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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)*

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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\***

*(Updated January 6, 2021)*

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**[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.

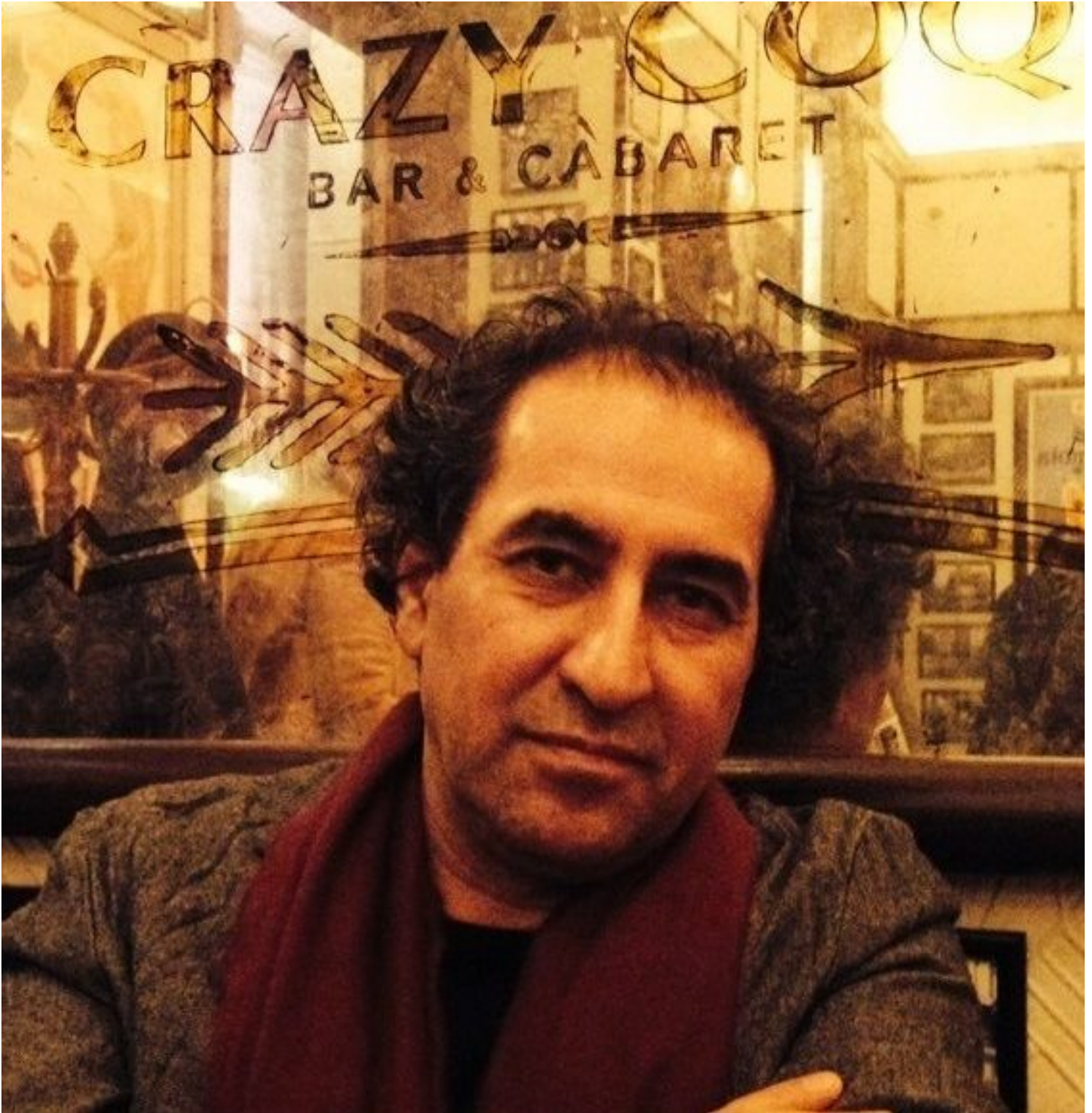


**Dr. Daniel Bernstein**

***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, Tessellate 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 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.



**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.



**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 descendents 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](mailto: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.

# About

(Updated August 15, 2025)

In-Sight Publishing

Publication Location: Fort Langley, British Columbia, Canada

Publisher: In-Sight Publishing

ISBN: 978-1-0692343

## Publications: People/Organizations

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

## Publications: Overview

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

## Publications: Feeds

- [African Freethinker](#)
- Apostasia (Archival)
- [Critical Science Newswire](#)
- [Freethought Newswire](#)
- [Ghana's 5%](#) (Archival)
- [In-Sight: Interviews \(2369–6885\)](#)



- [Indigenous Middle East](#)
- [Question Time](#) (Archival)

## 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: Interviews 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: Interviews 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: Interviews 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: Interviews. 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) Vaughn Archives (Bettye Vaughn): <https://www.ethicscenter.uci.edu/vaughn.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 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.
- Phase 69, January 2, 2025: Name change of In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal to In-Sight: Interviews, frequency alteration of In-Sight Interviews from three times per year to four times per year with issue publications happening January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1, and reformatting of interview design and publications for In-Sight: Interviews based on more standardized academic format and presentation.
- Phase 70, May 3, 2025: Update to License and Copyright to more comprehensive stipulations. These terms govern all [In Sight Publishing](#) content—past, present, and future—and supersede any prior notices.
- Phase 71, August 15, 2025: Completion of integration, updates, and transfer of Amazon operations for books to Apple Books following ISBN acquirement for In-Sight Publishing as a publishing house as a whole (ISBN: 978-1-0692343), with the [Books](#) section incorporating several second edition books showcasing this transition.

# In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal

(Updated May 3, 2025)

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 by the Publisher

I appreciate the support of Herb Silverman, Richard May, Bob Williams, Uwe Michael Neumann, and Larae Bakerink, for bringing this issue to fruition.

This is Issue 23 of “Outsiders and Outliers” and Issue 29 of *In-Sight*—a long journey, and a quaint one too. I extend my appreciation to the following Advisory Board members who served through January 1, 2022, and to all former Advisory Board members. The Board up to January 1, 2022: Dr. Daniel Bernstein, Dr. Kathy Bullock, Dr. Aubrey de Grey, Ismail Hamaamin Hamalaw, Marissa Torres Langseth, B.S.N., R.N., M.S.N., ANP-BC (retired), J.J. Middleway, Tim Moen, Stacey Piercey, Professor Azra Raza, M.D., Dr. Lloyd Hawkeye Robertson, Dr. Sally Satel, M.D., Dr. Herb Silverman, Prof. Imam Syed B. Soharwardy, Rod Taylor, Professor Sven van de Wetering, and Terry Waslow, M.B.A.

I also express gratitude to the librarians of Athabasca University, Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, the University of California, Irvine, the Fort Langley Library, Thompson Rivers University, and the Surrey Public Library. The unseen contributors often count the most. I appreciate the collaborative assistance that has enabled a fuller understanding of new styles and content of thought, and the connections to these individuals.

Onwards,

So it goes,

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)

## **Issue 29, Idea: Outliers & Outsiders (23)**

# Free of Charge 10 – Theology Transcending Into Nothing, Various Privileges, and Points of Education

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Numbering: Issue 28.E, Idea: Outliers & Outsiders (23)

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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: theology; supernaturalism; “rational analysis”; maximization of happiness; an afterlife; agency of non-human animals; belief in God and fear of death; white privilege and White Christian Nationalism; white privilege, considerations; false rumours and wishful thinking; development of a humanistic outlook; American soft power waning; climate change; education in logic; Christian and private religious schools; and modern sex education.

**Keywords:** America, Christianity, ethics, Herb Silverman, Humanism, logic, morality, non-human animals, religious belief, sex education, supernaturalism, theology, Utilitarianism, White Christian Nationalism.

Free of Charge 10 – Theology Transcending Into Nothing, Various Privileges, and Points of Education

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

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen:** Is theology a dead field, at this point? I mean in the sense of ethics connected directly to reality, so the natural sciences, and morality grounded in human concern. What is the point of theology at this point if any? Thousands of Th.D.s, presumably, or some ridiculously high number, must be published annually on the subject matter. To me, it looks as if an entirely farcical endeavour and an enormous waste of human time and talent.



Smart people seemingly wasting their lives in fruitless considerations of the attributions of those objects so transcendental that they've transcended into nothingness.

**Dr. Herb Silverman:** I'm not opposed to theology if done right. Theology, to me, is the study of religious belief. I think it's important to learn about religious and god beliefs that have influenced our culture. Theology is often taught in academic religious studies programs. Learning about different theologies that sound ridiculous to some students often makes them think about the religion in which they were raised, and why it might sound ridiculous to an outsider. It's sometimes only a short step from thinking that their religion and god beliefs are also ridiculous. So, studying theology can create atheists.

**Jacobsen:** If supernatural, transcendentalist ethics can be rejected, and if theology seems like a dead field of enquiry in terms of moral truth, what would be the long-form and the short-form statement on a secular humanist Golden Rule? A comprehensive statement covering all relevant concerns mentioned before, by you.

**Silverman:** Supernatural ethics can certainly be rejected because we live in the natural world, and supernatural is a meaningless expression promoted by people who believe in so-called holy books. I would say a short-form statement for a secular humanist Golden Rule is that we should not treat others in ways that we would not like to be treated. This is not much different from the traditional Golden Rule as long as "others" means all other people, not just a favored tribe (as is the case with most religions). A long-form statement about universal morality requires empathy and reciprocity. We know that humans are an integral part of nature, the result of unguided evolutionary change. Humans are social animals and find meaning in relationships, so we should work on improving our relationships. We need to learn how others would like to be treated as individuals. Since ethical values are derived from human need and interest and tested by experience, we must continually discover new ways to improve secular humanism.

**Jacobsen:** With "rational analysis" as part of the knowledge of the world considered in the humanist ontology, what about cognitive biases? Those anthropological truths hammering away at the idea of the "rational" individual humanist who makes the "rational analysis."

**Silverman:** Cognitive bias is our tendency to listen more often to information that confirms our existing beliefs. We need to be aware of cognitive biases when we try to make rational decisions. Regardless of how rational we think we are, we are all subject to confirmation bias, probably an evolutionary characteristic. Some cognitive bias might have served our hunter-gatherer ancestors well. It likely brought about faster decision-making when speed was more valuable than accuracy.

Scientists are always concerned about confirmation bias, which is why they usually test a theory by first looking for examples that would show their theory to be false. If found, they either modify the theory or discard it. When mathematicians think they have proved a theorem, before submitting it for publication they look for a counter example that would show the proposed theorem to be false.

Religious people are particularly subject to confirmation bias, believing without evidence what their "holy" books say, listening mainly to others who hold those same beliefs, and not considering all the facts in a logical and rational manner.

Many people only pay attention to information that confirms their beliefs through selected news sources and social media. This includes opinions about issues like global warming, wearing masks during a pandemic, getting vaccines, following science, and gun control. This also happens on a governmental level. Witness the confirmation bias that the leaders of the United States have had for 20 years about Afghanistan.

**Jacobsen:** Why is maximization of happiness important? Is Humanism, in this sense, a branch of Utilitarian philosophy (Millian more than Benthamite)?

**Silverman:** Utilitarianism, as I understand it, is a philosophy that aims for the betterment of society as a whole. Where happiness applies to Humanism, I can't improve on the quote from Robert Green Ingersoll, known as the Great Agnostic: "Happiness is the only good. The time to be happy is now. The place to be happy is here. The way to be happy is to make others so."

**Jacobsen:** Is "afterlife" an oxymoronic phrase? It's extremely common as both a word and a sentiment. Does this word and idea modestly annoy you, too?

**Silverman:** I don't know that "afterlife" is oxymoronic, since I can't prove there isn't one. On the other hand, I would bet my life that there is no afterlife. In fact, I am doing so. Since we don't delude ourselves into thinking we will have an afterlife, we ought to decide what we want to accomplish in this, our one and only life. I am comforted in knowing that I can contribute something useful in the world. Sometimes our choices and their repercussions live longer than we do, impacting on family, friends, people we don't know, and future generations.

**Jacobsen:** If human beings have agency, and if non-human animals have a modicum of agency relative to human beings, should the meaning in life of other evolved critters be respected, too?

**Silverman:** Of course, we should show respect for other evolved critters, besides humans. That's why I'm a vegan (except for ice cream). After all, humans are just fish plus time.

**Jacobsen:** Is the belief in God based on a fear of death, generally? In my interview with the late James Randi, he considered this core to the whole enterprise of globally held falsehoods from religions and New Age beliefs (what he, in a neologism, termed "Newage")?

**Silverman:** I think belief in God is largely, but not totally, based on a fear of death. Some people want to believe they will somehow go on after they die. God is an easy, though false, answer for them. Humans are pattern-seeking animals who like to know answers. When ignorant of why something occurs, some say "God did it," which is known as the "God of the gaps." Of course science often comes up with real explanations, so the gap keeps shrinking.

**Jacobsen:** Why is white privilege so tied up with Christian Nationalism in the United States now?

**Silverman:** If I were to give a two-word answer, it would be "Donald Trump." Despite Trump's unchristian behavior and comments, white evangelicals voted overwhelmingly for him and still support him. The "white" component is partly about stopping immigration of non-whites. White Christian Nationalists would like to return to the days when whites could easily and more legally discriminate against those of a different race and those who were not Christian. That is what they mean when they say, "Make America Great Again."

**Jacobsen:** What parts of white privilege seem legitimate and illegitimate in the various presentations of it?

**Silverman:** It's hard to come up with a legitimate part of while privilege, other than to say we should not blame all whites for discrimination against non-whites. I don't favor reparation to all African-Americans regardless of status, but I do favor affirmative action programs and helping those who were deprived of a decent education. We should put more public money and quality teachers into poor schools, many of which are predominately African-American.

**Jacobsen:** In either false rumors or wishful thinking, are the same mental mechanisms at play?

**Silverman:** I see some difference in that people can often show rumors to be false by providing contrary evidence. Wishful thinking might simply be hoping for a best possible outcome in a situation. It can also be holding to a belief, like in a god or an afterlife, that can't be disproven.

**Jacobsen:** In personal experience, or based on research into it, what factors seem the most important in the development of a humanistic mentality and outlook on life, earlier in life rather than later? I am only part of the community for the last few years, very few in fact, but I have interviewed and talked to a lot of people, happily. I'm far more impressed with the secular humanist community than most others, while the non-theistic Satanists seem to do the best at provocative and creative sociopolitical commentary through protest.

