific Youth Network (APYN: 2012-2013), the Steering Committee of UNOY, and is an alumnus of the International Visitors Leadership Program in the United States. Ismail was recognized by *Foreign Policy* as one of the 100 Leader Global Thinkers in 2013. She is the recipient of the Chirac Prize for Conflict Prevention. She discusses: human rights and the family in Pakistan; and Gulalai Ismail and Aware Girls.

Keywords: Aware Girls, Convention on the Rights of the Child, girls' rights, Gulalai Ismail, middle-class, Pakistan, Saba Ismail, The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, women's rights.

Conversation with Saba Ismail on Family History in Pakistan, Gulalai Ismail, and Aware Girls: Co-Founder, Aware Girls (1)

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

Interview conducted July 2, 2020.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: You come from Pakistan. You have a family history there. What is the family history there? What are some other contexts for your family, even farther back than your father for Pakistan and for human rights?

My father was accused of liberalism and secularism. With his political ideologies, we had to leave our village. We moved to Peshawar. Since I remember, I have never been told or taught that I was different than my brothers.

Saba Ismail[1],[2]: Gulalai and I come from a middle-class family. Our grandfather was an artisan. My father became a professor. He and my mother became activists. My mother is a housewife. We were brought up by our parents. We were born in a rural village in the Northwest of Pakistan. When I was 7-years-old, we had to leave the village to live.

My parents ensured equal opportunities with our brothers. We grew up in an environment where gender equality was not only preached. It was practiced, too. For example, as kids, in the area where we grew up, men don't do the housework and the chores.

However, in our house, my brothers would clean the bathroom or elsewhere. Even for my cousins and other extended family members, it was a different situation. As we were growing up, our childhood stories were not about Cinderella or a prince coming to save the princess.

Our childhood stories were about the CEDAW (*The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women*), the UDHR or the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, and the Constitution of Pakistan.

Generally, in Pakistan, we don't read about the *Constitution* in schools or in academia, or about general strikes, basically. There is nothing like this being taught in schools. At our home, our father taught basic human rights. My father used to have workshops with us.

We learned and were introduced to these concepts, whether the concept of secularism, Humanism, or human rights. Our father would give us a paragraph of a convention to read. We had to read a point and understand it, and interpret it to the rest of our siblings.

So, when people do training in the NGO sector, there are group activities and team-building activities. Our father used to do all of these growing up. While growing up, every day was learning and unlearning.

In our schools, we were taught people who were not Muslims had to be beheaded. It is the duty of Muslims to preach the religion. We were taught to hate people who are from other religious backgrounds.

We were taught a Muslim should not share a cup or anything, e.g., a utensil, with a non-Muslim. Muslims should not shake hands with non-Muslims because non-Muslims are dirty. We were introduced to these concepts in academia, in the schooling system, and in our society, generally.

At home, we were taught everyone is equal. Everyone has rights. You cannot hate someone based on their religious identity. It was difficult for a child to learn a completely different set of values at home; a completely different set of things taught than things taught in society, in school, and in the media.

I remember when I was young. We always had hard print newspapers at home. I remember reading descriptions for the government jobs, a sweeper job, for example.

They would want a non-Muslim. It was a requirement. If someone has to apply for a sweeper position, their religion should not be Muslim. This was the type of thing. These were the kinds of things that we were learning from media.

When they advertised these advertisements for jobs in the newspaper, when you read it, and integrate it, and then get a completely different set of things at home, in the public space, you had to cover up and behave publicly.

Boys would go out in public. But we were not allowed, not by family, but the society. Our family was worried about men dominating society. We lived in completely different worlds at one time.

Because our father knew if he introduced us to these concepts at a young age, only then would we become different human beings. Then these concepts, without them, we wouldn't be who we are today.

Both of our parents, our mother is a housewife. She has been to school, but only until 3rd or 4th grade. She ended up not continuing her education because there was no girls' school in her area. Her father didn't allow girls to go to another village for education.

My mother ended up not going to school and not getting an education. When we were being brought up, like both of our parents gave support, our father had the ideological side, the mind. Our mother was the one more implementing the ideas of the children.

Her focus was on education and learning all these different things from our father. My mother would do the housework at all hours, so we would have enough time on our hands and could do all these different things.

They invested their time. They invested their energy in bringing up all of their children. Also, what our father did differently, in the patriarchal and male dominant society, he would take Gulalai and I to different programs.

He used to work in collaboration with different NGOs, INGOs, etc. We used to go to the events that were organized by our father's organization and participate in them. We were, actually, exposed to and had the opportunity to meet women who were leading an NGO and were in positions of power.

Also, he showed us. Women don't have to do what society is telling them. The roles and responsibilities of society. It was, 'We can be like them.' He showed us, role models, from a young age.

For us, growing up, it was different compared to other girls and women. Also, we saw that our father also stood up for girls' education within our family. Our own cousins were not allowed to go to school or to go to college to continue their studies.

What our father did, he would talk to the parents. He would say, "I am a parent. They can come to our house. They can stay for a few days." Sometimes, he would not tell them about being a professor. He would teach them.

They would spend some time with us and help with household things, or spend time with our cousins. It was excused to let these girls have months, sometimes, at our house. My father would teach them everything.

He would enroll our cousins in colleges or schools. Sometimes, in Pakistan, people can give private exams. If they don't have to go to school or college to study classes, they study at home and only give the exams and pass.

We saw our parents. If other girls from our family were not allowed to go to schools or colleges, then they became able to develop ideas. They did the best that they could do in their capacity to make sure some girls can have degrees.

I've never seen someone standing up for other girls in a way trying to create opportunities for other girls as well in our family. This was the kind of childhood and family for us. As I said earlier, it was not only about teaching us concepts, but showing us.

They showed us. You can stand up for someone's education and be creative. You can help other women doing this other work. *You* can be like that. This was early childhood. We grew up and had our own ideologies. Our father drove and mentored us, in our work.

Jacobsen: Your name should be as prominent as Gulalai, but is not as prominent as Gulalai. In light of the fact, you co-founded Aware Girls with her. Which is interesting, when people think of prodigies, they think of some mathematical or scientific pursuit.

But I don't see prodigy applied to morals or rights-based prodigies as much. Gulalai, your sister, and you seem to me like former moral prodigies. Because you co-founded Aware Girls as adolescents.

In a country, Pakistan, rated among the worst in the world for the status of women and girls, so, what was the driver in the context of all this upbringing and experience with women leaders,

and so on, for founding Aware Girls? What was the inspiration there?

Ismail: The inspiration was one of our cousins who dropped out of school one day. She was told that she was not allowed anymore. One day, she was told, "Okay, you can't go to school. Because you're getting married to a man who was 15 years an elder to her."

We were too young. I was 13. Gulalai was 12 at that time. We couldn't do anything. We were already teenagers. We didn't understand the contexts of a lot of these. We wanted to help. But we couldn't at that time.

We were like, "What can we do so other girls do not have to go through this?" We have seen dreams shattered. When our cousin used to come to our house, she used to wear pants and shirts of our brothers and act as a pilot.

You see someone so closely. They're desperate and passionate about something. Then their dreams were gotten destroyed because of their gender. They have to get married because girls are a burden to their parents, and at a young age as well.

We knew it was wrong. But we didn't know how to fix it, at that time. We had to do something. That was the inspiration, which led to the foundation of Aware Girls. Now, you mentioned Gulalai is more prominent.

One of the reasons I tell people. It does come across. It is not a competition among sisters. We are best working together as a team. She has certain skills. When she's passionate, she is seen as a spokesperson who can articulate things.

My set of skills comes at a different level. I'm better at the managerial level, managing finances and office management. I am not saying Gulalai is not organized. I am saying I am more organized and structured at the organizational level.

People with different personalities. We have one sister who is a better storyteller. Gulalai is more like a better storyteller. This is the best fit for us. It worked well in Pakistan. Like I said, I took on certain roles and responsibilities, which I liked.

It was never a competition. Who is more prominent or well-known? It wasn't there. When Gulalai gets an award, it's my award. When Gulalai gets recognition, it's my recognition. We were never separate individuals in that way. My siblings would all tease me. Saying, "You're her secretary."

When we were too young, my siblings would say, "How much is your salary because you always take

her side, never say anything against her?” We were siblings. We used to fight. Gulalai used to always be on my side. I used to always be on her side.

We are one year apart. We were like twins. We went to the same school. We went to the same university. It happened almost at the same place. Our exposure and travel together to different countries. We were and are a good team; we are good together.

We complement each other so much. Also, we understand each other. We are the closest siblings. This is my answer to this person. It is more important what the organization, Aware Girls, is doing. What work are we doing? Who will it impact?

Rather than focusing on, “Who is the speaker?” People have different skill-sets. Gulalai is good at managing social media and public speaking, and saying opinions on different things. This is the good thing about us. Each has a skill set.

We become strong. It was good for the institution, for the organization. It was one thing. Everything we have achieved; we have achieved together. As I said, she has a different skill-set. I have a different skill-set.

I am working from here. Even with Covid-19, people working remotely. In the US, I used to work with Gulalai remotely. That’s it. That’s the inspiration that we got from our own family, our own cousins.

These are the things that we have done together. We co-founded the organization. We have been through thick and thin together. We had to move places. It all started years ago. We were all being harassed and persecuted, had to relocate ourselves, relocate our office, and so on.

We have been doing it. The impact that we had was really important for us.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Co-Founder, Aware Girls.

[2] Individual Publication Date: March 22, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/saba-ismail-1>; Full Issue Publication Date: May 1, 2021: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

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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



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Abstract

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.

Keywords: academia, bioengineering, biotechnology, governor, Puerto Rico, resignation, Ricardo Rosselló Nevares.

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)

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

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 things. 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 see 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 make the transition to give the opportunity for storm of things happening. Two months before, pollsPuerto Rico to move forward.

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

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.

Appendix II: Citation Style Listing

American Medical Association (AMA): Jacobsen S. *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)* [Online]. March 2021; 26(A). Available from: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/rossello-2>.

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Brazilian National Standards (ABNT): JACOBSEN, S. *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)*. In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal. 26.A, March. 2021. <<http://www.in-sightjournal.com/rossello-2>>.

Chicago/Turabian, Author-Date (16th Edition): Jacobsen, Scott. 2021. *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)*." In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal. 26.A. <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/rossello-2>.

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Vancouver/ICMJE: Jacobsen S. *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)* [Internet]. (2021, March 26(A). Available from: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/rossello-2>.

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)

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Abstract

Erik Haereid is an Actuarial Scientist and Statistician. Eivind Olsen is the Chair of Mensa Norway. Tor Arne Jørgensen is the 2019 Genius of the Year – Europe. They discuss: the 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.

Keywords: Erik Haereid, Eivind Olsen, IQ, Mensa, Mensa Norway, Tor Arne Jørgensen.

Norwegians of the High-Range Discussion with Erik Haereid, Eivind Olsen, and Tor Arne Jørgensen: Statistician & Actuarial Scientist; Chair, Mensa Norway; 2019 Genius of the Year – Europe, World Genius Directory (3)

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

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 would need. As for the other accepted tests: it all the pupils (not just of the “troublemakers”) and depends. There are several, but we don’t have a 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*

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 thiogramic 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 metronome 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 impleitory 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 outwards onto both sides by reasons as to strengthen 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

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.

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Conversation with Michael Baker on Blue Collar Labour, Geniuses, Deism, Collective Intelligence, and His Dog: Member, CIVIQ Society (1)

2021-03-15



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Abstract

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 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.

Keywords: blue-collar labour, CivIQ Society, collective intelligence, deism, EPIDA, EPIQ, IIS, Iquadrivium, ISI-S, Logiq, Michael Baker, SPIQR.

Conversation with Michael Baker on Blue Collar Labour, Geniuses, Deism, Collective Intelligence, and His Dog: Member, CIVIQ Society (1)

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

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

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

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 Warhol 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 understand why some things succeed spot. I have grown to understand the dunning-kruger while others fail. 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

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/>.

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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)

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Abstract

Bob Williams is a Member of the Triple Nine Society, Mensa International, and the International Society for Philosophical Enquiry. He discusses: 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.

Keywords: Arthur Jensen, Bob Williams, Charles Spearman, creativity, Davide Piffer, Francis Galton, g, general intelligence, genius, Hans Eysenck, Howard Gardner, Rex Jung, Ricard Haier, Robert Sternberg.

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)

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

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 enddilettantes seeking titillation but seem unable to 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

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.

Appendix II: Citation Style Listing

American Medical Association (AMA): Jacobsen S. *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 (2)* [Online]. March 2021; 26(A). Available from: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/williams-3>.

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Chicago/Turabian, Author-Date (16th Edition): Jacobsen, Scott. 2021. *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 (2)*." In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal. 26.A. <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/williams-3>.

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Vancouver/ICMJE: Jacobsen S. *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 (2)* [Internet]. (2021, March 26(A). Available from: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/williams-3>.

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

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Abstract

[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 Polymathic 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.

Keywords: Antjuan Finch, Charles Darwin, Christianity, CIVIQ Society, Creative Attitudes Inventory, intelligence, IQ, Jacob Barnett, Leonardo Da Vinci, Public Domain Intelligence Test.

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

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

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 people have told me that the test seems very hard, 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. 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: 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

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.

Appendix II: Citation Style Listing

American Medical Association (AMA): Jacobsen S. *Conversation with Antjuan Finch on Separation from Family, Christianity, Autism Spectrum, Leonardo Da Vinci, Jacob Barnett, CAI, and PDIT:*

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Chicago/Turabian, Author-Date (16th Edition): Jacobsen, Scott. 2021. *Conversation with Antjuan Finch on Separation from Family, Christianity, Autism Spectrum, Leonardo Da Vinci, Jacob Barnett, CAI, and PDIT: Member, CIVIQ Society (2)*." In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal. 26.A. <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/finch-2>.

Chicago/Turabian, Humanities (16th Edition): Jacobsen, Scott "Conversation with Antjuan Finch on Separation from Family, Christianity, Autism Spectrum, Leonardo Da Vinci, Jacob Barnett, CAI, and PDIT: Member, CIVIQ Society (2)." In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal. 26.A (March 2021). <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/finch-2>.

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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



Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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Abstract

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.

Keywords: American Mensa, Executive Committee, intelligence, IQ, Larae Bakerink, Mensa Foundation, Mensa International, San Diego.

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)

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

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 on 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/>.

Appendix II: Citation Style Listing

American Medical Association (AMA): Jacobsen S. *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)* [Online]. March 2021; 26(A). Available from: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/bakerink-1>.

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

2021-03-01

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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Abstract

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.

Keywords: family, genius, Hiroshi Murasaki, intelligence, IQ, ISI-Society, love, philosophy.

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

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

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

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.

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.

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. 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 genocracy, 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 Abrepe, 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 amato l'indipendenza e il lavoro. Non ho mai chiesto 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: programmavo, 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.^[3]

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 vediamo. 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.^[L]^[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.^[L]^[SEP]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 Figue 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 sentirsi parte e da cui sentirsi 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 avvicinando 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 Abrepe, Opera tenet rotas" cioè il seminatore si dilegua, 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.

Appendix II: Citation Style Listing

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Free of Charge 7 – “Amsterdam Declaration” (2002), Indigeneity and Humanism, and Beyond Western-Dominant Humanism

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Abstract

Dr. Herb Silverman is the Founder of the Secular Coalition for America, the Founder of the Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry, and the Founder of the Atheist/Humanist Alliance student group at the College of Charleston. He authored [Complex variables](#) (1975), [Candidate Without a Prayer: An Autobiography of a Jewish Atheist in the Bible Belt](#) (2012) and [An Atheist Stranger in a Strange Religious Land: Selected Writings from the Bible Belt](#) (2017). He co-authored [The Fundamentals of Extremism: The Christian Right in America](#) (2003) with Kimberley Blaker and Edward S. Buckner, [Complex Variables with Applications](#) (2007) with Saminathan Ponnusamy, and [Short Reflections on Secularism](#) (2019), [Short Reflections on American Secularism's History and Philosophy](#) (2020), and [Short Reflections on Age and Youth](#) (2020). He discusses: *Amsterdam Declaration 2002* and possibly “Amsterdam Declaration 2022”; points preliminarily brought forward for the new declaration; things to add to the potential new declaration; human intelligence and non-human intelligence rights; the environment; non-Western traditions of Humanism for formal inclusion; Indigeneity and Humanism; *Amsterdam Declaration 2002*; and the ultimate fate of religious ethics.

Keywords: Amsterdam Declaration, Herb Silverman, Free of Charge, freethought, Humanism, Indigeneity, Western.

Free of Charge 7 – “Amsterdam Declaration” (2002), Indigeneity and Humanism, and Beyond Western-Dominant Humanism

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

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: The philosophy of Humanism^[1] does not dictate to its adherents, as in a top-down dogma requiring thou shalt and thou shalt nots on some firm, transcendentalist basis. The supernatural only gets invoked as a negation of it. Even with the organizations and the statements, these amount to individuated communities and documents with individual choice as the ultimate arbiter. It took about 50 years for an advancement of the *Amsterdam*

Declaration 1952 into the Amsterdam Declaration 2002.^[2] There has been a call by the team at Humanists International for an advancement into a third edition of the Amsterdam declarations in particular. This may move forward, or has moved forward, for requests on proper ways in which to add updated concerns to the proposed third edition of the *Amsterdam Declaration*. The most recent version from 2002 (Humanists International) has been translated into 35

languages.^[3] **If an updated version proceeds in 2022, then this will be the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the organization, Humanists International, formerly the International Humanist and Ethical Union, and the third version of the Amsterdam declarations. Some of the conversations ranged around sport or physical activity, non-human intelligence, the environment, and non-Western sources within the humanist tradition. Fundamentally, what is the difference in a philosophical stance representing evolutionary changes even to ethical founding documents compared to others declaring foundational texts as complete and comprehensive for all time with nothing ever capable of edit, as in Quranic theological orientations – can't edit it – akin to the necessity of acceptance of the resurrection of Christ in Christianity? In short, what makes foundational evolution of an empirically informed ethic better than an unchanging asserted morality in centuries-old texts?**

Dr. Herb Silverman^{[4],[5]*}: Evolution made it possible for us to become Homo sapiens (humans), though my DNA shows that I am 3% Neanderthal. Charles Darwin felt that a difference between Homo sapiens and other animals is our moral sense. He said that our enhanced ability to cooperate may be the most significant distinction between us and our closest evolutionary relatives. Such cooperation, along with concern for others and a sense of fairness, may be the basis of morality in humans. Since evolution works so slowly, I don't think we can relate evolution to how moral behavior differs in humans today, often based more on philosophical or theological differences.

You ask why our empirically informed ethic today is better than an unchanging, asserted morality in centuries-old texts. Science is empirical and thrives on disagreement and on a willingness to question assumptions critically, while we search for evidence until a consensus is reached. Centuries-old texts, often called "holy" books, were written by scientifically ignorant men. Their ideas of ethics included discriminating against gays, not allowing women to have responsible positions, punishing blasphemers and heretics, and advocating for holy wars. Tying our principles to unchanging, dogmatic religious text makes no sense. Morality, to us, involves using available evidence to help decide what actions might be for the greater good of humanity. We base our ethics on what we learn from human experience, which includes the efforts of thoughtful people throughout history who have worked toward achieving their ideals. We also know

that some of our values might change as our knowledge and understanding advances.

Jacobsen: For those points brought forward, "sport or physical activity, non-human intelligence, the environment, and non-Western sources within the humanist tradition," what seems like the relevance of each to the potential next edition of the declaration?

Silverman: I'll address your question of "sport or physical activity" here. The other parts (non-human intelligence, the environment, non-Western sources) are asked about in your other questions, so I will answer those later.

Regarding sport or physical activity, I think we should encourage people to remain active for as long as they can. Playing sports, preferably non-contact, can be fun and help us keep a sound mind and body. At 78, I no longer play sports, but I exercise a lot. I walk a few miles every day with my wife, Sharon. We also lift weights or swim several times a week. What I don't like to see are so many people who only watch others play sports. When a professional player on their favorite team hits a home run or scores a goal, they congratulate each other, as if they themselves deserve credit for it. Being active in sports (and in life) is beneficial; being passive is not.

Jacobsen: Would you add anything else for consideration to such a new Amsterdam declaration?

Silverman: I would add more suggestions on how humanists and others can improve their quality of life. In addition to physical activity, we could mention the importance of having a good diet (perhaps vegetarian), getting enough sleep, reducing stress (perhaps through yoga, meditation, or other relaxation techniques), and having a sense of humor with lots of laughter.

Jacobsen: What is the core of human intelligence? What seem like the prospects for non-human intelligence and the possibility for rights (and responsibilities) applied to non-human operators? Prominent humanists, e.g., Isaac Asimov, posited science fiction ideas of positronic brains, and the like, exploring ideas like these well before the current crop of humanists.^[6] These likely have been stewing since that time, potentially even more so in the Computer Age.

Silverman: Human intelligence is the ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills. Intelligence has evolved in animals, perhaps many times. We must not forget that non-human animals can also be

intelligent. Thinking about other intelligent animals causes some humans emotional distress because they may eat these animals or use them for neurobiology research. *their distinct cultures and way of life. Find below a short history of the indigenous struggle in the international stage.*^[7]

When it comes to robots, perhaps one day they may be designed to have consciousness, and we will deal then with those implications. Isaac Asimov wrote science fiction stories about robots with a positron brain that functions as a central processing unit and, in some unspecified way, provides these robots with a form of consciousness recognizable to humans. I loved Asimov, who was president of the American Humanist Association from 1985 until his death in 1992. But keep in mind that his wonderful scientific fiction robot stories were still fiction. I hope one day we will have conscious robots, but I don't expect to see that come to pass in my lifetime.

Jacobsen: What makes the environment a core necessity as this time, especially with the ongoing climate crisis temporarily overshadowed by the coronavirus pandemic?

Silverman: I think even now that the ongoing climate crisis should not be overshadowed by the coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic will pass, but the climate crisis might never pass, only get worse. The scientific consensus at the moment seems to be that we need scientific breakthroughs and global cooperation to avoid a catastrophic rise in temperatures and climate disaster.

Jacobsen: Something which I consider important is the inclusion of non-Western, even Indigenous, proposals into the humanist canon formally. For example, the definition provided about indigeneity by the United Nations in “Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations” states:

Indigenous peoples are inheritors and practitioners of unique cultures and ways of relating to people and the environment. They have retained social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live. Despite their cultural differences, indigenous peoples from around the world share common problems related to the protection of their rights as distinct peoples.

Indigenous peoples have sought recognition of their identities, way of life and their right to traditional lands, territories and natural resources for years, yet throughout history, their rights have always been violated. Indigenous peoples today, are arguably among the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of people in the world. The international community now recognizes that special measures are required to protect their rights and maintain

This is a good start for humanists, possibly. I have been given permission by the Aboriginal Committee, as a member (non-Aboriginal) of the committee for Humanist Canada, to submit a point of reflection via a letter to the representatives of Humanists International.^[8] As far as I know, this was a first, which was sent in March of 2020. Different regions and cultures have different flavours of Humanism and distinct difficulties against religious fundamentalism and state totalitarianism. How can proposals, such as these, provide neither a negative view on Western-based Humanism nor a rejection of the current mostly Western-based Humanism, but an expansive global Humanism inclusive of the tastes, sights, sounds, flavours, and unique manifestations of Humanism seen around the world? Those more rounded perspectives can provide a better vision of Humanism and, in turn, a more complete and comprehensive envisioning of Humanism vis-à-vis a more comprehensive and complete imagining of human nature and potentialities.

Silverman: We tend to focus on Western culture and assume that other cultures should behave more like us. Perhaps sometimes they should, and sometimes they shouldn't. We need to learn more about these cultures and watch how they interact with others, including with us.

One of my most memorable experiences was being a Visiting Mathematics Professor for a semester in 1987 at the University of Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby. My colleagues there treated me very well. Over eight hundred languages are spoken in Papua New Guinea, reflecting the isolation of its many tribes. Not only were most students at UPNG the first in their families to go to college, they were the first to leave their village tribes. Part of our mission was to persuade students not to continue their ongoing tribal disputes at the university, avoiding the “payback” system in PNG. A tribal member at the university explained to me how the payback system worked. If a member from Tribe A killed a member from Tribe B, a designated member from Tribe B could legally kill any member from Tribe A. If he killed more than one member, “payback” would again kick in. Fortunately, the university was a payback-free zone.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Australian explorers discovered the highlands of PNG, home to roughly one million people who had never before

encountered Europeans. In a video I saw of this “first contact,” one PNG woman said they thought white people were gods, but changed their minds after having sex with them. Women in PNG were treated unbelievably poorly. Village men typically resided in a house, while women and pigs (yes, pigs!) lived together in a shack behind the house. Both women and pigs were sold or used for barter, the woman/pig ratio depending on the quality of both the women and the pigs. (This, of course, does not apply to men and women at the university.)

The country was teeming with missionaries of all kinds. Most tried to improve the lives of the inhabitants, usually accompanied by attempts at religious conversion. I hope missionaries now have become more humanistic than when I was there. At the time, I asked one priest why he deplored the practice of bare-breasted women, but said nothing about wife beating, which was legal there. He told me they couldn’t change everything that was wrong in the country, and bare breasts were a good place to start. Shortly thereafter, the university held a beauty pageant with five participants, four of whom were bare breasted. When I saw that the primary judge was this same missionary, I confidently predicted the winner to my colleagues. After the breast-covered woman won, my colleagues showed an undeserved respect for my powers of judging beauty.

Jacobsen: The second Amsterdam declaration (2002) or the *Amsterdam Declaration 2002* posited a number of core values.^[9] Its foci are ethics, rationality, ethical, “democracy and human rights,” “that personal liberty must be combined with social responsibility,” a response to the

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widespread demand for an alternative to dogmatic religion,” “values artistic creativity and imagination and recognises the transforming power of art,” and “a lifescape aiming at the maximum possible fulfilment.”^[10] Non-dogmatic principles for being in the world. These are so in line with cosmopolitan global values and positive scientific uses more than almost any other philosophical system known to me. As our ethics advance more and more, how do the more faith-based ethics appear in comparison year-by-year?