**Silverman:** I think encouraging young people to think for themselves and search for evidence to support their beliefs goes a long way leading them to secular humanism. Explaining why you accept a rational, evidence-based humanist philosophy that is guided by reason and inspired by compassion should be part of their upbringing. Though not everyone is comfortable with the name, I personally like the Satanic Temple, whose members are atheists and have no belief in Satan. They picked a catchy name to piss off the religious right and to protest against those who try to use the government to support religion.

**Jacobsen:** Is American soft power waning? Does this threaten the promise of increases in global democracy? I ask because America, in spite of ridiculous antics and interior flaws, represented an ideal of a largely free state of affairs for citizens in a democratic country in contrast to so many other countries.

**Silverman:** I hope we can get to the post-Trump America, where we support human right and democracy at home and abroad, and no longer support autocrats elsewhere. That's how we can make America great again.

**Jacobsen:** With climate change as another sword of Damocles to global society, what are the democratic alternatives to this state of affairs? What is being done? How can humanists cast their vote to edge the world towards constraining the runaway effects of greenhouse gases this late in the game? Many in the younger generations may not know old age because many in the younger generations may die before old age might happen for them, due to direct and derivative effects of climate change.

**Silverman:** This is not easy to answer. Humanists follow the science about climate change and work with other groups, humanist or not, to try to lessen the effects of climate change. I hope we have not reached the point of no return on planet Earth.

**Jacobsen:** Why focus on an education in logic for students?

**Silverman:** Learning logic is a way for students to see fallacies constructed by others, and how to create a solid argument for a position.

**Jacobsen:** Why have private Christian and religious schools rejected or warped the correct teaching of the theory of evolution in their classrooms? How does this hobble students with an interest in learning biology and medicine, or in simply having an accurate idea as to the origins and development of life?

**Silverman:** A lot of religious schools reject the theory of evolution because it conflicts with their holy books. Students in these schools who are interested in science need to learn about evolution, perhaps by talking to someone who understands that evolution is an essential component of science or by reading legitimate science books on their own.

**Jacobsen:** Side note, with a rejection of the teaching of modern sex education, and with the known consequences to the life outcomes of more students on average in the negative, is this another example of the high negative cost of religion in public life?

**Silverman:** Yes. Schools that reject the teaching of modern sex education usually have an inordinate number of teen pregnancies.

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

#### 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: September 1, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/free-of-charge-10>; Full Issue Publication Date: January 1, 2022: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

# Conversation with Richard May (“May-Tzu”/“MayTzu”/“Mayzi”) on “Picking One’s Own Pocket,” “Did Gurdjieff understand his own teaching?”, “What is the work?”, “Truth,” “Good and Evil,” and “Is this what the work has become?”: Co-Editor, “Noesis: The Journal of the Mega Society” (6)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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## Abstract

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



“What is the work?”; “Truth”; the meaning of truth in “Truth”; “Good and Evil”; so few being awake; “Is this what the work has become?”; the work, and play; identification with the work; identification with the work considered sleeping rather than waking; and Gurdjieff and Wittgenstein.

**Keywords:** Blavatsky, Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Richard May, the work, Wittgenstein.

Conversation with Richard May (“May-Tzu”/“MayTzu”/“Mayzi”) on “Picking One’s Own Pocket,” “Did Gurdjieff understand his own teaching?”, “What is the work?”, “Truth,” “Good and Evil,” and “Is this what the work has become?”: Co-Editor, “Noesis: The Journal of the Mega Society” (6)

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

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen:** “Picking One’s Own Pocket” describes a context in which the truth, to an individual, gets posed as forever-incomplete, while the truth, itself, can be complete. How is this playing off the poly-agnosticism regarding different levels of knowledge in other braindroppings in *Something for No One*?

**Richard May[1],[2]\*:** To me picking one’s own pocket meant simply that one cannot abrogate one’s own authority in choosing what or whom to believe, if anyone. It’s your judgement.

**Jacobsen:** “Did Gurdjieff understand his own teaching?” posits, based on Blavatsky’s and Gurdjieff’s overlap in writings, Gurdjieff taking from other sourcing without full knowledge of the implications of the knowledge or parts of the systems lifted from other sources. Who was Gurdjieff? Why was he important? Is he well-regarded in general or more as a fringe loon, or a excommunicated enlightened figure found, more or less, in obscurity? Same questions on Blavatsky, too, please. (These are not Zen koans.)

**May:** There are hundreds of books on the topic of who Gurdjieff was. No one knows who Gurdjieff was.

Gurdjieff was important only to his pupils.

He is generally regarded as a obscure fringe loon, as you suggest, except by his pupils, and Blavatsky could only aspire to be regarded as a fringe loon.

**Jacobsen:** “What is the work?” describes a stick with two ends, but inverts North American Judeo-Christian theological foundations. How does the devil lead to paradise and God to hell?

**May:** The devil may lead to paradise and God lead to hell? I do not know that there is a devil or a God. This is something Gurdjieff seemed to claim. But Gurdjieff said can lead to paradise, not does lead with certainty.

**Jacobsen:** “Truth” describes the where the lies of truth lie. Side questions, what was the importance of Ouspensky? What is the importance of Blavatsky? What was the importance of Gurdjieff? Because... they seem neither well-known nor well-understood.

**May:** Ouspensky is generally regarded as Gurdjieff’s most important pupil. Otherwise Ouspensky had no importance. Ouspensky wrote coherent English. Blavatsky and Gurdjieff had no importance except to their pupils. Blavatsky and Gurdjieff were neither well-known nor well-understood.

**Jacobsen:** What is “truth,” in that sense,” as stated in “Truth”? What is truth and falsehood in that sense? What does this state about human nature with defilement of truth as necessary for truth to come forth and be heard properly?

**May:** Gurdjieff seemed to be saying that humans as they were could not understand truth. Truth could only be understood by most humans if presented as a lie.

**Jacobsen:** “Good and Evil” explains the nature of good and evil as first requiring a realization of them. How do good and evil only exist for a few?

**May:** That good and evil only exist for a few was a claim made by Gurdjieff. I don’t know how this is true, or if the claim even has any meaning.

**Jacobsen:** Why are so few awake? What is “awake” in this sense? Is it akin to enlightenment in some philosophies of Buddhism?

**May:** Why are so few awake? What is the biological utility in an evolutionary context of awakening? Maybe awakening has no biological utility. I think awake may be equivalent to enlightenment in some Buddhist philosophical schools. But I may be incorrect.

**Jacobsen:** “Is this what the work has become?” talks about the work. First, what is the work?

**May:** The work is Gurdjieff’s system for awakening humans from the condition of being what he called sleeping machines or unconscious automata.

**Jacobsen:** Second, why does it have to be work? Why not play?

**May:** Referring to Gurdjieff’s system as work rather than play suggests that it may be difficult to awaken. But I did not choose the terminology of work or play. Supposedly the sheep in the folk tale of the magician illustrate the illusions of hypnotic sleep.

**Jacobsen:** The magician sounds sadistic and cruel. What is the identification with the work?

**May:** Supposedly the sheep in the folk tale of the magician illustrate the illusions of hypnotic sleep.

**Jacobsen:** How is this identification with the work considered sleeping rather than waking?

**May:** Identification in any form is considered to be sleep.

**Jacobsen:** Is the act of identifying the work akin to the universe seeing its own back, so as to mess with the still waters of the awakened—so to speak? By act of observation, the work is broken. One is no longer awake but asleep with an even deeper illusion.

**May:** I don’t understand your question regarding “the universe seeing its own back.”

Gurdjieff may have taught that one could sometimes awaken if only for a moment.

Ludwig Wittgenstein also noted this changing quality of human attention. He wrote that we may occasionally awaken for a moment sufficiently to realize that we have been asleep and dreaming.

## Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Co-Editor, “Noesis: The Journal of the Mega Society.”

[2] Individual Publication Date: September 8, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/may-6>; Full Issue Publication Date: January 1, 2022: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

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

# **Conversation with Bob Williams on David Piffer, Latent Variable Analysis, High Correlations with the g Factor, Executive Function, Leonardo da Vinci, DMN, Booze, Promiscuity, and Charles Murray: Retired Nuclear Physicist (4)**

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Numbering: Issue 28.A, Idea: Outliers & Outsiders (23)

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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:* alcoholism, Arthur Jensen, Bob Williams, Booze, Camilla Persson Benbow, Charles Murray, creativity, David Becker, David Lubinski, David Piffer, Dean Keith Simonton, Default Mode Network, Executive Function, Flynn Effect, g Factor, genius, Hans Eysenck, Ian Deary, Latent Variable Analysis, Leonardo da Vinci, Linda Gottfredson, Michael Woodley, Nyborg, Promiscuity, Richard Haier, Richard Lynn, Richard Sternberg, sex drive, The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale.

Conversation with Bob Williams on David Piffer, Latent Variable Analysis, High Correlations with the g Factor, Executive Function, Leonardo da Vinci, DMN, Booze, Promiscuity, and Charles Murray: Retired Nuclear Physicist (4)

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

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen:** After a hiatus, round four, what would make a general test of creativity valid? Has David Piffer proposed anything?

**Bob Williams[1],[2]\*:** Piffer has done a good bit of work related to creativity and published several papers on it. To avoid congestion with my answer, I will append references to some of these papers. One of his particularly interesting observations: “There is some evidence that schizotypal traits and temperament are associated with creativity. Schizotypal traits as measured by the O-LIFE questionnaire were related to creative thinking styles and a subscale (but not the other three scales) ImpNon (Impulsive Nonconformity) was positively correlated to Divergent Thinking tasks in a sample of British students.”

Among the things he mentions in his papers are that Openness and low Conscientiousness are predictors of creativity. This has high face value and indirectly links creativity to intelligence (via Openness). He found a correlation of 0.54 between scientific and artistic creativity that was 70% genetic. Piffer suggested that the best measure of creativity is the impact of a work on its creative field. I like that definition more than the usual one of *something novel and useful*.

From my perspective, measuring creativity is difficult. It is not like intelligence in that we don’t have a positive manifold and we don’t have good ways to check the measurement instruments. One of the problems I see is the lack of importance in creativity below the level that we see in great composers, directors, writers, etc. If a person has a very low level of creativity, or even no realistically detectable level, he will not suffer in the way that the same low standing would cause problems relative to intelligence. Piffer referred to two kinds of creativity: Big-C (as in true genius) and Pro-C (someone at a level where he can work professionally in a creative discipline). If we add one more category, Little C, we have a group where there is a range of creativity, but where it has little impact.

People actually try to measure creativity over a full range. I’m not sure why or whether they have paid much attention to how the Little-C people are affected by their level of creativity.

Tests have a construct validity and an external validity. The construct (internal) validity is simply an indication that the test is measuring the thing it is supposed to measure—in this case, creativity. The treatment of construct validity is less rigorous than a test of external (predictive) validity. One way it

is done is by comparison to tests or other means of making the measurement. If it matches conventional expectations, it is showing internal validity. In the case of intelligence, the usual method is to factor analyze the test and compare the resulting factors to those found in other tests that are believed to show construct validity.

If we consider validity to mean accuracy, the question is one of how well the test predicts creative output. If we have people at two significantly different levels of creativity, can we use their output to validate the measure, as we do in intelligence testing? I don’t know the answer; I see the whole approach to creativity measurement as fuzzy, even when compared to other life sciences.

The more important validity is external or predictive validity, which tells us that the test is measuring things that can be predicted and verified. If the test shows that someone is in the 90th percentile of creativity, we expect that the person will display high levels of creativity in his job and life. For example, he may be a successful screenwriter or composer. Predictive validity is central to the whole

notion of being able to meaningfully test for creativity. If we are measuring things that actually predict real world outcomes, the test is useful. If it fails this, the test is of questionable value.

**Jacobsen:** Why is the reliance on latent variable analysis important for the study of creativity?

**Williams:** Latent traits are found in multifaceted constructs, including creativity. The use of latent traits allows the researcher to show how multiple variables interact and form a structure. Remote association tests are used in creativity research with good results. The difficulty level of making specific connections (item level in the test) can be determined using latent trait models. This is similar to Item Response Theory as used in intelligence tests.

**Jacobsen:** Why is the reliance on latent variable analysis important for the study of intelligence?

**Williams:** The often displayed hierarchical structure of intelligence is a representation of latent traits. These identify narrow and broad abilities and g. All of these are latent traits and are essential to the understanding of intelligence. It is difficult to overstate the importance of g in the study of intelligence. It translates directly to the study of the brain, is remarkably stable over lifespan, and explains life outcomes better than any other single parameter.

**Jacobsen:** What five items or tasks in formal intelligence tests have the highest correlation with the g factor?

**Williams:** The g loadings of various factors are test dependent. For example, vocabulary is a well known factor that usually shows a very high g loading. But its specific loading depends on the structure of the test and the number of test items that correspond to each factor. If you add more test items, it tends to skew the loadings upwards. Some tests are designed to use only a single category of test items. The best known of these is the Raven's Progressive Matrices. It can be factor analyzed to show that it has factors other than g, but those factors are usually ignored because they are not the traditional ones seen in comprehensive tests, such as the WAIS.

The WISC-IV has only 5 Stratum II factors. Here are the g loadings for those:

Comprehension-Knowledge (Gc) \_\_\_\_ .80

Fluid reasoning (Gf) \_\_\_\_ .95

Short-Term Memory (Gsm) \_\_\_\_ .62

Visual Processing (Gv) \_\_\_\_ .67

Processing Speed (Gs) \_\_\_\_ .27

Timothy Salthouse created a factor structure from 33 of his studies (about 7,000 people, ages 18 through 95) and also found 5 Stratum II factors. The g loadings he found:

Reasoning \_\_\_\_ .95

Spatial ability \_\_\_\_ .91

Memory \_\_\_\_ .66

Processing speed \_\_\_\_ .60

Vocabulary \_\_\_\_ .73

Johnson and Bouchard found a natural structure of intelligence by using the 15 test Hawaii Battery, the

Comprehensive Ability Battery, and the The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale. They eliminated some subtests to avoid duplication. When they factor analyzed the massive test, a four stratum structure emerged. I consider this to be the best fully analyzed study of the structure of intelligence. The top 5 g loadings:

Verbal \_\_\_\_\_ .96 Stratum III factor Perceptual \_\_\_\_\_ .99 Stratum III  
 factor Image rotation \_\_\_\_\_ .97 Stratum III factor Scholastic \_\_\_\_\_ .88 Stratum II  
 factor  
 Fluency \_\_\_\_\_ .83 Stratum II factor

The point of presenting these different results is to show how different tests cause different factors and different loadings. The very high loadings, in the last set, are the result of the large number of diverse test items used. This causes most non-g factors to cancel out.