Silverman: Assuming faith-based ethics is not an oxymoron, I think more and more people are adopting our improving humanist ethics. This is especially true of younger people, most of whom no longer believe that homosexuality is a sin, willingly accept transgender people, think men and women should be treated equally, and agree that no law should prohibit abortion under all circumstances.

Jacobsen: What is the ultimate fate of religious ethics?

Silverman: Probably there will always be people who follow what they consider to be religious ethics. I hope most of those people will have a religion that allows them the flexibility to follow their own conscience, without being restricted to following everything in a book that was written thousands of years before. I have no problem with nontheistic religions, all of which seem to be humanistic.

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

Silverman: Thank you.

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Appendix I: Footnotes

^[1] Grudin (2020), Humanist Canada (2021), Humanists UK (2021), American Humanist Association (2021), and Humanists International (2021).

^[2] Humanists International (2002) and Humanists International (1952).

^[3] Humanists International (2002).

^[4] Founder, Secular Coalition for America; Founder, Secular Humanists of the Low Country; Founder, Atheist/Humanist Alliance, College of Charleston.

^[5] Individual Publication Date: March 1, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/free-of-charge-7>; Full Issue Publication Date: May 1, 2021: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

^[6] Memory Alpha (2021).

^[7] United Nations (n.d.).

^[8] The letter in full as follows:

I send as an independent proposal and through filtration of the Aboriginal Committee of Humanist Canada. In other words, I send this based on prior correspondence alongside feedback caveats from the Aboriginal Committee of Humanist Canada, of which I am a part, in addition to personal justifications and qualifications before too. This amounts to the formalized presentation, numerically ordered (not by importance), of the caveats from Humanist Canada's Aboriginal Committee and myself. The document below entitled "Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' Formal Recognition in the Global Humanist Movement" implies global democratic Humanism before comprehensive consultation with the international Humanist indigenous and tribal peoples diaspora should:

1. *not speak for indigenous or tribal peoples in general;*
2. *not speak for indigenous or tribal peoples who are humanist;*
3. *not take this draft statement as a declaration, resolution, or policy;*
4. *take this as a statement of reflection and consideration for the global democratic body of Humanism to seriously consider endorsing established international documents like the UNDRIP; and*
5. *further serious reflection on the inclusion and furtherance of consultation and dialogue with humanist groups around the world in bringing in feedback from and having consultation with the humanist indigenous and tribal people diaspora in the "over 70 countries" and beyond?*

I drafted the below alone – taking full responsibility for negative and positive implications of its presentation to Humanists International – with feedback (with minor alterations) from the Aboriginal Committee of Humanist Canada:

Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' Formal Recognition in the Global Humanist Movement

Indigenous and tribal peoples continue to muster and garner deserved recognition in international institutional and rights documents, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) from September of 2007 and the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169(Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention) from 1989, and, by the nature of Humanism, deserve formal recognition in the global democratic Humanist movement too.

Global democratic Humanism marches forward in its greater moves towards a true representation of the vibrant fabric of the human species with more nations, peoples, and flavours of Humanist communities accepted into the international community in a formal manner in spite of the short period ebbs and flows of theocracy and secularity, authoritarianism and democracy, xenophobia and inclusivity, superstition

and science, and, indeed, supernaturalism and naturalism. An oft-neglected sector of the international community comes from minorities within minorities. One such sector of the global humanist movement emerges in the context of indigenous and tribal peoples throughout the world. More than 370 million indigenous and tribal people exist in over 70 countries in the world based on estimations of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Those indigenous and tribal peoples recognized in international rights documents including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2007, and the ILO Convention 169 (Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989). Together considered the highest standards and singularly comprehensive international instruments available to the indigenous and tribal peoples throughout the world in the defence of their most basic human rights, in particular, with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the oldest and most general. When Humanism enters into the practical applications of daily living and ordinary recognition in a global democratic movement and capacity, Humanists International performs a fundamental role in this regard, especially as its evolution incorporates previously unheard voices and unseen faces. For the full flourishing of the global Humanist movement, indigenous and tribal peoples throughout the world who adhere to the principles of Humanism deserve recognition and support at the international level. This instantiates the first formal effort as such, in the tradition of global democratic Humanism.

We recognise:

- *the Preamble stipulations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) on “the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women,” “a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations,” and with special emphasis on Article 1 stating “all human beings are born free and equal,” Article 2 stating “everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms... without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status... [or] on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs,” Article 7, Article 15, Article 18, Article 20, Article 22, and Article 28;*
- *the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169 or Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (1989) subjective and objective criteria for the inclusion as indigenous peoples or tribal peoples within an international context in Article 1, and with special emphasis on Article 2, Article 3, Article 5(a) and 5(b), Article 6(1)(a), Article 7(1), Article 27(1) and 27(2), Article 28, Article 29, Article 31, Article 34, Article 35, and Article 36;*
- *the Amsterdam Declaration (2002) affirms the “worth, dignity and autonomy of the individual,” “human rights can be applied to many human relationships and are not restricted to methods of government,” “Humanism is undogmatic, imposing no creed upon its adherents,” and “Humanism is a lifestance aiming at the maximum possible fulfilment... [and] can be a way of life for everyone everywhere.”*
- *the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) in full.*

We support:

- *the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948);*
- *the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169 or Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (1989);*
- *the Amsterdam Declaration (2002); and*
- *the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007).*

Suggested academic reference

‘Indigenous and Tribal Peoples’ Formal Recognition in the Global Humanist Movement’, *Humanists International, General Assembly, Miami, United States, 2020*

The Reconciliation with indigenous peoples (2000-11) for Australia represented a generic and national, not international, statement.

[9] “Amsterdam Declaration 2002” states:

- **Humanism is ethical.** It affirms the worth, dignity and autonomy of the individual and the right of every human being to the greatest possible freedom compatible with the rights of others. Humanists have a duty of care to all of humanity including future generations. Humanists believe that morality is an intrinsic part of human nature based on understanding and a concern for others, needing no external sanction.
- **Humanism is rational.** It seeks to use science creatively, not destructively. Humanists believe that the solutions to the world’s problems lie in human thought and action rather than divine intervention. Humanism advocates the application of the methods of science and free inquiry to the problems of human welfare. But Humanists also believe that the application of science and technology must be tempered by human values. Science gives us the means but human values must propose the ends.
- **Humanism supports democracy and human rights.** Humanism aims at the fullest possible development of every human being. It holds that democracy and human development are matters of right. The principles of democracy and human rights can be applied to many human relationships and are not restricted to methods of government.
- **Humanism insists that personal liberty must be combined with social responsibility.** Humanism ventures to build a world on the idea of the free person responsible to society, and recognises our dependence on and responsibility for the natural world. Humanism is undogmatic, imposing no creed upon its adherents. It is thus committed to education free from indoctrination.
- **Humanism is a response to the widespread demand for an alternative to dogmatic religion.** The world’s major religions claim to be based on revelations fixed for all time, and many seek to impose their world-views on all of humanity. Humanism recognises that reliable knowledge of the world and ourselves arises through a continuing process of observation, evaluation and revision.
- **Humanism values artistic creativity and imagination and recognises the transforming power of art.** Humanism affirms the importance of literature, music, and the visual and performing arts for personal development and fulfilment.
- **Humanism is a lifeway aiming at the maximum possible fulfilment** through the cultivation of ethical and creative living and offers an ethical and rational means of addressing the challenges of our times. Humanism can be a way of life for everyone everywhere.

Humanists International (2002).

[10] Ibid.

Appendix II: Citation Style Listing

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Conversation with Daniel Hilton on Family, Intelligence, Genius, and Philosophy: Member, Glia Society (1)

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Abstract

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.

Keywords: Daniel Hilton, family, Glia Society, intelligence, IQ, genius, Mensa International.

Conversation with Daniel Hilton on Family, Intelligence, Genius, and Philosophy: Member, Glia Society (1)

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

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 Cooijman'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/>.

*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.

Appendix II: Citation Style Listing

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Conversation with Dong Geon Lee on The Right Life, Religion, Science, and Agnosticism Bordering on Atheism: Member, CIVIQ Society (2)

2021-03-01

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Numbering: Issue 26.A, Idea: Outliers & Outsiders (21)

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Abstract

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.

Keywords: agnosticism, atheism, Carl Friedrich Gauß, CIVIQ Society, Dong Geon Lee, ethics, morality, physical theories.

Conversation with Dong Geon Lee on The Right Life, Religion, Science, and Agnosticism Bordering on Atheism: Member, CIVIQ Society (2)

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

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.

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

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Conversation with Anthony Sepulveda (Brown) on Depression, Love, Recovery, and Lessons: Member, World Genius Directory (9)

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Abstract

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.

Keywords: Anthony Sepulveda, depression, love, recovery.

Conversation with Anthony Sepulveda (Brown) on Depression, Love, Recovery, and Lessons: Member, World Genius Directory (9)

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

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.

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

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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.

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Conversation with Anthony Sepulveda (Brown) on Depression, Love, Recovery, and Lessons: Member, World Genius Directory (9)

2021-03-01

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Numbering: Issue 26.A, Idea: Outliers & Outsiders (21)

Place of Publication: Langley, British Columbia, Canada

Title: In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal

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Individual Publication Date: March 1, 2021

Issue Publication Date: May 1, 2021

Name of Publisher: In-Sight Publishing

Frequency: Three Times Per Year

Words: 1,873

ISSN 2369-6885

Abstract

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.

Keywords: Anthony Sepulveda, depression, love, recovery.

Conversation with Anthony Sepulveda (Brown) on Depression, Love, Recovery, and Lessons: Member, World Genius Directory (9)

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

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.

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Conversation with Gareth Rees on Genius and Philosophy: Member, Canadian High IQ Society (2)

2021-04-01

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Numbering: Issue 26.A, Idea: Outliers & Outsiders (21)

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Words: 2,180

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Abstract

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.

Keywords: Canadian High IQ Society, Gareth Rees, genius, intelligence, IQ.

Conversation with Gareth Rees on Genius and Philosophy: Member, Canadian High IQ Society (2)

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

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 ones that are also mystics are my favorites. Tesla,

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

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

SymboIQ 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.

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Conversation with Master Chef Craig Shelton on Science, Food, Farming, and Finance: Founder, Aeon Hospitality (2)

2021-04-01



Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Numbering: Issue 26.A, Idea: Outliers & Outsiders (21)

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Abstract

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'III", "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

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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.

Keywords: Aeon Hospitality, Craig Shelton, culinary arts, enterprise, finance.

Conversation with Master Chef Craig Shelton on Science, Food, Farming, and Finance: Founder, Aeon Hospitality (2)

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

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/>.

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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



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Abstract

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.

Keywords: complexity, coronavirus, leadership, Puerto Rico, Ricardo Rosselló Nevares.

Conversation with Dr. Ricardo Rosselló Nevares on the American Social and Political Framework, and Puerto Rico and the Coronavirus: Former Governor, Puerto Rico (4)

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

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Looking at Canada, as a make an outrageous claim. You really won't get comparative metric, we have the similar situation covered. Let's take healthcare, you have three folks 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

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 the difference.

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.

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 "Hey, put a mask on"; whereas, others took months. 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,

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/>.

*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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Conversation with Master Chef Craig Shelton on Common Sense Versus Scientific Validity, and Motivation: Founder, Aeon Hospitality (3)

2021-04-08



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Abstract

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'Il", "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.

Keywords: Aeon Hospitality, agriculture, Craig Shelton, farming, human health, motivation, nutrition.

Conversation with Master Chef Craig Shelton on Common Sense Versus Scientific Validity, and Motivation: Founder, Aeon Hospitality (3)

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

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. 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/>.

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Conversation with Master Chef Craig Shelton on Economics and Banking Systems: Founder, Aeon Hospitality (4)

2021-04-15



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Abstract

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'III", "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

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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.

Keywords: Aeon Hospitality, banking, British Banking, Chinese Banking, Craig Shelton, finance, German Banking.

Conversation with Master Chef Craig Shelton on Economics and Banking Systems: Founder, Aeon Hospitality (4)

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

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: To close off, what about the economics of everything? back to ancient Sumer; taxation was always based on wealth.

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 transmogrification of agriculture and the food system. 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.

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. 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].

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.

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.

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?"

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

Appendix II: Citation Style Listing

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Conversation with Saba Ismail on Pakistan, Women's Rights Organizing, and Raids Against the Ismail Family: Co-Founder, Aware Girls (2)

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Abstract

Saba Ismail is a Co-Founder of Aware Girls. At the age of 15, she co-founded Aware Girls for the empowerment of young women in leadership capacities and to advance social change. She completed a Masters in Biotechnology from COMSATS University Abbot Asad and the Hurford Youth Fellowship with the National Endowment for Democracy. She has worked as Youth Ambassador for Asia Pacific Youth Network (APYN: 2012-2013), the Steering Committee of UNOY, and is an alumnus of the International Visitors Leadership Program in the United States. Ismail was recognized by *Foreign Policy* as one of the 100 Leader Global Thinkers in 2013. She is the recipient of the Chirac Prize for Conflict Prevention. She discusses: human rights and the family in Pakistan; and Gulalai Ismail and Aware Girls.

Keywords: Aware Girls, girls' rights, Gulalai Ismail, Pakistan, women's rights.

Conversation with Saba Ismail on Pakistan, Women's Rights Organizing, and Raids Against the Ismail Family: Co-Founder, Aware Girls (2)

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

Interview conducted July 2, 2020.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Now, how was Aware Girls seen within Pakistan or Pakistani society for years up until a few years ago? Was it mostly positive or mostly negative?

Saba Ismail[1],[2]: It was both. Our work had a great impact on women in Pakistan. We advocated for anti-sexual harassment laws in Pakistan. We advocated for gay rights. We advocated for women in the informal sector, their rights.

We advocated for enhancing the political participation of women in the political process of the country. We helped young women to run in local

elections, in the last local elections, in Pakistan. It was historic.

In some villages, it was the first time that women ran for elections. They were amazing. Young women and girls wanted to be a part of the organization and part of the programs. In our organization, we would not just do a one-time training or a one-day activity.

We would engage people over a long period, as long as 1-year. Some have been engaged for years in our programs. Women felt safe working as employees and being part of the programs. They knew it was all women as a platform.

They felt safe to be part of the institution, felt safe to women who are working in the informal sector seen be given opportunities. As I said about these women as doing proper work.

who ran in the local elections, we are seeing the change brought by Aware Girls. So, there was definitely a huge impact of our work, in our community.

There were men who started supporting women's rights and women's issues, e.g., women's political participation. One of these women who ran for local election. One was run by men in the family. It was helping these women to win these elections.

It wasn't just women. It was for men too. We reached more than 10,000 young people, preventing them from being taken by the militant organizations. We have been able to help them to promote the values of tolerance, non-violence, and peace.

The impact was huge reaching out to so many young people directly, helping women running elections, helping women run in and participate in political processes. We help run something started back in 2012.

We had something on young women in leadership. We had this in the 16 days of activism. We were raising awareness among women, "If there is violence, report it." Women were like, "We can report violence. We should report it."

There should be a place if an action is taken. If a woman is in danger, or if a woman needs a shelter or psychological support, medical support, we started a helpline, started provided free legal services to women facing domestic violence. We established strong educational institutions across the province.

We would do partnerships and programs. We would go to the colleges and campuses and talk on women's rights, sexual reproductive health and rights, the issues of human rights in general, and peace.

We had good networking and partnership-building with other civil society organizations, including institutes. Even with government agencies, we had good working relationships.

We had women who worked in the informal sector. We developed a good relationship with the Labour Department. Women who were domestic workers or who work in the home are not considered labourers. They are not entitled to basic income.

They're not entitled to sick leave. They are not entitled to anything anyone working in the formal sector would get normally. We worked with the Labour Department. So, they can help us in making

Aware Girls established the first ever union of women domestic workers and home-based workers. It was the first ever time, where we organized hundreds and hundreds of women from the informal sector and built their capacity first.

It was educating why labour rights were important for them. We developed programs for them. When we were working in the Pakistani Labour Department, we had relationships with the media. When we ran these conferences and programs, we would always get really good coverage from great media channels.

It would always be people coming from the media. Whether the media or the government offices, educational institutions, or other civil society organizations, or even communities, we used to work with the communities.

It was the only young women led organization in the whole country. Definitely, it was safety. They knew that they would learn something. Also, families would see the change in their own family members.

For example, one story I remember, when I was working with the domestic workers and home-based workers in 2014, when I was organizing some of these programs, we had to postpone some programs because the army public schools were attacked.

It was attacked where more than 140 children were killed. We had to postpone. There were some other administrative issues. We had to stop our programs for 3 months. When we started the program, when everything was set to restart the programs, our team went to the homes of these women to inform them. We were restarting the program.

One woman was not home. Our team member left the message with the husband. This woman, at that time, when we stopped the program, this woman went to Afghanistan because people have relatives in Afghanistan.

But they are refugees. They are doing the work in the informal sector. She went to Afghanistan to meet her relatives. When our team went back and said, "We are restarting the program." The husband called the wife and said, "You need to come back because your program is restarting. So, you need to be here."

You won't believe. This was such a huge change in this family. Because only when this woman started coming to our program. On the first day home, she was beaten by the husband. The husband said: How

would she dare go to this? NGOs are viewed negatively in Pakistan.

How dare she go to a program organized by an NGO, the woman was like, “I learned so much on the first day. I have to come here.” She continued to go for the rest of the program. While coming, she learned so much. She transformed her husband so much.

A few days ago, the woman was beaten by her husband for joining a program. Only a few weeks later, the same man was calling his wife and asking her to come back because the program is being restarted.

So, when I think of the impact, it was definitely so huge. At times, we wouldn’t even know the impact or the change that we are bringing in the families, what changes we’re bringing in the society.

We cannot expect some few activities will change anybody’s life. It is not a realistic expectation. But definitely, what we saw, I know, of course, so many years have passed now. I still remember her: her face, her name.

That keeps us going. Gulalai and I are not on the ground anymore now. It was so important, brought so many changes to the lives of so many women. So, we have to continue the work. We have been receiving so many calls on the helpline, which I mentioned earlier.

They needed help in one way or another, help and support. This was the kind of impact. This was the kind of work that we had been doing on the ground. So, this was the positive side. You say, “Okay, how was Aware Girls seen?”

On the other side, we faced a lot of challenges. For example, it was girls at such a young age who can be leading an organization. When we would organize activities, we would be an all women and girls team, not just women and girls but *young* women and girls.

They would ask, “Where are the organizers of the event?”

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Ismail: We would say, “We are the ones.” They would say, “No, no, the *man* behind the organization.” We would say, “No, there is no man organizing all this. We are the leaders. This is our team.” It was an unbelievable thing for people to see young girls leading an organization and doing all this.

This is the kind of thing that we faced. We definitely faced confrontation from State and non-State actors. This was before the last year or couple of years. We were countering violent extremism in parts of the country.

We were addressing the root causes. Addressing the root causes is not so easy when you talk about the policies the country is supporting and changing all that, Gulalai and I were threatened to be among the missing persons.

This is back in 2013. So many years ago, we were told that we can be missing persons because we are working on these sensitive issues. They’re causing red flags for the national security of the country because we were preventing young people from becoming part of the militarized groups.

We did face these kinds of challenges. On one occasion, we were organizing on International Women’s Day back in 2012. This one government office called us and asked me to give them a bribe to have this event.

NGOs usually have a bad reputation. They would say, “We don’t allow you to organize events. You are an NGO.” All of that. When they asked us to give them a bribe on International Women’s Day, we were engaging different stakeholders.

Civil society organizations, men, etc., we were also engaging the government. When they said, “If we have to become a part of this program, then you have to give us a bribe.” I refused to give them a bribe.

As soon as I said, “I am not going to bribe anyone.” They immediately said, “International Women’s Day is vulgarity. Aware Girls is promoting vulgarity and Western culture.” They told me that they are going to ban the organization, are coming to raid our office, and then not allow us to do the activity.

The activity was the next day, March 8th. I had this conversation on the 7th of March. You can imagine the stress. We were organizing five activities in one day. We were really a small team, maybe 10 people in total.

We were organizing these five activities at once. There were more than 100 people per event. You can imagine the stress. Yet, we resisted this. We contacted the authorities and told these people, “These people are asking for bribes and saying International Women’s Day is vulgarity.”

There’s a mentality. Women’s rights are a problem. We face this problem in 2014 in Peshawar for the work that Gulalai and I did. At that time, Gulalai

was on a trip. They attacked our home. They started to shoot, firing guns.

So, it was a very brutal attack. When I still recall that, that was really, really a difficult time. It was in the middle of the night after 12. These men who really stormed our house and were firing on the house.

They were firing in our direction and to destroy our work. That's when we decided that city was not safe for us. That was another time relocating. We have been relocating because of these kinds of attacks that we have both faced.

In Pakistan, I haven't seen such a case in which families are being tracked. Not in the past two years, those have been another story. Our family has been persecuted because of our work. Our family was attacked.

We had to move from one city to another. We went into hiding. That was a short time. We went into complete hiding and strategized how we would move forward with all of that. We have been receiving threats, attacks, challenges, harassment, as being women working on women's rights or women working on peace.

There has been the good side and the challenges on the other side. In that, our father really stood in that. People who even travel to the US or countries outside. The intelligence agencies will come to our office, to our home, and will gather information and all that.

In our culture, you can't imagine. The intelligence agency visiting our house to violate the house is really something. You won't see it; it's not common. Our father stood up with us. He would be helping us navigating whatever those challenges were.

Jacobsen: What is the feeling of being raided?

Ismael: It was scary, definitely. The society shouldn't let this happen. It was definitely traumatic. It was hard. At that time, of course, when that happened, it was denied. We weren't ready, of course. That kind of raid was not something that we were expecting at all.

We were not people to fight back with guns. Because, definitely, we are peaceful people who believe in peace and peaceful protest. It was really hard. It was like Gulalai was not harmed. It was Shola, my parents, and I.

It was the four of us. The hardest thing after the firing happening. Those people left. My father had to go to the airport to pick up Gulalai. He had to leave all of us back at home. We knew that if these

people are still outside on the corner waiting for our father to come and to kill him.

We didn't know. It was an uncertain event. Our father had to go and pick up Gulalai. When she got home, I told her the whole story. She narrowly escaped that situation. Because, what if she was outside? They would have killed her.

It was really hard for her to sleep at night. It was not easy. In Pakistan [Laughing], there was no electricity when she got home with our father. We were – literally – sitting with no lights waiting for Gulalai to come back safely.

It was a sigh of relief. The moment Gulalai came; we thought, "What should we do now? What is our next step?" That is when we went into hiding. Of course, it wasn't easy. People were so suspicious of things happening. We saw one person standing in front of our house all day smoking a cigarette, all day.

There was another woman the next day who tried to enter our house by impersonating someone else. She was saying, "I have to drop something because someone ordered something from here." We know that we never ordered anything.

There were people who tried to get in. They impersonated. There were people standing in the street in front of our house. There was a beggar who was actually spying on us. So, the very next day, we noticed some of these suspicious things, especially my mother.

She is good in catching these kinds of things. There was a person impersonating a mentally sick person. They tried to get into our home. He tried to get into it. My mother said it was suspicious and had seen suspicious people outside.

It was the incidents before and after this raid. It was not safe to spend one day in the house. It is not easy. We were a small family. You live so much in your house. Even then, you pack small. Those that can fit in the car. Then we left the home at that time.

There were people in cars following us. We ended up being safe, went into hiding. We moved to safer places. We thought that Islamabad may be safe. But in the last 2 years, everything has changed, because my father was abducted.

There were attempts to kill my father, attempts to kill Shola because they thought she was Gulalai. Even in the city, which is the capital of the country, my family is not safe anymore. That is why we moved back in 2014.

Of course, what happened in the last two years in Islamabad, as you all know by now, so much has

happened in the last 2 years, my parents are not safe even in the capital.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Co-Founder, Aware Girls.

[2] Individual Publication Date: April 15, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/saba-ismail-2>; Full Issue Publication Date: May 1, 2021: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

Appendix II: Citation Style Listing

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Free of Charge 8 – Possible Futures for Humanism

2021-04-22

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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Abstract

Dr. Herb Silverman is the Founder of the Secular Coalition for America, the Founder of the Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry, and the Founder of the Atheist/Humanist Alliance student group at the College of Charleston. He authored [Complex variables](#) (1975), [Candidate Without a Prayer: An Autobiography of a Jewish Atheist in the Bible Belt](#) (2012) and [An Atheist Stranger in a Strange Religious Land: Selected Writings from the Bible Belt](#) (2017). He co-authored [The Fundamentals of Extremism: The Christian Right in America](#) (2003) with Kimberley Blaker and Edward S. Buckner, [Complex Variables with Applications](#) (2007) with Saminathan Ponnusamy, and [Short Reflections on Secularism](#) (2019), [Short Reflections on American Secularism's History and Philosophy](#) (2020), and [Short Reflections on Age and Youth](#) (2020). He discusses: some of the paths Humanism could evolve into the future; Humanism's unification; Humanism and the rejection of the supernatural versus strict atheism; democratic ideals and issues; and limits of an empirical moral philosophy.

Keywords: empirical moral philosophy, future, Golden Rule, Herb Silverman, Humanism.

Free of Charge 8 – Possible Futures for Humanism

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

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: I want to take an interlude session into unifying evolutionary ethical frameworks as exemplified in part, in Humanism. One widely touted claim by individuals with a leaning towards the secular and a sympathy for religious sentiments is a claim to unified moral principles or frames in every 'great' religion, as in Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Chinese traditional religions, and ethnic religions. One group of more return into postmodernist philosophers, they superficial thinkers will point to a feeling or some ramble off into incoherency and don't make any loose intuition about religion, "All religions teach sense, while puffed up and self-proud as a cock the same things." I understand what they are meaning, but what they are saying, as a matter of fact, is false. Why have different religions if so? Another group will be selective about the observations. Ignoring the parts of brutality,

cruelty, bigotry, and supernatural superstition, only focusing on the Golden Rule, saying, "Oh, it's the Golden Rule. It's in all of them. All of the religions teach this as the same basic element of their ethical teachings." Generally, one can find passages. However, it seems both incredibly naïve and selective, because different formulations of the Golden Rule exist and different religions teach the Golden Rule unequally well. Still others (rooster) on a dunghill. Humanism is an advanced 20th-century philosophy. It's about a deep dive into reflection on the depths of human depravity and reformulating, and formalizing, the positive, proactive ethics found in all periods

of human history in which civilized advance society existed for those times, when naturalism and the humanities were the dominant discourse of the time. What are some of the paths Humanism could evolve into the future?