**Jacobsen:** What do these five tasks or sub-tests tell us about the structure of general intelligence and the human brain?

**Williams:** If you look at the three sets of factors, you see that they are similar. Tests are generally designed to either fit the three stratum Cattell-Horn-Carroll model, or are forced to produce another three stratum structure. All tests show one general factor, that may appear at stratum II, III, or IV. Ergo, we have accepted and repeatedly confirmed Spearman's early findings. I am always amazed by how much he reported over a century ago and how dead-on accurate his findings were.

Richard Haier formulated the Efficiency Hypothesis based on positron emission tomography studies he did, starting in 1988. These showed high glucose uptake in low IQ cohorts and lower glucose uptake in high IQ testees. It meant that, when trying to resolve the same mental task, the low IQ group required high mental effort, while the bright group required less mental effort. Some MRI work was available with Jensen wrote *The g Factor* (1998), but it has only been in the 21st century that we have had large MRI based studies. It has only been possible to look for g in the brain by using advanced imaging technologies. Among the most important are structural MRI, functional MRI, and diffusion tensor imaging. The latter two have provided the ability to study white matter and brain networks.

The above comments are a necessary introduction to what has been learned about the general factor within the brain. We already knew that g was unitary at the psychometric level. Now we know that it is not unitary at the neurological level. Richard Haier and Rex Jung found 14 Brodmann Areas that are strongly related to intelligence and problem solving. They created a model known as P-FIT (parieto-frontal integration theory) [described in detail in Haier, R. J. (2017); *The Neuroscience of Intelligence*, Cambridge University Press]. The model involves a sequential transfer of information between the cognitive centers, ending in the frontal lobes where the integrated information is evaluated.

The distributed nature of g within the brain has been confirmed by various studies, including focal lesion studies (using the Vietnam Head Injury Study). An important finding from this and other studies of networks is that damage to critical white matter areas causes lowered g. These areas are concentrated networks that link the P-FIT regions. Since the important cognitive centers work by information exchange, we have to think of g in the brain as the areas that are being linked as well as the efficiency of the connecting networks.

Most of the P-FIT Brodmann Areas (BA) share their associations with g and other non-g traits. BA-10, however, is only associated with g. This area appears to function as a control mechanism that is critical to the distributed processing nature of g.

**Jacobsen:** What do current tests of general intelligence miss?



**Williams:** As you would expect, different tests miss different things. While researchers today recommend comprehensive tests (WAIS and Woodcock-Johnson, etc.) other tests that are not diverse still work well for most purposes. This is because of Spearman's *indifference of the indicator*. We are ultimately trying to measure g and can do that by a variety of seemingly unrelated tests. Each of the different tests (consider vocabulary and block design) is g loaded and is measuring the same g.

But, we know from the structure of intelligence that there are factors, particularly at the broad abilities level (Stratum II) that are particularly important to some tasks. Arguably the most important of these is spatial ability. In this paper: [Spatial Ability for STEM Domains: Aligning Over 50 Years of Cumulative Psychological Knowledge; Jonathan Wai, David Lubinski, and Camilla P. Benbow; 2009, *Journal of Educational Psychology* Vol. 101, No. 4, 817–835.] the authors show that spatial ability is high in people who pursue engineering and sciences and its magnitude increases as the degrees held go from Bachelors, to Masters, to PhD. These fields are heavily dominated by males. At least part of the reason is that there is a sex difference in spatial ability favoring males. Some tests do not have any spatial ability test items, so they would certainly miss this ability. We know that various test designers try to force their tests to show invariance by sex, which may be why they do not include spatial ability test items.

**Jacobsen:** How much can an individual train and change the degree of executive function in adult life? Is it a trainable skill or something more innate as with the g factor?

**Williams:** I haven't seen any research showing that the executive function can be enhanced by training. It seems, however, that some people can increase things such as Attention and the inhibitory function (both are components of the executive function) when needed and decrease them when that is appropriate. When we see people focused to a degree that blocks out virtually everything around them, they are using the executive function in conjunction with the inhibitory function to stay on task and to block external stimuli. All of this is strongly related to working memory. High WMC enhances the executive function and other factors such as rate of learning, the formation of long term memories, and fluid intelligence.

**Jacobsen:** With someone like Leonardo Da Vinci, what would the structure of such a creative genius mind look like in real-time at peak performance?

**Williams:** I don't think we have any data that relates directly to brain imaging of true genius. If we did have it, I would expect that those in different fields (art versus science) would show behaviors that are similar to their colleagues and quite different from those in other disciplines.

The issue of artistic and scientific creativity is interesting to me; I see it as unresolved. I once asked Rex Jung if the two forms were the same and he said that they were. Jensen, on the other hand, expressed a belief that intelligence was a larger factor in scientific creativity as compared to artistic creativity. To me, this has more face value. I think that Jung was considering how tests of creativity work over a wide range of ability and was not focused on the rare true genius brains.

Neurologists have done measurements of some people while doing a creative task, such as music improvisation. Their findings are certainly related to real-time creativity, but I do not see this as relating to the brains of Leonardo or Beethoven. The task of learning what is going on in their brains is so difficult that I think it will not be resolved for a long time. The starting problem is to find people who are actually at that level of creativity. Then we have to be able to make meaningful measurements at the moment they are inspired to create. I think that director David Lynch is at that level of creative genius, but I doubt that we can monitor him constantly and figure out when and how his brain comes up with the huge number of elements that go into the finished film. My guess is that it is a

series of creative flashes, spaced by tasks that require either different kinds of thought or those that do not demand creativity.

I would also expect that if we were lucky enough to be able to examine several creative geniuses, we would find different approaches. Some would probably go into long, deep, creative sessions and some would have multiple sudden insights that they combine to produce their works. And we might find some who do both over the course of a project.

In the specific case of Leonardo we have the most extreme example of a polymath I can imagine. His brain would be a neurological treasure today, now that we finally have the technology to really study it. In such extreme cases of genius it is difficult to imagine what biological factors were combined to

produce the end results that were so profound. One would have to assume that his brain was an extreme case of factors that simply do not exist together in others. From the little we were able to learn about Einstein's brain, we know that his too was bizarrely different.

**Jacobsen:** What is the DMN, default mode network?

**Williams:** The DMN is the network that we use during mind-wandering, spontaneous cognition, imagination and divergent thinking. It is detectable by the presence of increased alpha-power. As is always true, things are messy. While the DMN is clearly linked to these things, the production of novel ideas seems to arise from the interaction of the DMN and various other networks. When the brain stops mind-wandering and focuses on a specific task, the DMN disengages and switches to other networks. We now know that the brain doesn't lock in on a specific network for a prolonged period; it switches between networks. One of the things that emerged from the focal brain injury studies was the identification of the regulatory role of Brodmann Area 10 as I previously mentioned. I am unsure if this includes network switching, but I think it is likely.

I once asked Richard Haier if it was known whether solutions to problems (the kind that happen after study and then hit us unexpectedly as we are doing something unrelated) are actually made in real-time while we are in the DMN or if the answers were made subconsciously and then revealed using the DMN as a vehicle. He said we don't know yet.

**Jacobsen:** Odd question, incoming: How would a universal definition of genius expand into other species? So, we see certain traits consistent across species with some conscious cognitive capacity, so as to consider them – exceptional minds in individual species – geniuses. This would seem an enlarged consideration, biologically, of genius with potential insight into the nature of human genius, so the quality of genius itself.

**Williams:** The only definitions I believe are appropriate to true human genius are those that relate to a constellation of traits, expressed at a high level. In the case of animal studies, it is difficult to measure as many behavioral traits as we see in humans. For example, researchers have found a general factor of intelligence in some animals, but that factor is based on a rather small group of different categories of problem solving. It may be possible to measure factors such as zeal and persistence in animals, but we have to see that these things are actually productive. For example, I recall a study of wolves and dogs in which there was a barrier between them and food. The wolves continued to repeat the same efforts to go directly to the food. The dogs figured out that they needed help and tried to get it from humans. The point here is that, while persistence tends to be a genius trait, it is so because the genius does not repeat the same failed effort endlessly. We have seen a lot more animal studies in recent years and they are becoming more sophisticated. It is likely that they will eventually have a wider spectrum of tests and measures of animal behavior and that may lead us to identify exceptional individuals. Related to this,

much of the animal kingdom is organized around male physical strength and fighting over mates, which creates a situation where the things we see as genius in humans may not show up at all.

**Jacobsen:** Why do creative people tend to drink so much?

**Williams:** In the book *The Cambridge Handbook of the Neuroscience of Creativity* (2018) Rex E. Jung (Editor), Oshin Vartanian (Editor), there is a mention of creative professions showing twice the rate of alcoholism as found in the general population. Some of the people in these professions have creativity expectations associated with the use of alcohol. In general they seem to be right, at least for the insight stage of creativity, but as the amount of alcohol they consume increases, their creative output declines. As we know, at least from modern history, creative people tend to use other drugs as well.

**Jacobsen:** Why are actors the biggest drinkers?

**Williams:** The book cited above confirms that actors (60%) use alcohol at a level beyond the norm for the general public. It mentions writers as being particularly likely to have serious problems with booze. This makes sense in that writers have to constantly create new material and their “writers’ block” is often mentioned in various media.

**Jacobsen:** Could those without high levels of executive function, but latent creativity, help themselves with exogenous agents such as alcohol to perform creative functions? However, this leads to the deleterious lives exhibited in high-performing creatives who have to rely on alcohol and other substances to accomplish incredible creative feats.

**Williams:** I haven’t seen studies that directly address this situation. It falls into a category of research that is likely to be regarded as too dangerous unless conducted from natural data. I believe that it is a case of “a little helps, but too much hurts.” It follows the distribution that is sometimes called the inverted U curve. We see this in psychosis and neurosis, both contributing positively to genius results, but only when the level is “elevated” and not substantial. Various substances, that are used to enhance creativity, appear to work this way. The problem is that the use of the substances can become a drive and cause the user to not moderate his intake.

**Jacobsen:** Is there a correlation between sex drive/promiscuity and genius?

**Williams:** I can only guess, as I haven’t seen a specific study relating to it. What we often see in true genius is isolation and often no children. But I expect we can find rather extreme cases of sexual behavior, depending on the specific personalities and possibly on the category of work they do. One discussion

that relates to this: Who are the “Clever Sillies”? The intelligence, personality, and motives of clever silly originators and those who follow them; Edward Dutton, Dimitri van der Linden; *Intelligence* 49 (2015) 57–65. The title of the paper is somewhat misleading. From the paper: “... creative, original, uncooperative, and impulsive risk-takers. These kinds of characteristics permit them, like artists, to conceive of an original idea, thus showcasing their intelligence and creativity, and take the risks

necessary – short term ostracism – to achieve their long term goal of high socioeconomic status. The fact that some of those whom we have assessed achieved high social status but not high economic status can thus be seen as the risks only partially paying off. In addition, the lack of sexual success among some of these figures is congruous with many geniuses not having children. But their actions can be interpreted as advantageous at the group level.”

**Jacobsen:** If taking one moral perspective on it, is there a correlation between perversion or various forms and genius?

**Williams:** That one falls outside of my knowledge base. I can imagine that there may be various forms of perversion, but I haven't seen anything that explores the relationship.

**Jacobsen:** When does conscientiousness become a negative trait? What contexts? I do not mean simply statements on specific professions.

**Williams:** Low conscientiousness is found in artistic people and high conscientiousness is characteristic of people more likely to be found in STEM. Conscientiousness is less likely among people who use drugs (per our discussion) and who have random life patterns, consisting of no schedule or traditional jobs. The extent of problems relating to low conscientiousness is probably related to specific professions. There are lots of stories of actors who were difficult to work with, inclined to walk out, or get drunk. The most extreme cases of near-zero conscientiousness are those from the world of rock music, where performers have written the book on bad behavior and short lifespans. The "27 Club" was the subject of a documentary [27: *Gone Too Soon*] of at least 6 high level performers, but the total toll for young deaths is much larger. Low conscientiousness was one of many things that are obvious in the world of idol worshiped musicians.

**Jacobsen:** Following from the previous question, when does conscientiousness become a positive trait? What contexts?

**Williams:** In most employment situations, where a person has responsibilities that relate to an entire group, conscientiousness is valuable. You want to have the person who, when given a job, can be counted on to get it done, even if there is a tight deadline. The performers we discussed would not be a good choice for this kind of business.

**Jacobsen:** How much is productivity a measure of genius?

**Williams:** The magnitude of output of true geniuses is high. We see massive quantities of output from composers, painters, and writers, even from those who died very young. Part of this may be related to the speed with which some art is created. I once watched a documentary of Picasso, showing him painting. He was fast and changed the painting frequently by painting over parts of the painting repeatedly. I seriously doubt that a sculptor could chisel his way through a piece of marble quickly. The task is at least partly related to productivity, in the sense of output rate.

**Jacobsen:** Are there any substances that temporarily or artificially increase tissue functionality? Or, more generally, what about substances going in either direction of high FA and low FA temporarily due to their intake? What would be the expected effects and productive outputs from such intake, when heading into artificial high FA and artificial low FA? Perhaps, the wording isn't sufficiently precise in the questions, but, I think, the curiosity for the idea is there.

**Williams:** That is a thought provoking question. For the benefit of readers who are not familiar with FA, in this context, it means fractional anisotropy. This is a measure of diffusivity. If FA is zero, the medium is isotropic; if it is at the other extreme, 1, it means that the diffusion is along one axis and there is no loss to radial diffusion. In brain imaging, we see high FA as desirable; this means high tissue integrity.

In the cases I have seen reported, FA is discussed as a tissue property that does not fluctuate. If it goes down, it stays down. But there may be studies showing that there are agents that can reduce FA temporarily and that it would return to normal when the agent is no longer present. Alcohol or drugs associated with hallucination might have some impact on FA (guessing). During the past week, we had the annual conference of the International

Society for Intelligence Research. One factor that was discussed during an open session was the impact of anesthesia on the brain. I was unaware that it is believed to be damaging to intelligence. Unfortunately, the discussion was in the context of a one-way trip down.

The reason this could relate to creativity (assuming that it happens) is that low FA can result in the brain following longer paths to join information. This presumably causes brain regions that are not related to the task at hand to be activated and may result in the formation of remote associations of the type associated with creativity. This would happen if a network has broken connections, thereby causing the brain to follow longer paths to complete tasks that recruit information from different parts of the brain.

**Jacobsen:** For Mensa International, Intertel, the Triple Nine Society, the Prometheus Society, and the Mega Society, you observed a trend or pattern – non-absolute – of individuals who may not succeed in “education, profession, and personal relationships.” They seem more prone to becoming a part of them. Jensen mentioned in the Mega Press interview the dilettantish nature of the interactions and a void in deep, critical evaluation. Yet, the qualifications of the societies ground themselves in higher, sometimes abnormally, higher than normal IQs. Which leads to an associated, but somewhat distant, question, what is IQ missing regarding critical intelligence if that’s the case? The stereotype with some truth to it: A genius level IQ without a sense of the mechanics of the social and professional world, or the right question to probe an intellectual problem appropriately.

**Williams:** It is certainly true and easily observable that these groups are statistically more attractive to people who have failed to establish meaningful careers, despite having high intelligence. Jensen mentioned that he was personally able to form satisfying relationships with his work colleagues and that, while all were bright, none belonged to Mensa (the only example he mentioned). Part of the answer may lie in the nature of personality. Of the Big Five, only Openness is significantly correlated with intelligence. That leaves a lot of room for other factors, as well as those that only appear in other personality test batteries, to cause problems. In fact, if you look at the four other traits, all of them can be expressed in a direction that could be poisonous to careers. I would expect that two traits would be particularly damaging: low conscientiousness and high neuroticism.

**Jacobsen:** Does Charles Murray account for global population growth with the 1.5 times per year number in genius emergence? In short, is this number larger in more recent history with vastly more people living at the same time compared to the past, e.g. 0.75 times per year at some point in the past and 3 times per year at a time closer to the present? This is taking into account the speculation of a decline in mean national intelligence.

**Williams:** No. Murray simply identified 4,002 people of extreme eminence over the period 800 B.C. to 1950 and limited his study to arts and sciences. The problem of computing the rate of genius birth is complicated because of the decline in real intelligence that is largely driven by the negative correlation between intelligence and fertility rate. [See *At Our Wits’ End: Why We’re Becoming Less Intelligent and What It Means for the Future*, by E. A. Dutton & M. A. Woodley of Menie. Exeter, UK: Imprint Academic.] Dutton and Woodley express concern that the births of geniuses will become increasingly rare, despite many births among low intelligence groups. They fear that this will or already has led to a reduction in innovation and discovery rates.

**Jacobsen:** What are the difficulties in estimation of mean national intelligence?

**Williams:** We approach the study of national intelligence (the comparison of mean IQs by nation) by gathering as many datasets as possible for the nation in question, then converting them to a single standard. The conversion is parallel in principle to what we would do in a national economic comparison. In the latter case, we would convert all currencies to a single reference, such as the dollar or Euro. The standard we use for intelligence is white British.

This standard is sometimes called the Greenwich IQ Standard. The details of conversion are discussed in Richard Lynn & David Becker (2019). *The Intelligence of Nations*. Ulster Institute for Social Research, London GB ISBN 9780993000157.

For the most part, the difficulties are simply that it takes a large amount of work to deal with the full set of nations for which we have IQ data. There are lots of studies available for developed nations and most emerging nations, but some poorly developed nations have limited data available. When *The Bell Curve* was written, there were only a few reports of intelligence for sub-Saharan Africa. But since 1994, we have had data pouring in from around the world. Today we have so much data for many nations that we can map intelligence within the nation by states or provinces. These data have resulted in within-nation studies that have shown patterns that seem to largely reflect migration and economic factors. A rather large number of nations exhibit a higher mean IQ in the northern regions and a decrease at lower latitudes. The opposite is seen in Britain, where the brightest region is in the south and the dullest in the north. Researchers have explained this as the result of the decline in the coal mining industry and its impact on migration. In India, Intelligence is higher in the South and in states with a coastline (indicating economic factors relating to trade). When Richard Lynn first reported the intelligence gradient for Italy (higher in the North) he explained it by noting that mean local intelligence reflects the fraction of the population that immigrated from the Near East and North Africa. In that study regional IQs predict income at  $r = 0.937$ . This resulted in papers objecting to his findings and that resulted in an exchange of published papers. It appears that Lynn was (as I would have guessed) right. [The title of the initial paper is a good summary of what was found. In Italy, north–south differences in IQ predict differences in income, education, infant mortality, stature, and literacy; Richard Lynn; *Intelligence* 38 (2010) 93–100.]

**Jacobsen:** What is the validity of the measurements done globally now? Some areas must be more reliable than others because of the finances and expertise to do it properly.

**Williams:** I haven't seen any reports of reliability for the IQ scores used in the national level studies. When *IQ and the Wealth of Nations* appeared, two things were triggered. The first was that researchers began to try different curve fits and concluded that a log scale works best and that nations with IQs below 90 were either in poverty or had valuable natural resources (usually oil). Some researchers attacked Lynn as usual. They claimed that his numbers were wrong; that they were based on too few data; that the nations were he used neighboring scores to estimate means could not be true; and that his entire study was politically incorrect and could not be trusted. But, the data, as mentioned above, kept coming in from sources around the world. Now we can say that Lynn was right on every point and that even the estimated mean scores were very close to measured scores that are now available. The validity of this work is shown in the many things that national mean IQ predicts: At the national level, mean national IQ correlates positively with per capita GDP, economic growth, economic freedom, rule of law, democratization, adult literacy, savings, national test scores on science and math, enrollment in higher education, life expectancy, and negatively with HIV infection, employment, violent crime, poverty, % agricultural economy, corruption, fertility rate, polygyny, and religiosity. These are the kinds of things used to establish the predictive validity of IQ tests. Naturally, there are confounds, such as the presence of natural resources in some low IQ nations, but the statistical predictions remain powerful.

**Jacobsen:** Who else, other than Gardner, are individuals qualifying as individuals who are “in a category that is highly regarded by the general public and not by many serious intelligence researchers”?

**Williams:** The first who comes to mind is Robert Sternberg. His triarchic theory was shredded by Linda Gottfredson and is not something other researchers have accepted. He has been criticized for grossly over citing his



own work. In general, the public has embraced such things as emotional intelligence, grit, mindset, and other tabloid worthy inventions. In his book, *In the Know: 35 Myths about Human Intelligence*, Russell Warne goes through his list of things that the public loves to love but which are not science. I think the single most disliked person (from the perspective of researchers) is the late Stephen Jay Gould. His book, *The Mismeasure of Man* was an intentional distortion of facts and is loved by the public because politically left people wanted to hear his false message. He attacked g and other factors, such as brain size, using outrageous comparisons to what researchers were doing in the distant past. It was almost as extreme as claiming that chemistry is worthless because alchemists were unsuccessful.

**Jacobsen:** Who are the most serious researchers and commentators on genius, on IQ, and on the g factor? I take those as three related, but separate, questions in one.

**Williams: Genius** – Jensen wrote a good piece on genius in the last chapter of *Intellectual Talent: Psychometric and Social Issues* by Camilla Persson Benbow & David Lubinski; The Johns Hopkins University Press (January 22, 1997). Dean Keith Simonton has written numerous articles on genius. His work impresses me as biased and inaccurate. Eysenck wrote about genius and the personalities of genius. Some of this can be found in H. Nyborg, Editor, *The Scientific Study of Human Nature: a Tribute to Hans J. Eysenck at Eighty*, Pergamon, Oxford (1997). Eysenck believed that true genius required elevated neuroticism and psychoticism. Overall, the material we have about genius is based on observations of various eminent historical figures. Statistical studies are not seen because there is no satisfactory way to find and test a statistically meaningful group of such rare people.

**IQ** – The most prolific and brilliant commentator on intelligence was Arthur Jensen. His lifetime output of 7 books and over 400 papers is huge and remains influential. I think that Richard Haier is probably the most important living commentator. With only 1 book and one DVD lecture set, he is nonetheless a major factor in our understanding of IQ from the neurological perspective. While

Charles Murray is accurately described as an author, he is one of the most knowledgeable intelligence scholars alive. Like Jensen, he has been willing to take the heat from the left and calmly discuss the realities of IQ. Ian Deary has been a high profile researcher and department head. Two young researchers have shown themselves to be bright, competent, and broadly focused. Michael Woodley has authored or co-authored half a dozen books, covering a wide range of topics. His work has been at the forefront of new understandings of such topics as the Flynn Effect and the decline of intelligence. Like Woodley, Stuart Ritchie has rapidly become a serious contributor to the understanding of intelligence. I have read his books and find that his writing style is particularly appealing. His most recent book, *Science Fictions*, is a detailed account of abuses of the scientific process of doing research and reporting it.

**Psychometric g** – Jensen almost single-handedly convinced researchers worldwide that intelligence is about g and that their work should be focused on g. His book *The g factor: The science of mental ability* is the most cited in all of intelligence research. Linda Gottfredson has been a prolific writer of g related papers and articles. She has devoted much of her energy to explaining g and its consequences to non-experts and has made her entire output available to the public on her web site. Today, intelligence research is g research, so it is fair to say that we have lots of people writing about g and studying how it relates to the neurology of the brain.

References:

Can creativity be measured? An attempt to clarify the notion of creativity and general directions for future research; Davide Piffer; *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, Volume 7, Issue 3, December 2012

The personality and cognitive correlates of creative achievement; Davide Piffer; *Open Differential Psychology* April 7th, 2014.

Shared genetic and environmental influences on self-reported creative achievement in art and science; Yoon-Mi Hur, Hoe-Uk Jeong, Davide Piffer; *Personality and Individual Differences*, Volume 68, October 2014, Pages 18-22.

## Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Retired Nuclear Physicist.

[2] Individual Publication Date: September 15, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/williams-4>; Full Issue Publication Date: January 1, 2022: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

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

## **Conversation with Uwe Michael Neumann on High-IQ Societies, Depression, ADS, and Alcohol: Member, CIVIQ High IQ Society (2)**

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### **Abstract**

Uwe Michael Neumann developed a love of photography when he got his first camera, a Polaroid, at the age of eight years old. From 1982 to 1988, Neumann diverted from photography, studying law at Cologne State University. But his love of photography, driven by curiosity and the desire to see new things and discover and show their beauty, always called him back. He conducted his first photo tour in Provence, France in 1992. In 1998 he visited New York where he further developed his photographic style; experimenting with verticals and keystone/perspectives. Launching into the field of international cooperation he combined his daily work with his photography in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Finland, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Sweden and Ukraine. In November 2014, Neumann attended the wedding of a daughter of the Sultan of Fouta Djallon, Princess Janina, in Fouta Djallon, north-west of Cameroon. There he met and became friends with the famous French photographer and producer, Alain Denis who inspired him to become a professional photographer, instructing him in portrait and landscape photography. After his life-changing visit to Cameroon in 2014 Neumann returned there in February 2015 taking photographs of Central Africa's unique nature and everyday life, which differed greatly from Europe, and even tourist destinations in Africa like Kenya and the Republic of South Africa. During his stay in Central Africa, he lived in Yaoundé, Cameroon and travelled frequently to Equatorial Guinea, the Central African Republic, Gabon, Chad and Congo Brazzaville, among the poorest countries in the world. He also visited and photographed Algeria, Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo), Benin, Kenya, Egypt, Mauritania and the Republic of South Africa. Neumann focused on often-overlooked treasures in nature, the environment, and beauty in places seemingly dominated by poverty. In October 2017, Neumann returned to Berlin and worked on over 90,000 photos from Africa, launching his first exhibition in May in 'Animus Kunstgalerie', Berlin. In October 2018 his exhibition 'Inner Africa' in GH 36 gallery in Berlin was focused on Central Africa displaying not only a huge variety of photographs, but also traditional masks from different regions. In 2019 and 2020, other exhibitions at Bülow90, Berlin and Nils Hanke,

Berlin followed. In Ghent, Belgium, he was a speaker at the European Mensa Meeting 2019 on Africa and presented some of his works. He was also invited to present his works in the online exhibition e-mERGING a r t i S T S. and again at GH36 in the exhibition No Time. [One of his photos](#) was on the title page of the Norwegian magazine Dyade in 2019. His photos have also been featured several times in the online Magazine Foto Minimal & Art. In December 2021 his works were part of an exhibition at Basel Art Center in Basel, Switzerland. He discusses: the Big Five; openness to experiences amongst the high-IQ; rigid structure; finding out about the gifts; the formal diagnosis for depression; and a protective against various forms of mental illness.

**Keywords:** Big Five, depression, high-IQ, openness to experience, IQ, Uwe Michael Neumann.

Conversation with Uwe Michael Neumann on High-IQ Societies, Depression, ADS, and Alcohol: Member, CIVIQ High IQ Society (2)

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

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen:** What do you think of the, typically, psychologists who spend their life studying this stuff, speaking of the Big Five personality traits? Do you think openness to experiences, as you're noting, is a big correlate with higher intelligence?

**Uwe Michael Neumann[1],[2]\*:** Yes, I think certainly. Openness to new experiences, yes, for sure.

**Jacobsen:** What do you think might be exceptions to that rule?

**Neumann:** Openness to experiences. Exceptions, I don't know. Maybe, some people are less interested. Let's say a place like Africa, also higher IQ people, not everybody is interested to hear about Africa, but many people. But maybe, there are some who are, of course, not so keen on that. But basically, it's compared to other groups of people. It's very open and very open minded and very interested. People are very interested in these things. But no exception. No idea at the moment. Maybe later after the interview.

**Jacobsen:** It might be something like some kind of comorbid cognitive deficit in a social and a socio-emotional area, or something like this, where someone who is, for instance, part of Mensa or some other group qualifies, appropriately, while having a limitation in their interpersonal functioning. So, they would prefer the kind of rigid structure and don't necessarily have a necessary tendency towards openness to experience. This sort of thing.