Dr. Herb Silverman[1],[2]: It may be true that just about all religions have some version of the Golden Rule about treating others as you would want to be treated. And a version of this can also be found in almost every ethical tradition, with no gods necessary. In my Jewish tradition, the first century BCE Rabbi Hillel was allegedly asked by a prospective Jewish convert to teach him the entire Torah (Hebrew Bible) while standing on one leg. Hillel replied, “That which is hateful to you do not do to your neighbour. The rest is commentary.”

Some equate the Golden Rule with the rule about loving your neighbour as yourself. The problem arises with who we consider our neighbour. In the Hebrew Bible, neighbours were the “chosen” people, other Israelis. Jews were supposed to kill outsiders on their way to the Promised Land. Today in America, many White Christian Nationalists view only their fellow Christians as neighbours and so justify discriminating against non-white immigrants.

Another problem with the Golden Rule is that some people may not want to be treated as we want to be treated. Our values may be so different that the Golden Rule makes no sense. For instance, some fanatics have no aversion to death, so the Golden Rule might inspire them to kill others in suicide missions. For humanists to live by the Golden Rule, we must empathize with other people, including those who may be very different from us and might want to be treated differently.

When you mentioned “dunghill,” I thought of Thomas Jefferson, who in many ways (but not all ways) was a humanist. As he correctly pointed out, there are some words of wisdom in the Bible, but I agree with Jefferson when he referred to them as “diamonds in a dunghill.”

When you ask for paths where Humanism could evolve in the future, I think Humanism is a philosophy that is continually evolving. That’s why we have had three Humanist Manifestos, and will undoubtedly have additional “manifestos” as we learn more about how better to live ethical lives, along with new scientific discoveries.

Jacobsen: Continuing from the previous question, there are areas in which Humanism is a laundry list of principles rather than a unified ethical framework. Such a framework in which it can continually, dynamically evolve while

maintaining its former evidentiary coherence, in fact, many of the declarations are such listings. Do you think that there are ways Humanism can be more compact, more unified, showing how its principles interact with one another to create a whole other than a simple titular stamp: “Humanism”?

Silverman: A compact way to talk about Humanism is to describe, without a laundry list, its basic principles, which serve as guidelines for how we should live. Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that also aspire to the greater good of humanity. We are an integral part of nature, the result of unguided evolutionary change, and ethical values are derived from human need and interest as tested by experience, along with a greater knowledge of the world. Humanists are guided by reason and inspired by compassion.

Jacobsen: Are there any parts of Humanism that you think should just go, not be there? I believe you had some qualms in earlier variations of declaration with the inclusion of supernatural versus atheist or non-theist as an appeasement to some who couldn’t quite stomach a complete rejection of the impossibility of the gods.

Silverman: I know some good people who can’t stomach a complete rejection of the existence of gods. They may act in a lot of ways like humanists, leading ethical lives and aspiring to the greater good of humanity. I just don’t like the god baggage that might go along with it. I can’t prove there are no gods. An atheist is simply someone without a belief in any gods, and I think we should not claim to be guided by imaginary beings. That’s why my brand of Humanism is atheistic. I can’t prevent the Pope from calling himself a humanist because he supports immigration, opposes wars, and accepts that humans are partially responsible for climate change.

Jacobsen: Human rights and democratic ideals feature prominently in the humanist lifescape. Are there any particular weaknesses in the claims of human rights, as said in the formal documents of human rights, or in the principle of majority rule (adult age majoritarian voting rule)?

Silverman: The notion of human rights is a modern concept from the 18th century Enlightenment, not from ancient times when the Golden Rule was first quoted. Thomas Jefferson incorporated such “inalienable rights” into the U.S. Declaration of Independence. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 was a milestone for its universalist

language, which recognizes that all humans are born free and equal in dignity and rights regardless of nationality, place of residence, gender, national or ethnic origin, colour, or religion.

I do have some problems with majority rule, especially if we have an uneducated populace, and leaders (dictators) decide who constitutes voters. After all, Adolf Hitler came to power in a democracy in 1933. Not that it is any way comparable, but democracy may not be working so well in the U.S. now, with many Republicans trying to make it difficult for some African Americans to vote. So, I must agree with Winston Churchill: “Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others.”

Jacobsen: Are issues of an empirical moral philosophy found in the epistemologies informing the ethics? So, the ideas of the limitations of induction to give answers about the world – its scope and limits – and then the limitations by logical implication extended into the moral philosophy of Humanism, as in some things can never be known, others partially known now, while others known with a reliably high degree of accuracy. A sort of variation in accuracy of reality maps meaning variations in the reliability, and validity, of the application of humanistic ethics. Sometimes, there’s tons of informations; other times, there’s little; still others, we have, basically, none, and may never have any data to

inform the ethic, which would make ethical decisions solely grounded in the lattermost equivalent to a base-level faith-based moral decision-making frame of reference (that which we try to avoid at all costs).

Silverman: When it comes to what we know and don’t know with a reliable level of accuracy, I usually look to science. I recently read a wonderful new book by Jeff Hawkins called, *A Thousand Brains: A New Theory of Intelligence*. It compares our old reptilian brain to our new mammalian brain (the neocortex), with implications for moral behaviour.

I’ve been in debates with Christians who insist that objective morality must come from God. My contention is that we don’t know if there is such a thing as objective morality but, if so, we are coming closer to it by learning more about human nature and what works best for individuals. We often learn this through science or experience, not through ancient “holy” books. We need to be careful when we talk about what we know, and, even more important, about what we don’t know. To quote Mark Twain: “What gets us into trouble is not what we don’t know. It’s what we know for sure that just ain’t so.”

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

Silverman: Thank you.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Founder, Secular Coalition for America; Founder, Secular Humanists of the Low Country; Founder, Atheist/Humanist Alliance, College of Charleston.

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Conversation with Saba Ismail on Criminal Justice, Dominant Faith Group Tied to Military State, Minority Muslims, and Humanists: Co-Founder, Aware Girls (3)

2021-04-22

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Abstract

Saba Ismail is a Co-Founder of Aware Girls. At the age of 15, she co-founded Aware Girls for the empowerment of young women in leadership capacities and to advance social change. She completed a Masters in Biotechnology from COMSATS University Abbot Asad and the Hurford Youth Fellowship with the National Endowment for Democracy. She has worked as Youth Ambassador for Asia Pacific Youth Network (APYN: 2012-2013), the Steering Committee of UNOY, and is an alumnus of the International Visitors Leadership Program in the United States. Ismail was recognized by *Foreign Policy* as one of the 100 Leader Global Thinkers in 2013. She is the recipient of the Chirac Prize for Conflict Prevention. She discusses: the formal charges; more recent case or cases; the justice system within Pakistan; different minority Muslim backgrounds; extensive periods of having to be in hiding; and the *New York Times*.

Keywords: Aware Girls, criminal justice, Gulalai Ismail, Islam, law, minority religious groups, Pakistan.

Conversation with Saba Ismail on Criminal Justice, Dominant Faith Group Tied to Military State, Minority Muslims, and Humanists: Co-Founder, Aware Girls (3)

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

Interview conducted July 2, 2020.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: What were the formal charges at the time towards your parents, your siblings, and yourself?

Saba Ismail[1],[2]: At that time, there were no formal charges. At the time, the raid, they were restless ordinary people without uniform. We never knew their identity. There were no charges and no cases. None against Gulalai.

At the time, Gulalai and I were receiving international awards. We were on the [100 leading global thinkers of 2013](#). Both us won several

awards. We were getting the recognition and acknowledgement.

At one occasion, actually, when we both received the 100 leading global leaders award back in 2013, my father had a reception party at our village. The next day, some people came to my father.

It was a reception, but it was family, friends, and relatives. They said that if they knew the party and reception was here. We would be attacked. So, it is not a party as in Western culture. It was people getting together and eating food. It was people

coming and chatting and having good food. That's it.

Even that, my father received a threat that it would be attacked. Always, it received threats and different forms of persecution in one form or another. There was never a formal charge. There was never an FIR (First Information Report) or a police report, or anything.

Jacobsen: In the more recent case or cases, what were the formal charges at that time?

Ismail: Before Gulalai's speech, she was charged. In total, she has been charged with inciting hatred and violence, inciting people to attack the army, of terrorism, and financial terrorism. These are the kind of charges that my family has been facing.

Gulalai was on the Exit Control List, No Fly List (can't leave the country). My mother has been denied the right to have a passport. It was denied to her at the end of 2019. When her passport expired, she cannot get a passport because under the instructions of ISI; she will not get a passport.

She doesn't have her identity documents on her. There is a cybercrime case against my father. There are multiple cases against my parents. On the 2nd of July, Gulalai and my parents were acquitted in the financial terrorism case.

That case started back in 2018 when Gulalai was put on a person of special interest inquiry. There were enquiries from the counterterrorism department. On the 12th of July, in 2019, there was a police case against Gulalai.

They accused Gulalai of taking money from India and transferring it to our accounts from India. The judge decided there is no evidence at all. With no evidence, the case is dismissed. Gulalai and my parents were acquitted in this case.

Because there was no evidence at all. They couldn't provide any.

Jacobsen: This is insane.

Ismail: How can you charge someone based just on accusations? Because they couldn't submit any single evidence. The judge was like, "This has to be dismissed and is malicious." There are still so many crimes against Gulalai and the cybercrime case against my father, Exit Control List of my parents, and Gulalai was on a state kill list. There were orders to kill her.

There were all these charges. The past year (2020) have been a difficult time for our family fighting the legal ways.

Jacobsen: Now, if this is the status of the justice system within Pakistan, how is for other humanists?

Ismail: For other humanists, it is really hard. Same for human rights defenders and activists. It is not easy. It is really difficult. You can imagine. It took one year and multiple court appearances. My father was abducted, disappeared and spent 35 days in prison.

The police raids, everything, at the end, this case was used on social media and troll and spread hatred against my family. Of course, it cannot undo the harm done by Pakistan as a state against our family.

Our family is not united. We cannot go back to our country. Definitely, this is the situation. Even without a single piece of evidence, it still took one year and multiple appearances in court to bring our parents back and be acquitted in this case.

Other humanists are not safe. We have seen professors being accused of blasphemy. We have seen professors being killed in the name of blasphemy. Students have killed their professor.

Jacobsen: Holy smokes.

Ismail: Yes! Yes, recently, another person was accused of blasphemy. A humanist released a statement in favour of the professor. Generally, the space as a country is not safe for humanists. Anyone who dares to speak out will face crackdowns or being killed, false accusations of blasphemy, e.g., Asia Bibi who was falsely accused of blasphemy, spent 8 years in jail.

When she was released, the religious extremists were going crazy to get her killed. Also, a few years ago, a young brilliant student named Mashal Khan was killed by a university fellow at the university, again, because he was accused of blasphemy.

Blasphemy is not only a card used against religious minorities in Pakistan, but against anyone with a different opinion. They will say, "This person has committed blasphemy." The justice system is not strong enough to protect them.

Or the crazy people, if the justice system fails to get them, there is mob violence to simply kill them if they are a humanist or a committed blasphemy. All the propaganda being spread against Gulalai on social media.

They say, "Okay, look at Gulalai as part of a humanist organization, she is a secular person. People should follow her and her ideologies because she is a secular humanist." People reference the

humanist groups and her being on the Board of Humanists International.

It has been used to spread hate against her. It is on social media. Several years ago, several bloggers were disappeared. They were accused of blasphemy. A lot of these cases stay this way. Because they believe if someone has a different political opinion; that's where they use it.

Humanism is not a safe opinion at all. It can cost lives in Pakistan. This is a gruesome reality. This is the reality of Pakistan.

Jacobsen: The subtext or the elephant in the room is the idea of blasphemy as a generalized law in public, when, in fact, it's only religious legal concept. So, the idea of applying a religious legal concept to those without a religion or those with another religion using religious legal law or different religious laws.

It shouldn't be legitimate, but it comes at the most costly thing: someone's life.

Ismail: But in Pakistan, it is not just religious persecution. Mashal Khan was a humanist and born a Muslim. He called himself a humanist. It applied to people who are not Muslims. Christian houses and communities have been burned because of these false blasphemy laws.

It is a very easy thing to provoke people in Pakistan. That's what they're using to promote. It is a very easy card to provoke people to kill someone or defame someone, or to make sure they don't listen to someone's ideas.

Jacobsen: Islamic backgrounds, minority Muslim backgrounds, is there a different reaction to different minority Muslim backgrounds, like the Ismailis? Are there different reactions to the minority Muslim backgrounds amongst the more dominant Muslim groups?

Ismail: Yes, definitely, people who are from the Ahmadi community. By law, they are not Muslims in Pakistan. The irony on top of all of it. I was born a Sunni Muslim. Now, if I want to have a national identity card, and when I am applying for a passport, I have to sign a document saying, 'I, as a Muslim, do not consider Ahmadis as Muslims according to the Constitution of the country of Pakistan.'

If I don't sign it, I don't have an option to not sign it. If I don't, though, then I will have to show my religion as another religion, such as a non-Muslim, in my identity documents. The amount of persecution that religious minorities within Muslim communities face is *immense*.