**Neumann:** Yes. Ok. I think many people are shy. So, even though, they are generally open, but, at some point – and also me, they are shy. When I was young, I was very, very lonely because I was growing up in a working class area. There are also very smart good working-class people. But in general, these people are very not smart, not so intelligent – let's say, the opposite of intelligent. And I don't have a grudge, but I was very lonely because you don't fit in and then it's difficult to interact with other people. I have many problems with that; and I think many people have the same problem when they are young. Many people are shy and that limits their possibilities.

**Jacobsen:** So, when were you finding out about the gifts? When did you develop those formal interests in academics to hopefully have your intelligence flourish a little bit more in school?

**Neumann:** In school, I knew that I was intelligent, let's say, in the first class. We had a contest, math contest, arithmetic; and we were given tasks like, "What is five plus five?" and then you have to add to answer. If you were the first one to answer, you could advance one step. And I was very fast. I was the guy who was winning the contest. I was always five six steps beyond the others. So, I realized that, "Yes, there's something in me." Also, I realize that I'm more sensitive than other people. I realized this about the world, let's say. So, that gave me a shock.

Because when you're at a very young age, you realize how the world is. You get depressed, I would say. Because the first few, if you see the world is so big, there's fighting. There's aggression. There's this and that and crime.

For me, at first, it was like when the ideas of the travel thinking. I became aware of my real involvement. Also, in this working class environment, this poor, relatively poor low education working class environment, I was really depressed. Also, I started some kind of meditation when I was 12 or 13 because I was lonely. I had no friends so much in that area when we moved, when I was 12 to a new area. And I was very lonely. I started meditating. I was thinking about things just sitting around, and so on. So, yes, I didn't feel so good about university because I was also shocked when I came to university because in the first year; we were 800 students and I got really a shock. So, I've never felt really at ease at university and wasn't particularly good at that. Yes, I can only work when I feel good, when I feel comfortable.

And also, I'm basically shy. So, for me, it was difficult. I tend to have depression. So, that's also difficult when you only can work, let's say, one hour a day because of your depression. And to get on with your work, so, that was difficult for me.

**Jacobsen:** What's the formal diagnosis for depression?

**Neumann:** Diagnosis, yes. It was diagnosed later. But let's say, I was constantly in psychotherapy and with a psychoanalyst, which didn't help, actually. But now, I have a very good neurologist; and this is helping a lot; and Mensa is helping a lot. For me, this is the first time in my life. I became a member of Mensa and other High IQ organizations 10 years ago. And since then, it helped me a lot because now I really have friends and so got some new situation for me. So, I'm very thankful to have that.

**Jacobsen:** I'm not a psychiatrist. However, do you think that higher intelligence is a protective against various forms of mental illness, or do you think it can make it worse if present?

**Neumann:** Let's say, I think in my case, I was more prone to mental illness or depression and things like that. And I suffer also from ADS. I think many people get depression. So, I get to cry. Yes, I get depressed very often. And it helps also to find strategies to get out of it. I developed a strategy for myself to stop drinking alcohol. I never took any drugs. Only once, I tried, but it was very few. But I had the habit of drinking alcohol every evening. I wasn't an alcoholic. But I just had the habit to drink instead of one beer then it became two beers. In the end, it became three beers, basically, over years, many years. And at one point, I realized that I only drank beer because I was used to drinking beer. And then I developed a strategy to get out of this, and that worked, and that was 10 years ago.

So, I cannot sell it as a program for other people because it's tailor made for me. But basically, you are able to get out of certain things. The thing of when I was very young was that you are not basically allowed to think that you would be one percent of the population in this group, basically, especially when you grow up in a working class environment, working class lower level public servants, and so on. You're constantly told that you are not excellent. You cannot be that; or, maybe, they don't tell you openly. And also, when you're a man and you're relatively big one, I'm six foot one and a half or something. People tend to think that you're not intelligent. I remember when I was in school, I was sitting at a table. We were two students at one table. So, I was sitting next to a small guy with glasses. I didn't wear the glasses at the time when I was at school. He was very small; and he wore glasses.

And at the end of the school year, the teacher said, "Yes, you got a three or two." We have a number system. One is very good and two is good. „But only thanks to your neighbor." And I was really shocked because he was thinking that the small guy helped me to get through all this. And it wasn't like that. We were sometimes exchanging, but

it's not like he was feeding me with the information. But people think when you are really big and when you're a man; that you're not intelligent, basically. And that is sometimes very... I find it depressing.

## Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Member, CIVIQ High IQ Society.

[2] Individual Publication Date: September 22, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/neumann-2>; Full Issue Publication Date: January 1, 2022: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

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



# Conversation with Uwe Michael Neumann on Co-Morbidities, Heightened Intelligence, and Community: Member, CIVIQ High IQ Society (3)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Numbering: Issue 28.A, Idea: Outliers & Outsiders (23)

Place of Publication: Langley, British Columbia, Canada

Title: In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal

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## Abstract

Uwe Michael Neumann developed a love of photography when he got his first camera, a Polaroid, at the age of eight years old. From 1982 to 1988, Neumann diverted from photography, studying law at Cologne State University. But his love of photography, driven by curiosity and the desire to see new things and discover and show their beauty, always called him back. He conducted his first photo tour in Provence, France in 1992. In 1998 he visited New York where he further developed his photographic style; experimenting with verticals and keystone/perspectives. Launching into the field of international cooperation he combined his daily work with his photography in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Finland, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Sweden and Ukraine. In November 2014, Neumann attended the wedding of a daughter of the Sultan of Fomban, Princess Janina, in Fomban, north-west of Cameroon. There he met and became friends with the famous French photographer and producer, Alain Denis who inspired him to become a professional photographer, instructing him in portrait and landscape photography. After his life-changing visit to Cameroon in 2014 Neumann returned there in February 2015 taking photographs of Central Africa's unique nature and everyday life, which differed greatly from Europe, and even tourist destinations in Africa like Kenya and the Republic of South Africa. During his stay in Central Africa, he lived in Yaoundé, Cameroon and travelled frequently to Equatorial Guinea, the Central African Republic, Gabon, Chad and Congo Brazzaville, among the poorest countries in the world. He also visited and photographed Algeria, Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo), Benin, Kenya, Egypt, Mauretania and the Republic of South Africa. Neumann focused on often-overlooked treasures in nature, the environment, and beauty in places seemingly dominated by poverty. In October 2017, Neumann returned to Berlin and worked on over 90,000 photos from Africa, launching his first exhibition in May in 'Animus Kunstgalerie', Berlin. In October 2018 his exhibition 'Inner Africa' in GH

36 gallery in Berlin was focused on Central Africa displaying not only a huge variety of photographs, but also traditional masks from different regions. In 2019 and 2020, other exhibitions at Bülow90, Berlin and Nils Hanke, Berlin followed. In Ghent, Belgium, he was a speaker at the European Mensa Meeting 2019 on Africa and presented some of his works. He was also invited to present his works in the online exhibition e-mERGING a r t i S T S. and again at GH36 in the exhibition No Time. [One of his photos](#) was on the title page of the Norwegian magazine Dyade in 2019. His photos have also been featured several times in the online Magazine Foto Minimal & Art. In December 2021 his works were part of an exhibition at Basel Art Center in Basel, Switzerland. He discusses: heightened intelligence; a double diagnosis alongside depression with ADS; a social interest group through Mensa; and high-IQ communities are providing support for individuals.

*Keywords:* co-morbidities, depression, folk psychology, high-IQ, IQ, Uwe Michael Neumann.

Conversation with Uwe Michael Neumann on Co-Morbidities, Heightened Intelligence, and Community: Member, CIVIQ High IQ Society (3)

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

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen:** And it's counterfactual too. Because the correlations we have about heightened intelligence are that they're positively linked rather than negatively linked. So, the folk psychology that you're pointing out is counterfactual.

**Uwe Michael Neumann[1],[2]\*:** Yes, it is. But I think this situation proved to me that people think so, because that was the only explanation. Why would you think that about this guy mostly, basically? So, what was it? I mean, he was just smaller than me. A lot smaller and he wore glasses. I didn't wear glasses at that time. So, these two things. But that was really depressing to hear that because you cannot change it.

**Jacobsen:** You mentioned a double diagnosis alongside depression with ADS before. So, depression, I think in many countries; there's more of a sensitivity to the difficulties that come along with it, minor and major, in many other forms of depression. Do you feel as if there's more of a sensitivity to these morbidities? These things that may or may not help in certain areas of life.

**Neumann:** I think now there's no sensitivity. Let's say, I also have problems at work. I did a 10-page report on the U.S. tax reform. And I was focusing completely on the content. And my boss only commented that on page five, instead of font Arial, I was using Times New Roman and size 12. And they were always pointing out, "Yes, okay, that can happen to everybody," but I think, "Okay, I have the tendency to overlook these things and to forget things and to lose things. I always constantly searching for things." I now have developed some methods to reduce it a bit, but it's a problem. But when you explain to people, I have a certificate. It's officially accepted, officially proven. But when I tell that to my employers, they don't understand that. They see, but they don't understand about ADS and everything, so it's difficult to explain to them.

So, that's why I'm also trying to say I'm working at the tax administration and here the finance ministry. But I'm also working as a photographer. I'm trying to get independent and to become independent and to work solely. I want to make programs with Africa and international cooperation, and to also combine it with photography and video, and so on. So, I want to become independent because then, I think, I can design my own procedures and so on. So, that would help me out. The only thing lacking is funding, but, at the moment, it's difficult for everybody.

**Jacobsen:** Do you think a social interest group through Mensa could be serviced to individuals with ADS, with depression, etc., to provide almost like a mutual support group as in, "I'm not the only one"?

**Neumann:** Yes. That's very helpful. It's always helpful to have discussion on a level that you can discuss things like this that we are talking about. And it's really some conducted to the point of recharging the batteries. It's very helpful, especially when you are not used to speak to intelligent people or people who understand the problems. It's really like a relief. Anything that helps to exchange with all these things; it's helpful. My friends and me, we are doing a lot of video conferencing like Zooming and so on. And that's really helpful.

**Jacobsen:** Do you think that the high-IQ communities are providing support for individuals who might have co-morbidities? So, they have this thing generally seen as a positive, higher intelligence, while having certain things that can impair some functioning in life. It could be anxiety, depression, could be schizoaffective disorders, and so on. These things; I mean, they are distinct. They impact life in different ways. Yet, the commonality of someone having a high horsepower brain while having, three legs – so to speak, having that community of people to help them make sense of what's happened in their life, for instance, or to have common communication. Do you think it's at a point at which there is support or not?

**Neumann:** Yes. Let's say to see that there are groups like this, and that there are people who have the same problems, it's very supportive already. So, we are communicating. I think it's very intense, also, because when you talk to somebody from Mensa; there's some kind of respect. And how this person has been going through some difficulties in the past, of course, everybody has. But yes, there are specific problems. I mean, for most people the younger years are the best time of their life, but I would doubt at all for us. It's more like it's very difficult to realize that you're different and you realize that you are different, but you don't realize that in the first place. The first moment, in the beginning, you don't realize that it's high intelligence. People just think you are somehow strange and awkward.

So, you start to think somehow. Also, I think it's also a self-fulfilling prophecy when people see you as something different. You feel uncomfortable. So, every kind of community and exchange helps you lots. It would have helped me a lot when I had this experience before. Actually, when I took the test, the IQ test was combined with the ADS test which was set by my neurologist. He explained the results for me. I was really shocked. I think, for three days, I was like walking like somebody with a shock, like had an accident or attack. It's because it changes your whole view. And I'm now also on my way to work at the ministry while having my normal job. Many people think that, maybe, I'm stupid. They don't understand. They wouldn't think that I have passed this test with that result. They think that it has to be some kind of professor of mathematics in Princeton or – I don't know – whatever university. That person has that test result, but not me.

Because I'm not perfect. I'm high-IQ, but but I have my shortcomings. So, it's difficult. It's also because the public perception of the majority of people; they would regard other people as potentially highly intelligent or whatever. Also, when it's about partnerships and so on, I often hear the argument that women say that it must be easy for some intelligent men to get women because women want intelligent men. The thing is that the majority of women do not recognize intelligent men like the majority of men do not recognize intelligent men and women, of course. Because they have a different level of perspective, they cannot see it. It's like basically, maybe; if you are in a bicycle race, and you see the person in front of you, but you don't see the guy who is 10 kilometers in front of you because it's so far away and can't see him. I don't know if that answered the question, but those were my thoughts about this.

## Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Member, CIVIQ High IQ Society.

[2] Individual Publication Date: October 1, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/neumann-3>; Full Issue Publication Date: January 1, 2022: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

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## **Conversation with Uwe Michael Neumann on Portraying Reality: Member, CIVIQ High IQ Society (4)**

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Numbering: Issue 28.A, Idea: Outliers & Outsiders (23)

Place of Publication: Langley, British Columbia, Canada

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### **Abstract**

Uwe Michael Neumann developed a love of photography when he got his first camera, a Polaroid, at the age of eight years old. From 1982 to 1988, Neumann diverted from photography, studying law at Cologne State University. But his love of photography, driven by curiosity and the desire to see new things and discover and show their beauty, always called him back. He conducted his first photo tour in Provence, France in 1992. In 1998 he visited New York where he further developed his photographic style; experimenting with verticals and keystone/perspectives. Launching into the field of international cooperation he combined his daily work with his photography in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Finland, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Sweden and Ukraine. In November 2014, Neumann attended the wedding of a daughter of the Sultan of Fomban, Princess Janina, in Fomban, north-west of Cameroon. There he met and became friends with the famous French photographer and producer, Alain Denis who inspired him to become a professional photographer, instructing him in portrait and landscape photography. After his life-changing visit to Cameroon in 2014 Neumann returned there in February 2015 taking photographs of Central Africa's unique nature and everyday life, which differed greatly from Europe, and even tourist destinations in Africa like Kenya and the Republic of South Africa. During his stay in Central Africa, he lived in Yaoundé, Cameroon and travelled frequently to Equatorial Guinea, the Central African Republic, Gabon, Chad and Congo Brazzaville, among the poorest countries in the world. He also visited and photographed Algeria, Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo), Benin, Kenya, Egypt, Mauretania and the Republic of South Africa. Neumann focused on often-overlooked treasures in nature, the environment, and beauty in places seemingly dominated by poverty. In October 2017, Neumann returned to Berlin and worked on over 90,000 photos from Africa, launching his first exhibition in May in 'Animus Kunstgalerie', Berlin. In October 2018 his exhibition 'Inner Africa' in GH 36 gallery in Berlin was focused on Central Africa displaying not only a huge variety of photographs, but also traditional masks from different regions. In 2019 and 2020, other exhibitions at Bülow90, Berlin and Nils Hanke,

Berlin followed. In Ghent, Belgium, he was a speaker at the European Mensa Meeting 2019 on Africa and presented some of his works. He was also invited to present his works in the online exhibition e-mERGING a r t i S T S. and again at GH36 in the exhibition No Time. [One of his photos](#) was on the title page of the Norwegian magazine Dyade in 2019. His photos have also been featured several times in the online Magazine Foto Minimal & Art. In December 2021 his works were part of an exhibition at Basel Art Center in Basel, Switzerland. He discusses: myths around intelligent people; Yaounde, Cameroon, and photographing reality.

*Keywords:* Cameroon, IQ, myths, photography, reality, Uwe Michael Neumann.

Conversation with Uwe Michael Neumann on Portraying Reality: Member, CIVIQ High IQ Society (4)

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

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen:** This also another aspect of some of the conversations that I have with others. I mean, there are some myths around, not intelligence testing. All of those exist. It's more around the aspects of intelligence. So, the idea that since someone has higher intelligence level; they, therefore, must have some compensatory mechanism. They must have a deficit in some area, other areas. These kinds of assumptions. And it's harder to observe: A because it's not physical prowess, which is immediately observable in someone. You can see someone as fit. Things coming from the mind are outputs. So, you have to see the person's outputs in terms of intellectual productions, how they behave in life, et cetera, to get more of these more ephemeral qualities of the individual, which would be intelligent output in a wide range of or various circumstances. So, I can see a reason for a larger set of myths around intelligence just based on its being observed. At the same time, it also leads to a question. What are those myths? What have you come across as some of the myths about higher intelligence? And what do you think are some truths to dispel?

**Uwe Michael Neumann[1],[2]\*:** I think many people are afraid of intelligent people. And maybe, also, because they think they are evil or something, and they want to be powerful or they want to use power. There may be some evil people, of course, I have read the Nazi leaders were also very intelligent, some of them. Of course, there are some evil people, but I think it's not worse than any other layer of society. And maybe, that is one thing. Of course, that intelligent people are crazy; and that they are drug addicts. Some kind in some form. I remember once I spoke to a guy, some working class guy. He said that all the people from the university; they're not drinking alcohol. They are into other substances and so on.

So, I think, maybe, one thing is also very common, which is also true that people, as far as I know; people rather tend to stay up late. And wake up late, some night owls, at least, that's perfectly true with me and so many people who I know. But also, of course, there are others, the opposite. I would say that the main thing would be; I think that people think we are some kind of evil or also the myth that we have a high degree, academic degrees. And I know people who are working who are fitness trainers and who are carpenters who have very high IQ. So, basically, there is a high percentage of people who have an academic degree. I'm a lawyer. I have two law degrees. So, of course, many people have that. But it's not necessarily the case.

And maybe, some professors of mathematics, they don't have a high IQ, but, of course, they are capable of solving problems. I mean, it's also, maybe, one myth: some people get tested and they get the result; they think, "Now, yes, I can do anything. I have an high IQ. I can just learn that, and I can do that." No, IQ is one element. But to be successful in the field, you cannot replace or substitute, let's say, experience by IQ, by intelligence. Because when you don't know how to speak – let's say – the 'language,' when you don't practice, then you cannot speak it. And even if you have the highest IQ in the world, you have to practice.



**Jacobsen:** These are very important points. So, when you're in Yaounde, Cameroon and taking photographs. What kinds of nature photographs or photography do you prefer, e.g., animals or landscapes, etc.?

**Neumann:** Actually, for me, it was very interesting to see the animals, especially the birds, because that's really something that is really different. You don't know to see it at first, but when you are sitting on your terrace. You look around. I remember one day I called and talked to my brother on the phone or Skype. The birds were singing, and it was very different from Europe. And I realize that the birds are completely different. And you don't hear about that when you see a TV program about Africa. But when you're there, this is a very small detail. And that was very interesting. And they are fast, and it's also a challenge to take photos of them because they are so quick; and they move around. The spot photographers, they make a lot of fuss about the movement. I mean, it's also great work.

But if you want to take photos of small birds that move around, that is really also hard work and a challenge. But what I also like is to just take pictures of ordinary people in ordinary situations because, at least we here in German-speaking Europe, we are getting a wrong idea by the media. I think they are completely missing the point when they talk about Africa. They are portraying it as if in Africa, everybody is starving. There's constant catastrophe everywhere. Nothing is getting better and people are fleeing. But I can tell you: let's say, if you look at the women, they are not as thin as European women because they don't have this model culture when you have models like very small.

But when you see models from a fashion show from Nigeria, the models are like Ruben ladies. They're completely different. And they are not starving. There is enough food for everybody and people are not fleeing, normally leaving the country, because they are so poor. But these are the people who have some more money and who want to go to, basically for most of them; it's a business. And they want to improve their lives, which I can understand. But if you are starving, of course, that's where there's conflict. Usually, people are starving when there is conflict. And when the supply lines are cut off. We were having that in Germany in the First World War because the British blocked our supply lines. So, thousands of people, 10,000 were starving in Berlin in one summer, I think 1917, simply because the supply lines were cut off and that happened.

So also in Africa, that's the same, when you have a conflict and the supply lines are cut off. Then, of course, people might starve. But the normal situation is not that people are starving. They have lots of food there. And actually, I'm thinking about showing photos of fat women from Africa to break this myth of the starving population. It's not that I don't want to help them, but I think the idea we get from the media, at least in Europe and Germany, is completely wrong. And it's not like a permanent suffering. Of course, people have a lower level of life and the qualities and standards are much lower, but still it's improving and it's not like a permanent catastrophe. So, that's why I've to come back to the original point. That is why I just want to show photos of this normal life, which for many people might not be so exciting because they are used to see like people from these tribes with the colorful things, with the spear and so on.

Ok, that is like if somebody from Bavaria is wearing leather trousers. It's a traditional clothing, but people don't use that in normal life. So, this is not reality. It's nice, great photos. But this is not reality. I'm interested in reality. And the problem is media shows very narrow points, which are catastrophe. That it's like when you have; let's say, you have a rash on your skin. You're bleeding, and so on. Like when you put a micro lens on the bleeding, it looks like everything is bleeding. No, it's not everything. There's a point that it's bleeding. But the rest of the body is functioning normal. So, I'm interested to see reality and to show reality might be boring to many people. But that's what I'm trying to do.

## Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Member, CIVIQ High IQ Society.

[2] Individual Publication Date: October 8, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/neumann-4>; Full Issue Publication Date: January 1, 2022: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

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# Conversation with Uwe Michael Neumann on General Philosophy and Unusual Experiences: Member, CIVIQ High IQ Society (5)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Numbering: Issue 28.A, Idea: Outliers & Outsiders (23)

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## Abstract

Uwe Michael Neumann developed a love of photography when he got his first camera, a Polaroid, at the age of eight years old. From 1982 to 1988, Neumann diverted from photography, studying law at Cologne State University. But his love of photography, driven by curiosity and the desire to see new things and discover and show their beauty, always called him back. He conducted his first photo tour in Provence, France in 1992. In 1998 he visited New York where he further developed his photographic style; experimenting with verticals and keystone/perspectives. Launching into the field of international cooperation he combined his daily work with his photography in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Finland, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Sweden and Ukraine. In November 2014, Neumann attended the wedding of a daughter of the Sultan of Fouta Djallon, Princess Janina, in Fouta Djallon, north-west of Cameroon. There he met and became friends with the famous French photographer and producer, Alain Denis who inspired him to become a professional photographer, instructing him in portrait and landscape photography. After his life-changing visit to Cameroon in 2014 Neumann returned there in February 2015 taking photographs of Central Africa's unique nature and everyday life, which differed greatly from Europe, and even tourist destinations in Africa like Kenya and the Republic of South Africa. During his stay in Central Africa, he lived in Yaoundé, Cameroon and travelled frequently to Equatorial Guinea, the Central African Republic, Gabon, Chad and Congo Brazzaville, among the poorest countries in the world. He also visited and photographed Algeria, Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo), Benin, Kenya, Egypt, Mauritania and the Republic of South Africa. Neumann focused on often-overlooked treasures in nature, the environment, and beauty in places seemingly dominated by poverty. In October 2017, Neumann returned to Berlin and worked on over 90,000 photos from Africa, launching his first exhibition in May in 'Animus Kunstgalerie', Berlin. In October 2018 his exhibition 'Inner Africa' in GH 36 gallery in Berlin was focused on Central Africa displaying not only a huge variety of photographs, but also traditional masks from different regions. In 2019 and 2020, other exhibitions at Bülow90, Berlin and Nils Hanke,

Berlin followed. In Ghent, Belgium, he was a speaker at the European Mensa Meeting 2019 on Africa and presented some of his works. He was also invited to present his works in the online exhibition e-mERGING a r t i S T S. and again at GH36 in the exhibition No Time. [One of his photos](#) was on the title page of the Norwegian magazine Dyade in 2019. His photos have also been featured several times in the online Magazine Foto Minimal & Art. In December 2021 his works were part of an exhibition at Basel Art Center in Basel, Switzerland. He discusses: general philosophy and unusual experiences.

*Keywords:* IQ, Peter Fenwick, philosophy, Rupert Sheldrake, Uwe Michael Neumann.

Conversation with Uwe Michael Neumann on General Philosophy and Unusual Experiences: Member, CIVIQ High IQ Society (5)

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

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen:** So, we've talked about early life morbidities, co-morbidities, intelligence, some professional life, and also some of the philosophy behind the photography. Another aspect that I like to typically dive into with some of the individuals in this particular small subtheme on higher IQ people of this series in the journal is the ideas individuals have developed over time. Some people who I interview are of a younger age and others are of a more advanced age. So, there's a wide range of amount of experience and time and reading and intelligence to think about a wide range of things not only about their own life, but about human affairs generally insofar as philosophy is concerned. So, some other questions that I might have would be around those more abstract notions: Do you have any thoughts on general philosophy? More reliable at this moment is to come to an ontological stance about the world or even some metaphysical or theological notions about how the world is. What are some of your thoughts there? And this is an open forum. So, it's not going to be restricted in any way.

**Uwe Michael Neumann[1],[2]\*:** Yes. Actually, I'm thinking a lot about that. I think I have a very particular view because what I see is that many IQ people, high IQ people are very much into science. I'm not saying that science is bullshit and so on. But sometimes I think that's like religion. I mean, science is good for many things, but I think that science cannot explain everything. And I have had, how to say, experiences that are very strange and which make me think about metaphysical things like only in my life; I'm almost 60 now. But I never had any accident. But I once had almost an accident when a car was coming behind me and I was crossing a zebra crossing. And seconds after I crossed the zebra crossing, the car was coming at very high speed and stopping, braking. And the thing is that this was one time in my life so far.

And one other thing happened one time in my life is that I had an inner voice that told me, look to the left. I was walking on a busy street on the pavement. There was one street leading to the busy street, a one-way street. And I was crossing this one-way street. I was looking to the right because the cars could officially only come from the right, but to my surprise, I heard a voice saying to me, "Look to the left." And I said to myself, "What, am I crazy now?" since it was one way street. And the voice said again, "Look to the left." I thought now. Then it said it again, "Look to the left," and I looked to the left, and there was nothing. And I went on, I crossed the zebra crossing and seconds afterwards I heard brakes screech. I turned myself. I saw a car that just stopped there. It had entered the one way street from the wrong side.

And I was really like this. And those things, these two things only happened so far once in my life and they happened together. So, that made me think about it. That was one experience, and another was when my grandmother died. I was standing at her bed. She was lying in her bed. I was standing there for one hour and then said, "Goodbye." And then I went to bed at some point. And in the night I woke up, we were living on the second

floor. I woke up because there was some knock on the door. And I woke up. It was also very strange. Maybe it wasn't anything extraordinary, but when you're in that situation, you think, "What is that?" And so, I started reading about some near-death experiences. Peter Fenwick and also Rupert Sheldrake, I find very interesting. So, I think science is good. It's developing. But it cannot explain everything at the moment.

And I think it will never be able to explain everything because we are not able to understand everything. Also, reasoning is not always good. When you are very intelligent, you tend to be very rational and to think about it. But actually, in human interactions, people don't act rational all the time. Otherwise, nobody would drive a car drunk also at high speeds, because that's not rational. But people do it constantly and also I do it, not drunk, but I drive too fast sometimes. So, I mean, you cannot always act rational. And I think that is also disadvantageous because you tend to act rationally and to try to convince people of rational things, to do it rationally. But this is not working. That's my experience because humans are not rational. I think it's useful, some for some things, but not for everything. And I would also say that rational thinking leads into depression.

What I mean is that when I look at myself, "OK, I'm 59 now. I can calculate. Maybe, I live 15 years on and I live here in this house and the environment situation, the climate change, and so on." When you take all this into account, the world looks very depressed, negative. So, because, usually, you don't see the positive sides; when I was at school, Germany was still divided. Europe was still divided. And I had told my teacher that I wanted to talk about the reunification at that time with him, at some point, he was looking at me like I was talking about landing on Mars or something. Because in 1982, when I was doing my schooling, the world was still divided. There was a wall and most people couldn't imagine that this wall would fall. And especially, they could not imagine that it would fall seven years later.

And if I had told him in 10 years, I will work in Berlin and Potsdam, and I will go across the border every day because it doesn't exist anymore. They would have called me completely nuts. That would be like if I was talking about living on Mars next year or something. So, I mean, rational thinking. Yes, it has its limits.

## Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Member, CIVIQ High IQ Society.