Imagine, people know that they are born in a certain religious identity cannot become the president or prime minister of a country. They know their dreams have limitations because of the religion they are born into.

Also, the persecution of the faith is immense. It is hard to say anything in support of these religious minorities. You say it. There are so many trolls and online armies ready to attack the family and to kill.

It is really hard. They have done it constitutionally, outcast the religious minority in Pakistan. There's this Pakistani physicist, Abdus Salam. They have disowned him because of his religious identification. It is common to see a warning in a job warning, "Ahmadis are not allowed in this shop. Ahmadis are now allowed to do business in this shop."

Where they sell clothes, telephone shops, there will be proper notices on the entrance of the doors of the shop. That these people from these religious minorities aren't allowed. People growing up in a certain country see all this.

Because they're a religious minority. Their certain rights are being withheld. They are not entitled to basic human rights in this country simply because of that. It is definitely not okay. Also, it has been taught in schools that Ahmadis are not Muslims.

It is repeated by the educated system. People propagate this online. It's on a daily basis. You see it all around you. The way they are being targeted are several instances. People will travel on a bus. They will be asked to identify themselves and then shot and killed on the spot.

Whether non-religious or religious minorities, they have faced things so inhuman and unconstitutional.

Jacobsen: For some of the family, there have been extensive periods of having to be in hiding. So, without details for safety reasons, how does one even go about making that decision to say, "Okay, this is something that we have to do. We're going to do it. We're going to go forward with it"?

Then you drop everything in your lives to come to some form of safety without any certainty of safety in the end.

Ismail: You're in a different mode. You don't have any other option. You don't have many choices. You have to be resilient, extremely resilient and extremely strong because every step that we did at that time.

There was always chances of us not being safe and us being killed, losing our lives. That is when you

know, constantly, about your safety or your parents' safety. There is no other choice but to fight. You do your best in that time.

We have been through so many situations. My father has been going through so much in his life. He was accused of blasphemy before 9/11. When you live a life of such persecution, we had to do something like a SWOT analysis: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

That kind of analysis. "If I take this route, what are the risks?" Definitely, in those kinds of situations, you can discuss it with your friends. You cannot simply take advice from other people, the community, everything.

We had to do a lot on our own. One person has to be resilient enough to stand in that kind of situation and to come up with solutions. This is what we did. We couldn't stay in the house anymore because it was not safe for us. In order to save our lives, also, because we come from a middle-class family, we don't have properties in different areas of the country.

We'd go to a farmhouse in some other part of the country. We didn't have choices on our plate. We had extremely limited options in what we could do and did our best. Each of us is safe in our situation after going through so much.

We have to understand the risk, but have to be resilient in what we do. Also, it is all the security measures and the precautions when it came to the physical security situation.

Jacobsen: When the stories came out in the *New York Times*, several of them, about your sister's case, in your father's case, it came out in the most influential publication in the Western world. Two members of the same family with similar stories in different circumstances.

One with your father in Pakistan. Two with your sister in New York in the United States. How, in in a very short period of time, were these stories, when they came out, portrayed in the countries that didn't want things for either your father or your sister?

Ismail: I'm not sure if I will be able to answer this. The people who were definitely not happy with why these stories came out in such a high profile way. I really commend the work of Jeffrey Gettleman. He put in a lot of work to the stories that came out at that time.

It was a lot of background work. When the first story came out, it took weeks and weeks of calls and

emails between Jeffrey and I at that time. When the stories came out, it really helps a lot raise the awareness of the case.

The day the *New York Times* story was published when Imran Khan came to give a speech in the United States. Nancy, the Speaker of the House, asked Imran Khan a question about it. It really helped us. Of course, it was courageous of Nancy to ask the Prime Minister of a country about the persecution of a women's rights activist at the time.

The *New York Times* helped bring the awareness to a higher level. Also, when the journalist from the *New York Times* visited our parents back home in Islamabad, she saw how much military people guarded with weapons and everything.

She saw those people outside watching of the house. They had weapons with them. There were cars with people. The journalist saw everything and documented in a pictorial way. They took pictures as evidences for everything.

When the story of the *New York Times* got published, those vehicles that would stand there all the time, day and night, were gone. That stopped on the day the article got published. Definitely, at the time, it was a big relief for us.

These people with weapons and guns were watching our parents all the time. It was a really good timing. When questions were being asked of the Prime Minister of the country, some of the persecution stopped because of this coverage.

I love the way Jeffrey articulated the story. I love the way he put his effort into this story towards ensuring that the story was told in a really good and neutral way. At that time, there was so much hatred and propaganda on the media against Gulalai.

No one was taking our side at that time. So, it was really important for us to tell our story to the *New York Times*. Here is our story, you shouldn't listen to the Pakistani authorities and the media. In Pakistani, the anchors would say Gulalai should be hanged and shown as an example – how dare she speak against the Pakistani military.

My parents watched this all day. For three days on television, people were repeatedly saying, "She should be hanged in public." What my parents went through because of that, they still cannot process it. It was a huge mental stress for parents to see all this.

All the stories being covered by the media in Pakistan. No one bothered to tell our story. It was

told through social media, through Twitter. Those

were the only means for us to actually say things, “This where we stand.”

Later on, I met people who read the story, but I didn’t meet those people. They knew the story of my sister. But they would mention, “Do you know this woman in Pakistan? I read this story.” I would say, “That is my sister.”

It gave us voice to tell our story and to be able to go to the higher levels. We got so much support from U.S. senators. Now, it has become an introduction of Gulalai. If Gulalai introduces herself, the two *New York Times* stories help.

Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Co-Founder, Aware Girls.

[2] Individual Publication Date: April 22, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/saba-ismail-3>; Full Issue Publication Date: May 1, 2021: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

Appendix II: Citation Style Listing

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Vancouver/ICMJE: Jacobsen S. *Conversation with Saba Ismail on Criminal Justice, Dominant Faith Group Tied to Military State, Minority Muslims, and Humanists: Co-Founder, Aware Girls (3)* [Internet]. (2021, April 26(A). Available from: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/saba-ismail-3>.

Issue 27, Idea: Land of Fire and Ice: Islandia, Snelandia, and Insula Gardari (2)

Conversation with Professor Terry Adrian Gunnell on Background, Informal Culture, Native Americans and Icelanders, Choosing Iceland, and Mythologies: Professor, Folkloristics, University of Iceland (1)

2021-03-15



Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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Abstract

Terry Gunnell is Professor of Folkloristics at the University of Iceland. He is author of *The Origins of Drama in Scandinavia* (1995); editor of *Masks and Mumming in the Nordic Area* (2007) and *Legends and Landscape* (2008); and joint editor of *The Nordic Apocalypse: Approaches to Vǫluspá and Nordic Days of Judgement* (with Annette Lassen, 2013); and *Málarinn og menningarsköpun: Sigurður Guðmundsson og Kvöldfélagið* (with Karl Aspelund), which received a nomination for the Icelandic Literature Prize (*Íslensku bókmenntaverðlaunin*) for 2017. He has also written a wide range of articles on Old Norse religion, Nordic folk belief and legend, folk drama and performance,

and is behind the creation of the on-line *Sagnagrunnur* database of Icelandic folk legends in print (<http://sagnagrunnur.com/en/>); the national survey into Folk Belief in Iceland (2006-2007); and (with Karl Aspelund) the on-line database dealing with the Icelandic artist Sigurður Guðmundsson and the creation of national culture in Iceland in the mid-19th century (<https://sigurdurmalari.hi.is/english>). E-mail address: terry@hi.is. He discusses: family background; highly informal culture; well-preserved culture; Iceland; and Celtic mythology, Native American mythology, Icelandic mythology.

Keywords: culture, Celts, Folkloristics, Iceland, Native American, old Norse, Scandinavia, Scotland, Terry Adrian Gunnell, Tolkien.

Conversation with Professor Terry Adrian Gunnell on Background, Informal Culture, Native Americans and Icelanders, Choosing Iceland, and Mythologies: Professor, Folkloristics, University of Iceland (1)

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

Interview conducted May 23, 2020.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: This is one of the earlier interviews for a series on Iceland. Let's discuss some family background, personal history, to give a grounding where you're coming from. What is some family background, e.g., geography, culture, language, religion or lack thereof?

Professor Terry Adrian Gunnell[1],[2]: Born in Brighton and Hove in East Sussex, south of England, father worked with the BBC. From school there, I went onto university to do drama and theatre arts, which is my main subject.

After taking a year between school and university, I went to work in Norway in a hotel. That's my first connection with Scandinavia. That's where I met my wife as well working at the same place. She is Icelandic.

She went back to Iceland. I went back to university. She found a way to coming to Birmingham afterwards, where we went on from there. After doing drama, which is not just practical, I ended up doing my B.A. in Icelandic Drama.

I was into Scandinavia at the time. People had written about Norwegian drama, certainly. So, I interviewed people and looked at Norwegian drama, which led me back to Viking times. The beginning of drama and some ancient poems from the Viking Period, certainly monologues and dialogues.

The next step was to do a teaching qualification. A year in my life, as far as I am concerned, a wasted year because you learn much more by teaching practically. One year in teaching in Birmingham in inner-city schools there.

Then we moved to Iceland. I learned Icelandic. I started teaching in the Hamrahlíð College, which had no objection to people having long hair, wearing

jeans. Which is part of my problem in Britain, everyone is supposed to wear suits and ties. People are supposed to call the teacher, "Sir."

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Gunnell: Then I taught English there for roughly 18 years. In between in the summertime, we would be regularly going to Norway and teaching there, doing lectures for tourists, especially American tourists, on Vikings and Scandinavian folklore.

In between, I do a doctorate where I continue with that idea on the background or origins of Scandinavian drama. Then a sense that performance subjects are something that I've done since. It brings together things that I'm writing, doing, and in terms of teaching.

1998, I had been teaching for 18 years doing courses. We could do a whole range of experimental courses because it was meant to be an experimental school. We took up a course on Native Americans. We wanted to underline that pigeon-holing isn't really helping the world.

That if you're going to understand Native Americans, you need to understand their way of living, and their beliefs and their culture. To understand their beliefs and culture, you need to understand their history and their way of living. Everything was connected.

So, we had a history teacher, an anthropology teacher, and me teaching literature and the beliefs of the different people. We connected the students with Native Americans through the web. That picked up quite a lot of attention around the country.

It was new and making use of the new media. Anyway, 1998, I was offered a position at the university teaching folkloristics. I'd also applied to teach drama as part of comparative literature. I got

the folkloristics position. That's where I've stayed since.

Teaching courses on Scandinavian folklore, Celtic folklore, Scottish folklore, Icelandic folktales and beliefs, festivals, Tolkien, old Norse religion, I teach a lot of it. Formal studies of a whole range of stuff, which is what I have been doing now.

I have been moving into retirement from now until next year. That's basically the story. Strong context with Scotland, Ireland, Scandinavia, and then Britain at the same time. I have a lot of international students coming and taking my courses. Does that do it?

Jacobsen: It's good [Laughing]. An earlier part of the response, with the transition of teaching in Iceland or even living in Iceland, which is going by a first name, "Terry," rather than "honourary" this or "Sir" that.

Is that reflective of a highly informal culture where everyone is brought to the same playing field?

Gunnell: It is, certainly, very similar to Germany and Britain, where you have this element of "sir," "professor," "doctor," and whatever else. I've got little patience for that. What was great about teaching in senior high, which was where I was before, I was in my early 20s. The students were 18, 19, 20.

The ones, who I were around, were fairly young. There's a lot more equality. Students and the staff, I did not have much space for the professor. In Iceland, you're never called "Mr."

The great thing about Iceland, your name is your Christian name. The surname is a patronymic. Everybody here is called by their first name. The phone book goes by the first name.

Yes, it was healthy. It was nice. This way of doing things. In my case, I had three names, which made it even more confusing.

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Gunnell: I had to change my name when I was given citizenship here. My name didn't fit into the rules of names, which has to be a Scandinavian name. So, I went to one of the earliest names in the phonebook and found Axel.

"Axel," we were worried about the axel on the car crashing. We were in Britain for a while. So, I became Axel for a few years.

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Gunnell: Then the University of Iceland refused to have three names and ordered me to just go back and change it. Somehow, Irish names were allowed and Terry was accepted. So, I became Terry, again.

Jacobsen: Iceland is a very well-preserved culture in terms of language. You studied some of Native American history. Is there a similar trend – of those that have been kept – of an accepted norm that the languages have been more or less the same, or is this an incorrect comparison?

Gunnell: Of course, we know very well in terms of Native Americans. We know so little because so little is recorded. We have no idea how the languages developed at the time. Iceland, on the other hand, we have literature.

While it would have sounded slightly different in the Viking times, Icelanders can read that material. It is much easier for them, for example, than for us to read Chaucer. Reading Sagas for them is easier for them than people reading Shakespeare when it comes down to it, it comes down to the culture of the Sagas being read on farms for a long time.

It keeps the language in that mode. Languages developed and changed over time. It is a way of speaking and spelling things in the Sagas, but it is not difficult to read. A large number of people can read from an early point.

Literacy in Iceland is much higher than in many other countries. I wouldn't really compare it to the Native Americans. The pride of the language is, certainly, there. But it is old and an older language in a sense than others that we find around elsewhere.

Jacobsen: Why did you choose Iceland in the end?