[2] Individual Publication Date: October 15, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/neumann-5>; Full Issue Publication Date: January 1, 2022: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

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

## **Conversation with Uwe Michael Neumann on Germany and Science, and Religion: Member, CIVIQ High IQ Society (6)**

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Numbering: Issue 28.A, Idea: Outliers & Outsiders (23)

Place of Publication: Langley, British Columbia, Canada

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### **Abstract**

Uwe Michael Neumann developed a love of photography when he got his first camera, a Polaroid, at the age of eight years old. From 1982 to 1988, Neumann diverted from photography, studying law at Cologne State University. But his love of photography, driven by curiosity and the desire to see new things and discover and show their beauty, always called him back. He conducted his first photo tour in Provence, France in 1992. In 1998 he visited New York where he further developed his photographic style; experimenting with verticals and keystone/perspectives. Launching into the field of international cooperation he combined his daily work with his photography in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Finland, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Sweden and Ukraine. In November 2014, Neumann attended the wedding of a daughter of the Sultan of Fomban, Princess Janina, in Fomban, north-west of Cameroon. There he met and became friends with the famous French photographer and producer, Alain Denis who inspired him to become a professional photographer, instructing him in portrait and landscape photography. After his life-changing visit to Cameroon in 2014 Neumann returned there in February 2015 taking photographs of Central Africa's unique nature and everyday life, which differed greatly from Europe, and even tourist destinations in Africa like Kenya and the Republic of South Africa. During his stay in Central Africa, he lived in Yaoundé, Cameroon and travelled frequently to Equatorial Guinea, the Central African Republic, Gabon, Chad and Congo Brazzaville, among the poorest countries in the world. He also visited and photographed Algeria, Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo), Benin, Kenya, Egypt, Mauretania and the Republic of South Africa. Neumann focused on often-overlooked treasures in nature, the environment, and beauty in places seemingly dominated by poverty. In October 2017, Neumann returned to Berlin and worked on over 90,000 photos from Africa, launching his first exhibition in May in 'Animus Kunstgalerie', Berlin. In October 2018 his exhibition 'Inner Africa' in GH 36 gallery in Berlin was focused on Central Africa displaying not only a huge variety of photographs, but also traditional masks from different regions. In 2019 and 2020, other exhibitions at Bülow90, Berlin and Nils Hanke,

Berlin followed. In Ghent, Belgium, he was a speaker at the European Mensa Meeting 2019 on Africa and presented some of his works. He was also invited to present his works in the online exhibition e-mERGING a r t i S T S. and again at GH36 in the exhibition No Time. [One of his photos](#) was on the title page of the Norwegian magazine Dyade in 2019. His photos have also been featured several times in the online Magazine Foto Minimal & Art. In December 2021 his works were part of an exhibition at Basel Art Center in Basel, Switzerland. He discusses: Germany and the state of science, and religion there; and unexplored areas.

*Keywords:* Germany, IQ, religion, science, Uwe Michael Neumann.

Conversation with Uwe Michael Neumann on Germany and Science, and Religion: Member, CIVIQ High IQ Society (6)

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

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen:** What do you think is the current stance within Germany about science, about faith? In other words, the general public perception of either. How does this impact individual lives? I mean, for instance, if we look at the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, you can see differences in terms of how the countries adhere to standard scientific stances. Also, you can see the contrasts in the degrees to which in the United Kingdom, individuals, adhere to more of a secular perspective. United States individuals adhere to more to a religious perspective. Canada's sort of a grey middle ground between them. Although, I have it on good authority; Canadians are good zoo specimens for this kind of stuff, too. So, how does Germany, generally, use some of these things in general?

**Uwe Michael Neumann[1],[2]\*:** I think Germany is not very religious, let's say. The percentage of people who believe and practice religion is less, let's say the religions are basically dying out, especially the Protestants; they are going down. And the problem is also that even religious people, they don't believe in it anymore. They are trying to sell it like religion, especially the Protestants, to me they are more like a self-help group. But it's not really about metaphysics and so on, because they don't believe it themselves anymore. But it's one thing, I would say. So, regarding science, let's say a vaccination, there is a group, at least. They are very loud and they criticize or they don't believe that vaccinations would work. So, they criticize science. They say, "It's all financed. It's all Bill Gates making profit off it. And that's all big pharma making lots of money."

And so, it's very stereotyped. But this would go out for modern techniques. And that's an interesting thing because Germany was a very poor country until the Industrial Revolution. We were always poorer than France, and we always had less, our population was always smaller than France because they have better climate for agriculture etc. And the Industrial Revolution brought Germany so much forward. And we owe science and technique and industrial development so much. But still people in Germany are very romantic about nature. They think nature's paradise and industry is bad and can make us bad and everything is bad. I think that's a very broad movement and we have this Green Party. I don't know how familiar you are with the German or the European landscape. But it's a green movement, a green party that started in end of the seventies.

Many of them were left wing before then they moved to green. And they are against industry, Big Pharma very often. They try to preserve nature, which, of course, is also a good thing. But they are sometimes dogmatic. We also have some kind of natural healers that are officially allowed to practice and they have also an official title. We call them Heilpraktiker. It means practitioner of healing. And these people promise you to avoid any pain and to treat you with natural healing methods. And the idea behind this is that natural healing is always good and it doesn't hurt. And of course, people are afraid of that.



And so, they like the idea of natural healing. So, that is very popular in Germany. I think, maybe, that's particular in this scale, on this level. Maybe, in other countries, I think people are less influenced by that. And also, if you look at nuclear science and nuclear power plants in France, they have a lot of them. I think they are building new ones and many countries are building new ones. But in Germany, we have abolished them because people are afraid of nuclear power. Which is understandable, but they tend to forget the other dangers of other systems I mean, it's very romantic thinking. And remember there was a period of time till the 60s when Germany was very positive about innovation, about developing and growth, economic growth and so on. And now, it's the opposite. I mean, we don't have any big player in the computer industry. It's just SAP.

But there are no computers just being built in Germany. There are no smartphones being built. I think Apple, they have some parts from Germany, but there is no German iPhone, German Nokia, and so on. Because people are not open to this kind of thing anymore. And it's more like the good of the times before the Industrial Revolution are being regarded as the good old times, and then the air was clean and water was pure, and so on. And then the industrial revolution came and coal and all that. So, that is seen very negative now. So, I think that is very intense in Germany. That's the view. Yes, so, I would say romantic. It's backward. We don't have a plan. Our government does not make plans for Germany 2050 or something. At least, at the moment, because I think Germans don't think that we will survive the next ten years or so because of climate change and all that will kill us and overpopulation, and so on.

And that's also a myth because there is no overpopulation, especially not in Africa. I'm giving speech talks about Africa, and what I can say is that Africa's apart from some points. It's not as densely populated as Europe. And we cannot talk about overpopulation in general, but OK, that has nothing to do with Germany. But there's this very romantic backward thinking at the moment. I don't like that because I grew up in the sixties when we were looking forward and everything was going up. And now we are lacking momentum, I would say. But people like to keep it, and they don't want change at the moment. So, maybe, that gave somehow an impression.

**Jacobsen:** Are there any areas that we haven't explored yet that you want to discuss?

**Neumann:** Maybe, yes. And what my personal interest is, I'd like to see also the real strategic connections between politics and raw materials and production methods and so on. And that's also what I'm talking about in my speeches, I think that is also something that people don't understand, especially not in Germany. And let's say, when I look at the map and I always wonder, why they went into World War One? You only just have to look at the map. You see that Germany is a country with a small coastline, and we are not a maritime power. And we can be cut off easily from our supply lines. So, it was a complete loss to get into this war.

And then there are many people that I like to talk about I'm trying to see reality and to draw conclusions, which can, maybe, help people understand the world better. And I've learned at least by fighting my depressions to see things more balanced. And if I could help to give people more information about reality, that's what I like to do. It will be great. Also, I think it would help people to understand many things and to calm down a little bit also because I think we have a certain hysteria here in many parts. Let's say, it's about Africa and migration and so on. And I think you have to have a more rational approach in this. In this field, it would be good to be more rational.

## Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Member, CIVIQ High IQ Society.

[2] Individual Publication Date: October 22, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/neumann-6>; Full Issue Publication Date: January 1, 2022: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

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## **Conversation with Uwe Michael Neumann on Germany Looking Forward: Member, CIVIQ High IQ Society (7)**

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Numbering: Issue 28.A, Idea: Outliers & Outsiders (23)

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### **Abstract**

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Berlin followed. In Ghent, Belgium, he was a speaker at the European Mensa Meeting 2019 on Africa and presented some of his works. He was also invited to present his works in the online exhibition e-mERGING a r t i S T S. and again at GH36 in the exhibition No Time. [One of his photos](#) was on the title page of the Norwegian magazine Dyade in 2019. His photos have also been featured several times in the online Magazine Foto Minimal & Art. In December 2021 his works were part of an exhibition at Basel Art Center in Basel, Switzerland. He discusses: Germans, the French, the English, the First World War, Europe, Bismarck, the Central African Republic, and Russia.

*Keywords:* Bismarck, Central African Republic, English, Europe, First World War, French, Germany, Russia, the future, Uwe Michael Neumann.

Conversation with Uwe Michael Neumann on Germany Looking Forward: Member, CIVIQ High IQ Society (7)

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

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen:** So, if Germans are not looking forward as much as they were in the 60s when you were coming up or were in the wave of that as a generation, it's a cohort. How are Germans looking at geostrategic and raw material issues now? Because in turn, these are regional geopolitical issues as well.

**Uwe Michael Neumann[1],[2]\*:** I think maybe this arrogant, but I think most people don't understand and don't see the point at all, geostrategic. I mean, Germans, let's say, we lack experience with the outside world in a way. Of course, we are travelling a lot, but I suppose or what I think is that the French and the English know more about the world and they understand it better because they have conquered the world. So, there is a different perspective and we were always confined to our middle European spot. And you can see that sometimes historians talk about, what would have happened if this or that battle in the the World Wars would have gone out another way and would have ended in another way. I say that it's bullshit because, of course, it ended that way, but even if there was never a point because the geostrategic situation was to Germany's disadvantage.

But people don't understand that. They've seen all the detail. The problem is that I think, yes, even today, people don't understand the connection. They have just a simple way of explaining things. That is, everything is getting worse, especially in Africa. There are the big corporations that are exploiting the world and making themselves richer and richer. And we cannot do anything about that and we are a small country. So, that's basically, I think many people think like that. It's a little bit simplified. And there is not this, let's say this connected view of things that belong together.

We're not a global power. We are not capable of ruling the world for sure. But we are also not the smallest country on Earth, so we have an impact. So, we can do something. But, the problem and I would say the geostrategic thinking is weak. There were only some figures like Bismarck in Germany. He was a genius and understood it. And I think it would be important for people to understand how things work together and let's say, on migration. We don't have a real discussion about migration. Just some people say that you have to do it like this. But it's not discussed. The government decides what to do. And when you criticize that, yes, sometimes you regard it as rightwing, but it's not always good.

What I want to say is that it would be helpful if more people will understand the situation outside Europe or even outside Germany. Many Germans never have been to Eastern Europe, to countries like Albania or Romania or Montenegro or so. And there are people who work for 400 euros a month or much less. So, Germans don't understand what's going on there. They know that people are poorer, but they don't understand how things work together. And I think it would be helpful if people would understand more about the reality in Europe and also in

our neighboring continent, basically Africa, because we are interconnected, of course. So, people are afraid of migration. But on the other side, they think it's because poor people are coming to us, but it's not the poor people, if you are close to starvation, you don't travel 5000 kilometers.

The poor people cannot afford to go to Europe. They stay in Africa. I've seen that, I've seen camps of people from Central African Republic who are moving to the airport at Bangui in Central African Republic, the capital, and they were fleeing from other parts of the country because there's a civil war. These people cannot go to Europe. And these are things I think the media does not portray correctly. And it's always about catastrophe. But what is actually going on there? Also in Africa people in general are living better than ever. And this leads also to the thing about their geostrategic thinking and so on. Knowledge, it doesn't exist and people don't think about raw materials like important things about interest. Of course, the leaders, they will know about that. But I think in the general population, the majority they don't understand that.

Also like if we look at Russia, people don't understand that Russia is basically a country with problems because Russia is immensely big, but their population lives mainly on the south western brink of Russia. So, that makes it also difficult to rule the country and so to govern the country. But people just see this big landmass, they don't see the details and they don't see the strategic implications behind that. So, my idea and what I like to do is to talk about reality basically, and to understand, to help people understand more of the interconnections between raw materials, population and so on. Developments, yes, it's maybe a little bit vague, but maybe you get the point, and that is my idea to bring reality forward to explain to people.

**Jacobsen:** It's all very interesting. It's such a wide range of things from nature photography to law to mathematics to geostrategic thinking about raw materials. It's a very wide range of interests for you.

**Neumann:** Yes, it is.

Jacobsen: I just want to thank you for your time today. It's been lovely.

**Neumann:** Okay, yes, thank you. Actually, I love to talk about these things. Thank you for listening to me. And yes, I really enjoy that and to exchange about that.

## Appendix I: Footnotes

[1] Member, CIVIQ High IQ Society.

[2] Individual Publication Date: November 1, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/neumann-7>; Full Issue Publication Date: January 1, 2022: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

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# Conversation with Larae Bakerink on Mensa and Events: (Former) Elected Chair, American Mensa; (Former) Member, International Board of Directors, Mensa International (2)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Numbering: Issue 28.E, Idea: Outliers & Outsiders (23)

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## Abstract

LaRae Bakerink was 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: Mensa International membership and a 2016 presentation; and Mensa presentations.

*Keywords:* American Mensa, Executive Committee, intelligence, IQ, Lancelot Ware, Larae Bakerink, Mensa Foundation, Mensa International, Roland Berrill, San Diego.

Conversation with Larae Bakerink on Mensa and Events: (Former) Elected Chair, American Mensa; (Former) Member, International Board of Directors, Mensa International (2)

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

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen:** And just to give people who are reading this an idea of the age difference compared to every other organization under the label of a high IQ group or society organization, it's old.

**LaRae Bakerink[1],[2]:** Mensa International is 100. I think we're over 150,000 now. I have to go back and look at the numbers.

**Jacobsen:** I mean Triple Nine society has close to 2,000, the Mega Society, maybe, has 26 to 40, or something. It's not a lot of people, comparatively, and so Mensa International is really tapping into a good rarity and longevity as an organization.

**Bakerink:** Yes, this year, we'll be 75 years. It started with Lancelot Ware and Roland Berrill.

**Jacobsen:** Yes, so, this kind of organization is, as far as I can tell by doing all of the interviews that I've done so far and some of the writing, unique in terms of size and longevity and growth rate, just a continual what would appear to be a year-on-year growth. So, how big is American Mensa?