Gunnell: [Laughing] My wife's Icelandic [Laughing], we were working in Norway every Summer. Our plan had been to move to Norway to work. She survived living in England for three years. The idea was that I would survive living in Iceland for three years.

Then we would move to Norway after. She was happy moving back here. I was happy teaching in that school. We found a way of doing both in the sense of going to Norway in the Summer while being here.

I learned Icelandic. It was a good place to work if you could get out in the summertime. Which you can't at the moment, this year, the first time in, roughly, 40 years [Laughing]. You can't go anywhere in the summertime.

Jacobsen: If you're looking at Celtic mythology, Native American mythology, Icelandic mythology, what are some common themes that tend to pop up?

Gunnell: Take them separately, what makes Icelandic mythology and folklore different from other Scandinavian countries, Iceland is definitely Scandinavian. The Celtic side was wiped out, a little bit like the Native American languages were wiped out in the schools. The slaves were not allowed to use their language.

The interesting thing about Iceland is it's a blend of Scottish, Irish, and Nordic. 50% in terms of DNA, 50% of the women, female DNA, is Gaelic, Celtic. Male, I think, is about 80% Nordic and 20% Gaelic. So, there's a lot of slaves brought from the Celtic area.

You can see that in the faces and can see it in a number of the folktales and ideas within the Sagas. We are dealing with a culture that is blended. You go to the west of Ireland. You see similar things here, almost Medieval culture, where the land is very much alive and people have respect for rocks.

There are places that you don't touch or go anywhere near at particular times of the year. Everyone has taken note of Iceland and the elves here. Western Ireland, you have the fairies. You have roads that go around particular trees. You have a strong respect for the land.

It is that that we can connect to the Native Americans. The respect for the land and the sense that the land is alive; that you need to work with it and, certainly, think long-term. Iceland in a sense is split.

Everything you hear me say about Iceland is like two sides of a coin. You were talking about a similar thing in Canada before [Ed. Long, off-tape discussion]. The rightwing is about making money off the land today.

The rightwing is very much an American dream of making cash. The left is more Scandinavian and

more aware of the long-term and the need to preserve the landscape. It is a 19th-century romantic sense of respect for the land, which you see among the Native Americans too.

You see this clash in Iceland. Both sides have a historical background. The rightwing, in the 1700s in Iceland, the people were well-aware that you had to live for the day. They were living so much on the edge. They were surrounded by pack ice. The volcanoes were going off, killing 50% of the domestic animals and 1/5th of the population.

This was a time of survival, thinking about just today, became quite instilled within Icelanders. Everybody knows a volcano could go off at any moment. A hot spring could go off in your kitchen at any time.

One is the sense of living for the moment, taking what you can get out of the land. The other is this sense of preserving it, looking at the landscape as beautiful, which is something people in the past didn't have time.

It is something that you get used to and live with. There is a difference. If you look at Icelandic farms to farms across Denmark and Norway, which are, often, very, very beautifully preserved buildings, in Iceland, you rebuilt your buildings endlessly.

Farms here are more of a dump. A little bit like what you find in Shetland or elsewhere, which I know very well. Because you are living for the moment, 'Why should we make the farm pretty for anybody. It is just a place that you live.'

That's one side. On the other side, it is a sense of the power of the country. For everyone, they've been brought up with a sense of the country being unique and something that you need to work with and is reflective of those beliefs. It is similar to the Native Americans.

We know it was the same right across Scandinavia and Britain. It is a very long answer.



Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Professor, Folkloristics, University of Iceland.

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Vancouver/ICMJE: Jacobsen S. *Conversation with Professor Terry Adrian Gunnell on Background, Informal Culture, Native Americans and Icelanders, Choosing Iceland, and Mythologies: Professor, Folkloristics, University of Iceland (1)*[Internet]. (2020, March 27(A)). Available from: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/Gunnell-1>.

Conversation with Professor Terry Adrian Gunnell on Old Norse Religion and Christianity, Women's Changing Roles Over Time, and Fylgja and Folkloristics: Professor, Folkloristics, University of Iceland (2)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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Abstract

Terry Gunnell is Professor of Folkloristics at the University of Iceland. He is author of *The Origins of Drama in Scandinavia* (1995); editor of *Masks and Mumming in the Nordic Area* (2007) and *Legends and Landscape* (2008); and joint editor of *The Nordic Apocalypse: Approaches to Vǫluspá and Nordic Days of Judgement* (with Annette Lassen, 2013); and *Málarinn og menningarsköpun: Sigurður Guðmundsson og Kvöldfélagið* (with Karl Aspelund), which received a nomination for the Icelandic Literature Prize (*Íslensku bókmenntaverðlaunin*) for 2017. He has also written a wide range of articles on Old Norse religion, Nordic folk belief and legend, folk drama and performance, and is behind the creation of the on-line *Sagnagrunnur* database of Icelandic folk legends in print (<http://sagnagrunnur.com/en/>); the national survey into Folk Belief in Iceland (2006-2007); and (with Karl Aspelund) the on-line database dealing with the Icelandic artist Sigurður Guðmundsson and the creation of national culture in Iceland in the mid-19th century (<https://sigurdurmalari.hi.is/english>). E-mail address: terry@hi.is. He discusses: the political context in the early 1900s; when “Christianity comes along; the influence of religion in Iceland now; claimed Christian belief mixing with the worship of the land; a *fylgja* or a following spirit; and professional folklorist.

Keywords: Christianity, Folkloristics, Fylgja, God, Iceland, Old Norse Religion, Pietist Church, Terry Adrian Gunnell, University of Iceland.

Conversation with Professor Terry Adrian Gunnell on Old Norse Religion and Christianity, Women's Changing Roles Over Time, and Fylgja and Folkloristics: Professor, Folkloristics, University of Iceland (2)

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

Interview conducted May 23, 2020.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: What about the political context in the early 1900s with famous writers like Laxness, Halldór Laxness? One individual described some of his writings as a way of giving a tip of the hat to women's movements in Iceland

movements in other parts of the world. He described them as the ‘big mommas.’ They managed the resources, the young, the finances of the household. Some spheres, not all, at least

prominent ones, were dominated by women in the family and in the community.

Was there an adaptation of the lore around this time too? Or were these folklore notions a relatively consistent one regardless of relatively rapid – historically speaking – dynamic changes in either gender relations in the culture, economic situations or technology situations in the culture that can have impacts in the home and in the community?

Professor Terry Adrian Gunnell[1],[2]: It is going to be a long answer too. We need to start off with going back to the Viking Period and going back to Germanic tribes. It is very, very clear that religion was in the hands of women. You had some very powerful goddesses.

I got a sense myself when teaching old Norse religions that even the year was divided into male and female. It was a Winter more associated with women and Summer more associated with men, war, and trading.

Certainly, when we look back at that period, women are much stronger, in a sense, before Christianity comes along. The old Norse religion, certainly, has much more respect for independent women. You see that much reflected in the Sagas. You do not mess with these Saga women.

They give back as much as they are given. Very famous figures in the favourite Sagas, they are being read about on the farms and everyone is very well aware of them. At the same time, in the division of labour, women control the farm.

This is partly why I am talking about the division of the year. Summertime, you're out working, travelling, and out on the fields. Winter, you move to the farm. Women keep the keys to the farm. They are in charge of the slaves of the farm. They are the bosses in the Wintertime.

There is a strong sense of equality right the way through. Gradually, Christianity raises the idea, priests certainly, of men doing the governing. It is the idea of men going out doing the fighting and the travelling; women are out in the farm, but not in a derogatory sense.

They're very powerful is what I am trying to underline there. As we start, in a sense, moving through time, people are still reading these Sagas right from the beginning. They're still coming into contact with these strong women.

Men are, certainly, as in other countries beginning to take over governance, law, and this sort of thing. At

the same time, Iceland does become one of the first places where women get the vote. This is happening quite early.

There is this strong sense of women demanding equality. I am trying to think of other places giving that same sense. Iceland and Scandinavia are not the same areas. A lot of similarity of equality running across Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, which is somewhat different from other countries.

Women getting the vote is much earlier than in many countries. It is similar to Scandinavia. As we start moving towards women's rights, that's developing quite strongly among Suffragettes whatever else in Britain. From getting the vote within the city and within the countryside, we have a sense of women demanding equality.

There was the Red Sock movement in the 1960s. It's not new that Icelanders should be doing this. That's what I am saying. It's part of the culture. Certainly, they are held behind other countries in Parliament. They can't become priests, can't become sheriffs, and are held more to the farm.

But the respect for the female gender is much higher here than in many other countries. But it also the same in Scandinavia. That provides a foundation for what happens within the 60s, in my mind. I'm glad, at least.

This was a good place to have daughters. We have two daughters who are now in their 30s. I don't think either of them has grown up thinking they're lesser to men, which is a good thing in my mind. There's more equality in wages and jobs than in many other countries. But I think this is a very Scandinavian thing, when it comes down to it.

Jacobsen: You have mentioned the phrase when "Christianity comes along." What was the sect of Christianity? What is its impact on the present?

Gunnell: We're going to have two levels. One of them is the slaves who come to Iceland from Ireland and those who have had contact with Irish Christianity. That is brought to Iceland at an underground level.

Certainly, many of the settlers say they are Christian, which is Irish Christianity. A missionary movement comes from Norway and from Norway back to Hamburg-Bremen. That, when it comes to Iceland, led by the Norwegian king; they tried to wipe out the Irish connection and act as if Christianity had never been here.

They tried to pass around the idea that Christianity was wiped out. It wasn't. It was German

Christianity. Britain has less influence here than in Norway, for instance, at that time. It brings in the idea of women had been beginning to lose their position that they had in the old Norse religion.

Men are beginning to take over both religion and politics. This is really the final nail in the coffin as Christianity moves in. You get the idea of the Virgin Mary, for example, versus Freya who will go out and sleep with whoever she wants...

Jacobsen: ...[Laughing]...

Gunnell: ... who won't be pushed around by anybody. A very different image of women to the Virgin Mary or Mary the Mother. They've been given very new models. The previous model was Valkyries and women on horseback in armour giving back as much as they get.

The idea of the warrior women that you see in the Viking series. It is definitely there. Christianity formally puts an end to that and starts instituting things like women regarded as dirty for four days after giving birth, and having to be locked away, which I'm sure they didn't know when they first accepted it.

There you go [Laughing]. Catholic, of course, and Protestant come in the late 1500s, early 1600s. There's more in Iceland, seems to have been more freedom, within Catholic beliefs than there was in the Lutheran beliefs that were brought in.

Jacobsen: What is the influence of religion in Iceland now?

Gunnell: Fading fast, as it is in so many other countries, partly because of the various scandals connected to the Church, you have a number of scandals that have rocked the Church here in the last couple of years.

If you talk about religion, Iceland is different than the other Scandinavian countries. We did a survey of folk beliefs in 2007, 2008. There had been one done earlier in 1970. I was sure things would change radically by that time.

I was tired of people asking about elves based on surveys. We did a national survey with about 1,000 people in 2007/2008. We asked, as part of that, "Do you believe in a God?" I was proved wrong with it. I expected, given a range of questions, differently.

A large number of people said they believed in a God and a good God that you can pray to, which meant that we were dealing with a Christian God here. It was really weird because Icelanders don't go to church and have no sense of the Bible.

I was teaching a course and doing an oral exam about a piece of literature in which someone was carried across a stage, hanging from a piece of wood, were bleeding from their hands and their side. Who was this character?

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Gunnell: They don't go to church except once or twice a year, maybe, for Confirmation, which, again, they've got no idea about. As a friend of mine who is a son of a bishop and a teacher within the theology department, they say people in Iceland are Christian in spite of the Church.

In a sense, their Christianity doesn't come from the Church. It comes from the parents. I use the word "superstition." They think the cross is protective. You find them putting up crosses. You find them putting up icons. You find parents encouraging children to pray.

It is a childish belief rather than anything to do with the Church. It is about the figures. They are probably changing now. At heart, it was something as high as you find in the Catholic countries and the fundamentalist areas of the States. 70% of Icelanders would say they are believers in the Christian God.

At the same time, what is fun, it may have changed a little bit. If you ask them in European values surveys:

"Do you believe in God?"

"Yes."

"Do you believe in the Devil?"

"No."

"Do you believe in Heaven?"

"Yes."

"Do you believe in Hell?"

"No."

"Do you believe in sin?"

"Yes."

Ha! Which means, basically, if you sin, you go straight to Heaven, which explains the banking crash when it comes into it. The Devil seems to have come to more belief since the banking crash, according to figures. But, again, this says something about the idea that everyone will go to Heaven, whatever they do.

It is a different Christian belief. It is very interesting. It needs to be looked into in more detail.

Jacobsen: It sounds like an inchoate, incoherent set of vague beliefs, where, in Daniel Dennett's terms, it is "believing in belief."

Gunnell: It is a superstition in a positive sense. In the same sense, we walk around ladders. When I use the word "superstition," I don't mean it in a negative sense. I mean it as a form of protection.

But it partly because the Church, in recent years, hasn't forced itself on people as you get in some areas of Scandinavia. The Pietist Church worked on wiping out old folklore banned it. Here, the priests were not that Christian.

You didn't have much choice if you were educated. People became priests. Everyone knew about elves. They weren't really against these beliefs. It has been more open to spiritualism when the theology departments opened here. It is different. It makes Iceland different than other countries.

Jacobsen: How is this claimed Christian belief mixing with the worship of the land, in a sense, and some of the folklore that goes back many, many centuries like the Sagas?

Gunnell: What was interesting about the survey, all of the strongest beliefs in the survey were not the hidden people (*Huldufólk*), the elves. That's only about 10% who say that they strongly believe and 10%/15% who say they don't believe. Everybody else is in the middle, open to it.

Stronger things like belief in dreams, belief in spirits, belief in telepathy, these are quite deeply rooted and go back to Saba times. They don't believe in Dobby the house-elf from Rowling. They don't believe in UFOs. If you bump into one, you're drunk.

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Gunnell: [Laughing]. It is not a deep belief. But the things that are believed go back a long way. The idea of having a *fylgja* when you're born, the following spirit. They all go back to the Saga times. In a sense, they have been passed on by the reading and telling of the Sagas. These are literal cultures.

Jacobsen: What is a *fylgja* or the following spirit?

Gunnell: It is the idea that when you're born; there's a spirit born with you. It follows you around. A little bit like the *Golden Compass* books, where everyone has a little animal that follows them.

The oldest version in Scandinavia was an animal. When Christianity came, it was an angel. This idea that you hear a door go five minutes before

somebody arrives. That's the *Fylgja* coming. Or you think about them all of a sudden.

That is very old. You don't find it in Gaelic belief as much as you find it here. You do find it in the Sagas. People have a sense. That there is a spirit *with you*, alongside you, can, sometimes, be a part of you, but, certainly, accompanies you.

Jacobsen: As a professional folklorist, what are some aspects of Icelandic folklore that you *do not* find in any other culture? Not things necessarily quintessentially Icelandic, but you never find them anywhere else.

Gunnell: First of all, I never learned folkloristics. I just researched and studied it. I never called myself a folklorist. What is different in Iceland compared to other countries, what I try to tell other people, if you go o Western Ireland, you will find similar ideas still alive.

Because there, as in Iceland, the move from an almost medieval world to the one that we have now, a modern, up-to-date, online culture happened in the Second World War, the rural culture, suddenly, because the urban culture.

So, memories of these old ideas are still around with parents and grandparents. Kids are still in contact with this rural, early way of thinking. What makes Iceland different, the *fylgja* idea is different from Ireland.

At least, the elf idea is very similar to Ireland, but you don't find it anymore in Britain or Scandinavia anymore in the same way. At the same time, I say to journalists who are coming here. It says more about them than about anything else, about their longing for the fairy tale world that they grew up in, which is reflected in *Thrones* and *Lord of the Rings*.

This fantasy literature world, a place where people actually believed in these things. They don't really understand how the belief *is*; it is a sense that the landscape is alive. It's not that Icelanders are out there dancing around rocks with little guys with pointy ears and ballet tutus every Friday night, which is partly what they're expecting.

It's not like that. It is a sense of respect for the landscape. That was, certainly, in Scandinavia up until the 40s, 50s, and in Britain until the First World War. It is still alive here. How different it was to Scandinavia, in the past, as I say, Iceland is different from the rest of Scandinavia due to the mix of the Irish and the Scottish.

It is a blend. But it is Nordic as a culture. So, I don't know if there's anything hugely different, if

Icelanders are *that special* when it comes down to it in terms of beliefs. On the other hand, what I said about the belief in God, that is very different to anything I've seen anywhere else.

One other aspect that is true too, which I haven't seen anywhere else. You name your children after a dream. I don't know where that came from. There are a few scraps in Norway during the Saga time.

Your wife is pregnant and dreams of somebody who says, "Let me stay." Then she names her child after that person. You speak to a group of Icelanders. A

large number of them will tell you stories of that kind.

You don't go against it because there is a fierce, "What will happen to your child if you don't?" One of our children is named in that way. The landscape is different too. It is a volcanic landscape, which speaks to you through the sounds of the hot springs and the grinding of the glaciers.

People are aware that a volcano could go off by the airport and cut Reykjavik off, at any moment [Laughing].



Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Professor, Folkloristics, University of Iceland.

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Conversation with Professor Terry Adrian Gunnell on God, War, Lore, Armies, and National Motto: Professor, Folkloristics, University of Iceland (3)

2021-04-01



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Abstract

Terry Gunnell is Professor of Folkloristics at the University of Iceland. He is author of *The Origins of Drama in Scandinavia* (1995); editor of *Masks and Mumming in the Nordic Area* (2007) and *Legends and Landscape* (2008); and joint editor of *The Nordic Apocalypse: Approaches to Vǫluspá and Nordic Days of Judgement* (with Annette Lassen, 2013); and *Málarinn og menningarsköpun: Sigurður Guðmundsson og Kvöldfélagið* (with Karl Aspelund), which received a nomination for the Icelandic Literature Prize (*Íslensku bókmenntaverðlaunin*) for 2017. He has also written a wide range of articles on Old Norse religion, Nordic folk belief and legend, folk drama and performance, and is behind the creation of the on-line *Sagnagrunnur* database of Icelandic folk legends in print (<http://sagnagrunnur.com/en/>); the national survey into Folk Belief in Iceland (2006-2007); and (with Karl Aspelund) the on-line database dealing with the Icelandic artist Sigurður Guðmundsson and the creation of national culture in Iceland in the mid-19th century (<https://sigurdurmalari.hi.is/english>). E-mail address: terry@hi.is. He discusses: the conception of God within Iceland; reactions to catastrophes; and the national motto.

Keywords: þetta reddast, armies, Christianity, God, Iceland, Terry Adrian Gunnell, War, World War Two.

Conversation with Professor Terry Adrian Gunnell on God, War, Lore, Armies, and National Motto: Professor, Folkloristics, University of Iceland (3)

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

Interview conducted May 23, 2020.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: The one thing that stands out is God.

long time. First World War, Second World War, all of the European wars hardly touched Iceland at all.

Professor Terry Adrian Gunnell[1],[2]: Yes.

Jacobsen: That's amazing.

Jacobsen: Even in a Christian context, Christians will mean different things.

Gunnell: These are things that Iceland hears about, until the Second World War forces itself onto them and Britain invades Iceland. I'm still not really sure about the word "Invade" there. Yes, it was an invasion, but it wasn't an invasion that had much affect on people except bringing a lot of money.

Gunnell: Oh, yes.

Jacobsen: The mentioning of World War Two is important because countries that tend to go to war a lot or have war imposed on them a lot. They tend to have populations looking to something to rally around or to find some kind of comfort or consolation, or some unifying image they can build a community around in a life of chaos and destruction.

It was a flood of cash into the country, which had been up until that time poor. In that sense, war was a good thing for them. So, this is very deep within the Icelandic culture of not having an army. You haven't got soldiers around all the time.

So, if you look at the developed nations, the most religious country is the United States. It is off the spectrum. It is a very war-like country. It is still embroiled in two major wars, Iraq and Afghanistan, which has claimed upwards of 500,000 to 1,000,000, or more, lives depending on the estimates.

It is not part of the way that they view history. The soldier, the army, isn't part of the way they look at the world compared to the way I do or you do. British history is war all the way through from the beginning to the end: French is; German is; American is. Canada is drawn into it wherever Britain goes.

There are many estimates. The fact that Iceland does not have army. I want to take this in two directions. On the one hand, a country without too much chaos can maintain and sustain general culture. This includes the beliefs.

We carry the blood of so many people with us. Iceland just doesn't have this. It is non-existence. In a sense, to other cultures outside, they don't really understand in the same way that I do from Britain.

The people's ideas about *Fylgjas*, a Christian God, about having a sense that the land is alive, etc., will be consistent. On the other hand, things will, more or less, be the same in terms of the trajectories we're seeing with more comfortable lives with healthcare, pharmacare, education for all or most at least.

People of a different colour are new. Icelanders will go abroad and stare and walk into lamp posts and say, "Look!" They are intrigued by this. Same way by Judaism and Islam. They are foreign. Nothing against it, but they find it strange.

We see a decline in formal traditional religions. Those religions with practices and beliefs connected to some kind of transcendent object of worship. So, how does not having an army affect Iceland?

There is this still island character, much more so than Britain. A periphery culture all the way through. So, armies, in Icelandic history, very recent with the arrival of first the Brits, and then the Americans and the American base, which forced itself onto Icelandic mentalities.

When Icelanders think of "God" in a Christian context or otherwise, how are they conceiving this being?

You couldn't go abroad without going through the American base and get accepted every time you went out there. The influence on Icelandic culture of English-speaking soldiers who were coming into town and going to dances and whatever.

Gunnell: [Laughing] What is particularly clear, Iceland has been living on the periphery for such a

The Icelanders keeping black soldiers out of the base. There's a fear. This fear of losing the pure Icelandic-ness, which is still floating around in terms

of language. So, in a sense, war and armies are never the main strip of Oxford St.? Because he's an part of Icelanders themselves in spite of the Sages with fighting and battles there.

You fight. You fight for your farm. You have arguments with other farmers, but you don't have really armies. They know from the Sagas, the contemporary Sagas of the 13th centuries of the civil wars in Icelandic discourse caused trouble.

They haven't got time for space or war. It's about daily survival for a long time. It's simply armies are not the way Icelanders look at things. They're very different to the way you or I will, as Brits and Canadians. A very strong left movement against NATO, against the American base, and so on.

The right will be more open to it, but not in terms of sending your sons off to join. It brings cash with it. "Okay, come on America, we like you if you bring some money with you." In terms of God, I think if you asked any Icelandic, "Are you Christian?" They would look at you as if you were nuts.

It is a lower level somewhere. This sense about superstition of the cross and a power out there. I would expect them to answer with a power in nature. They believe strongly in a sense of fate. What came out of this, it was a Christian God, which has somehow been brought in on the side.

But the two are very separate. To being Icelandic, that causes problems at the same time. In the sense, it has caused, to a large extent, the banking crash. Icelanders were brought up with the Sagas and their poems from the early 19th century.

The Sagas will tell them when you go to another country; the first person you meet is the King of Norway. Why? You're an Icelandic. It's quite natural. You're a poet. You go to Norway. That'll do nicely. Thank you!

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

Gunnell: It's the equivalent of the American Express card. You have people in the 19th century. The romantic poets saying, 'Iceland, what has happened to your fame of the past, the golden years...', and whatever.

What happened with the crash, they started fulfilling the dream that they'd been presented with for a long time. You have to go out buy a football team, buy a private jet, hang out with the royalty, everybody wants you.

It was a fulfillment of the idea that Icelanders are different than others. You could watch the news and people saying, 'How could an Icelandic in a country like this could buy a football team, could buy half of

Iceland. They are different.'

The President says, 'It is because they are Icelandic. They take risks better more than anybody else.' It didn't really bring out the risks that it would have on the economy. The *Star Trek* idea of going where no one else goes before.

"This is an Icelandic. We're better." It is the 'How do like Iceland?' thing. When I'm teaching courses on Icelandic culture, again, these two sided elements of it. It expresses, on one side, a hope that the person is going to say, "Wonderful, perfect, better than anywhere else."

"Why is it us?" Because there is an inferiority complex behind it. That you might not be. Then the rest is saved for the football clap. Suddenly, everybody wants Iceland again. Suddenly, I am being asked by bloody English journalists, 'Does Iceland do so well in football because of their elves?'

Come on! [Laughing] Get over it.

Jacobsen: Who asked you this?

Gunnell: This was when Iceland was winning football games and it was an English newspaper wanting to know if it was their belief in elves. Basically, they know each other. They have grown up together. It is a stronger sense of a team.

Iceland has done some amazing things in terms of the strongest man in the world and the most beautiful. But only if they aren't putting that in front of your face all the time, being the best. It is part of the, again, island culture: 'We're different.' There's something about the DNA of Icelanders.

The crash was a matter of shame, which they never had to deal with before. Of going to different places, like islands off Greece, the first question, 'How are you doing financially? Poor Iceland.' They went from being the worst in the world to not being the worst in the world.

The first to get over COVID. It is to be the first or the best. But there is a very strong sense of being Icelandic. That we are a little nation that has done so much. Different to the Brits, we're just hobbits. Icelanders aren't really hobbits. There's much more dwarfishness about Icelanders.

Jacobsen: At the end of the 1700s, there was the catastrophe that took out 1/5th of the population. What does this do to people's faith in lore? Does this look as if it's, as you're noting, just simply a matter of fate or the fates playing out?

Gunnell: No, the sense of fate is seen in people interpreting dreams for example. That there is something laid down. You can tap into it. There is a sense that your life is mapped out, a plan behind it, a higher power.

It's not the Christian God. There's a higher power that's laid down. It goes back to the Sagas very much. You die and even know your fate/meet your fate.

Jacobsen: They sound like Spinoza.



Gunnell: Yes, there's elements of this. It is very much a Scandinavian element. You go down bravely in spite of it. Things go badly. Okay, they go badly. We'll survive. This wonderful Icelandic motto: *þetta reddast*. It'll work out. [Ed. Literal: "It'll all work out okay."] Things go badly.

Okay, things go badly. We'll survive. *þetta reddast*, people have begun accepting it as the national motto. It'll all work out. It is both good and bad.



Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Professor, Folkloristics, University of Iceland.

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