**Bakerink:** I think we are at 49,000 right now because we only have a renewal once a year. It's like our numbers go up, up, up, up, up, up until November 31st and then April 1st it goes back down for those who have not renewed. We've lost some members over the years because there's so many different things out there now. There's Facebook and different social media groups and MeetUp and all that kind of thing that gives people another avenue to find smart people or likeminded people. I know that British Mensa has been losing some members for the same reason. But the newer national Mensas are like the new ones coming in, like Mexico and Peru and India. They're really starting to grow because Mensa is new there. So, it just depends on the outlook. And I think that we will be able to bring things back around after Covid.

Because one of the things that American Mensa, I think Mensa International in general, is good at is our events. That's what really gets people excited about it because of the different things we do at our events. I've been to a lot of conferences in my life and Mensa conferences are the most unique I've ever been to. Because there are no parameters on what's going to be discussed or what presentations, they're going to be everything from aardvark to zoo, just the whole range. I think we had this young man who built his own robot. He's eight or nine years old. Built his own robot, programmed it and then came and gave a presentation on it. Just amazing, amazing, young man. And then we have people talk about how to travel, where to travel, the best ways to travel, just everything you can think of. But it's all going on at the same time at the same conference.

So, you're never at a loss for something to go look at. Plus, there's a huge games room because our people are really into games and puzzles. And pretty vicious about it, sometimes, the tournaments get real, and then some of them just want to sit around and talk. We have a debate room that goes from like Wednesday all the way through Sunday. And every hour there's a different thing that they're going to debate on, and the room is always packed. Because it's like, "I have an opinion on that, I must let you know what it is." It's the in-person version of like online stuff. And they talk about everything, controversial stuff to just really benign. And if you want to learn anything, there's a way to find it out because there are some experts in it or someone who has so much knowledge that you can learn from them.

And then we have the entertainment, we always have great speakers. My favorite, of course, was Wil Wheaton because that was my speaker. In 2016, I was the chair of the annual gathering here in San Diego. We had 2,400 people and we took over an entire hotel complex. It was all Mensas for four and a half days and Wil Wheaton was our keynote speaker. And he was amazing, I sold 900 tickets because the dinner and the keynote is like separate from the whole rest of the conference. But we sold 900 dinners to be able to see him.

**Jacobsen:** So, in the 2016 presentation, what's the keynote speech? What was the particular presentation?

**Bakerink:** What he talked about is what it was like growing up Star Trek. He talked about how the nerds have won because by that time all the new Marvel movies had been coming out and it's like all this stuff that as I was a kid and the comic books and stuff that I read, it's like all coming to life and people aren't making fun of it now. They're standing in line at the theaters to go see it. So, that's kind of what he was talking about is like hey guys we won, the nerds one. But then he talked about his depression and how he deals with it, very, very emotional and there were people in the audience half of them were in tears. He was supposed to talk for about 30 minutes, about



50 minutes later he's finally walking off of stage just to outrageous standing ovation because he spoke at our level and spoke to a lot of the people that felt odd or different or misunderstood because that's how he felt about himself. So, he was very, very relatable. But we've had like Penn Jillette, we've had I can't remember the guy from *Mythbusters*.

**Jacobsen:** Is it the guy with the...

**Bakerink:** No, not Jamie, not the guy with the moustache, the other guy. But I know I just completely lost his name. He was our keynote one year. In Florida it was Penn Jillette. We've had astronauts, we've had Dr. Demento. We've had over the years some really wild keynote speakers. And it gets people excited and it's something that we can do for our members as an organization. And it's something we provide at pretty low cost compared to anybody else. I know all my business type conferences were super, super expensive. But the annual gathering cost's about a quarter of it and it includes a lot of the meals. So, people are just hanging out and having a great time. And that's one of the things that really, really gets our members excited is some of the events we put on. But it's not just our annual one.

Each of the local groups, we have 128 local groups in 10 regions in the United States. And there's probably 30 of what we call regional gatherings a year and it may be one local group or maybe a couple of the local groups get together and they put on a mini conference. And these are all throughout the year. So, you could travel from what we call RGs because we have all these acronyms, RGs, AGs, everything. But you can travel from RG to RG all year long and visit with Mensas all across the United States. Now there's always something going on; there are lunches. With Covid, we've been doing Zoom meetings like crazy. Zoom presentation speakers just to keep everybody involved. Our groups have been doing Zoom movie nights and puzzle evenings and cocktail hours and wine tastings to where they'll all order the same wine, and then they'll get together and taste on Zoom and compare if they're there together.

So, they've gotten really creative with it. And it's nice because one of the benefits, I think, that's come out of this whole covid thing is because of Zoom and that availability. A lot of our members that would not go to something in person. Now, they're hitting New York and Florida and Indianapolis and attending events there all online. But they're keeping themselves interested and involved.

## Appendix I: Footnotes

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

[2] Individual Publication Date: November 8, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/bakerink-2>; Full Issue Publication Date: January 1, 2022: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

# Conversation with Larae Bakerink on America and Mensa, Mr. and Mrs. Mensa, and Attractions of Mensa: (Former) Elected Chair, American Mensa; (Former) Member, International Board of Directors, Mensa International (3)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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## Abstract

LaRae Bakerink was 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: American Mensa; Mr. and Mrs. Mensa; main attractions of Mensa; communication gap, EQ, and IQ; and tests for Mensa admission.

**Keywords:** American Mensa, EQ, Executive Committee, intelligence, IQ, Larae Bakerink, Mensa Foundation, Mensa International, Mr. Mensa, Mrs. Mensa, San Diego.

Conversation with Larae Bakerink on America and Mensa, Mr. and Mrs. Mensa, and Attractions of Mensa: (Former) Elected Chair, American Mensa; (Former) Member, International Board of Directors, Mensa International (3)

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

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen:** What states in particular are more prominently represented within American Mensa?

**Larae Bakerink[1],[2]:** The higher population states. So, it's going to be the whole eastern seaboard, New York all down through there, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, Dallas, Houston, just the large cities where more people are located. It's going to be the same for Mensas. I mean one out of every 50 people qualifies for Mensa. Not everybody joins. And a lot of them do not even realize that they qualify. So, it's just up to us to figure out how to let them know about us.

**Jacobsen:** You also have a Mr. Mensa and Mrs. Mensa. What is this?

**Bakerink:** Mr. and Mrs. Mensa was the contest I was talking about earlier. And what they normally do is then they become like a representative for the foundation. They wear their crown and their sash to events and they encourage people to donate. So, it's like a big thing for a year. They get to wear their crown and sash to the different events. One of the ways that they raise money is like have a picture with Mrs. Mensa, pay five bucks and then the five dollars goes to the foundation. So, it's more to encourage our members to let them know about the foundation and then also to get donations for it. And it's a lot of fun for the people who are involved because someone says, "Why are you wearing a crown?" And then they go, "Well, let me tell you why." And it just gives them an opportunity to talk about the foundation. And the foundation, they give scholarships. I think it's from December 1st or November 1st.

People who are going to be in college over the next year can submit an essay as to why they feel that they should get a scholarship. And there's different scholarships for different things, whether you want to go into engineering or whether you're LGBTQ or whether you're going to be a teacher or you want to be an English professor; there's different scholarships for different things. And you do not have to be a member of Mensa to get a scholarship. It's for everybody. There are specific ones just for members, but there are designated different scholarship. So, the foundation gives out a lot of scholarships every year. And the nice thing is it involves our members too because all of the essays that are submitted are graded by our members.

Each local group will form a scholarship committee and they'll review and grade the scholarships and then that goes up to the regional to be graded. And then from there they determine who are the winners and then everybody is notified. And they get anywhere from \$600, and then just the regular scholarships goes up to \$3,000 to \$5,000. And then the foundation has other special awards like the Copper Black Award and stuff, which are large grants that can be \$20,000, \$10,000, depending on what it's for. In fact, they just started a new grant program for teachers too.

**Jacobsen:** What seem to be some of the more main attractions to people?

**Bakerink:** It's so different for everybody. Some people want to join just so they can say they have the card. It was a self-affirmation. I did a survey years and years ago just of our local, "Why did you join?" And some of the answers were, "Well, my husband told me, I was too stupid. I qualified. He did not." I mean because it's not just Mensa itself. It's the aptitude that they could qualify and that's what they care about. Some people are just happy getting their magazine, their monthly magazine. They want to do the crossword puzzles or read what's going on in their local group. Some people want to do international travel. We have a program called SITE. And I can never remember what it stands for. But basically, what it is, it's an international travel thing. So, say I want to go to South Africa, I contact their site person in South Africa, and I say, "Where the best hostel is?"

And so, they'll give you information. A lot of times they may even put you up at their house themselves or take you out to dinner because they get excited about having the foreigners come in from everywhere. And we have it in the United States. It's not quite as active here because people are a little more nervous or litigious. Not quite sure, but, at least, they provide information. So, when you're going to go visit somewhere and you're in Mensa, you can contact their site person in that country and they will provide you with information, let you know about tickets for things and help you along. Some of them will pick them up at the airport. It just depends on the situation and where they are. But I think it's really given a great flavor to some of our membership that want to travel and didn't have this ability gather all this knowledge before they go on a trip.

So, some people use it for that. One of our taglines for a while was find the people that get your jokes. Just to be around the people that you feel like you can be normal and be yourself and not have to hold back or worry that they're going to look at you like, "What did you just say?"

**Jacobsen:** Do you think there is a communication gap in general – what people experience when they're at Mensa level or above in terms of their cognitive ability?

**Bakerink:** I think it has a lot to do with their EQ as well as their IQ. If they have a higher EQ, their ability to communicate no matter who they're speaking to is better. But if they have a low EQ and a high IQ, they do not understand why someone isn't comprehending what they're saying. And so, that makes it a lot more difficult and they feel more separate. They feel distanced from that person. And so, this gives them the ability to just sit and talk and be understood and not worry about being looked at that way.

**Jacobsen:** I think it's almost a situation where people in the same country in different regions, but they have a different patois. So, they talk past one another, not all the time but, enough of the time to frustrate one another. And they go, "Those darn x," and the other people go, "Those darn y."

**Bakerink:** Exactly. And it's that way everywhere. But I mean it really is, I think, more noticeable when you have a big variance in the intelligence level. But like I said, EQ mix can really close that gap if the EQ is high. It's a lot easier to close that gap to understand and speak to the level of your audience. And that's kind of what I try to train some of the people coming up in leadership is: gauge your audience. Do not say what you want to say, gauge your audience so they hear what you need them to hear.

**Jacobsen:** Good point. Now, you mentioned the Stanford-Binet earlier and you mentioned the Wechsler (Adult) Intelligence Scale. To clarify, these are proctored mainstream intelligence tests that are designed to measure intelligence and have the most reliable valid statistics on measuring this psychological construct. So, what other tests can the mainstream of intelligence testing appear to have a higher reliability and validity acceptable to the standards of Mensa international?

**Bakerink:** American Mensa, I believe, two hundred different tests that we will accept for qualification. And a lot of them, I mean some of them are military admission tests depending on what it is the type of test. There's different tests that schools give. There's just so many different tests out there that have to be reviewed by our supervisory psychologist to make sure they meet the standards before she will allow them.

**Jacobsen:** In conversations with her, what are some of the metrics that you're gathering that she's taking into account when considering some of these tests?

**Bakerink:** That you'd have to ask her. I am not a psychologist, psychiatrist. I cannot speak reliably to that. Especially her, she has only been with us for a couple of months now, so we have a new supervisory psychologist. So, I have not had the time to really talk to her about this. So, I can't answer that well.

## Appendix I: Footnotes

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

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## **Conversation with Larae Bakerink on American Mensa and SIGs: (Former) Elected Chair, American Mensa; (Former) Member, International Board of Directors, Mensa International (4)**

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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### **Abstract**

LaRae Bakerink was 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: exciting options from Mensa; democratic involvement; and the structure of Mensa.

*Keywords:* American Mensa, Executive Committee, intelligence, IQ, Larae Bakerink, Mensa Foundation, Mensa International, San Diego.

Conversation with Larae Bakerink on American Mensa and SIGs: (Former) Elected Chair, American Mensa; (Former) Member, International Board of Directors, Mensa International (4)

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

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen:** That's like a class of individuals and their expertise that I would really love to interview to get. Some of these questions that I have answers to while others remain open questions or only partially answered. Ok, so, there's also another category of things that happened within Mensa in general, which are the special interest groups. So, for those who qualify for a certain intelligence level or cognitive ability within the general population, they also have specialized interests. Some people are lucky. They find interests like physics or math or art or music. They find a community; and they've been involved in those their entire lives. They had no need for a special interest group with regards to Mensa. For others, they are part of Mensa. They made a conscious decision to seek this out. What are some of the more exciting options or prominent options of special interest groups for American Mensa members?

**Larae Bakerink:** They are all over the place. I mean I can list off some of the ones: Star Trek. There are every kind of lifestyle type, special interest group, married couples, singles, looking, people in polyamory lifestyles, the LGBTQ, we have like the Gay SIG. We have some generational SIGs. Gen Y, Gen X, Boomers. We have Teen SIG for the teenagers. There's history. I know the history SIG is a big one. Physics, in fact, it's really funny. Our new diversity committee chair is a black woman, but she is also the first black woman physicist. And she's like the head of the physics organization for physicists in the United States. And so, of course, she's big in the physics thing. We have one called Sharp Women. It's women who like to knit, knitting needles.

**Jacobsen:** That's a great title.

**Bakerink:** There's one for travelling. But that just happened to come up. Yes, we have ADHD SIG, anthropology, art lovers, astronomy, beer me, bitcoin, blazingly lightly armed Mensans.

**Jacobsen:** Is it like a cavalry?

**Bakerink:** No. There are people who are interested in range shooting and firearms.

**Jacobsen:** Oh, cool, OK.

**Bakerink:** And then Burning Man, which is one of my favorite SIGS. And they have their own camp at Burning Man every year. So, we have another called Snowflake Village. One called shack of SIT.

So, what they have for barter is, they have ice water chairs and shade. So, that's why they call it a shack of SIT. Of course, debate room, diabetes, Disneyland, Dungeons and Dragons, Evangelical Christianity, Friends of Bill W. Gardening SIG, geo caching, global risk reduction, grammar police, that's a funny one, hacker nest. Who would not expect a hacker nest in Mensa, right?

Of course, we've got High IQ Whovians, because we have got to have Doctor Who, home schooling Mensans, Isolated Ms. Those are people who are not in the United States. These are Mensans who are U.S. citizens, but are placed outside of the U.S. LinkedIn Ms, Muscle Weight Training, M Atheists, M Available, Harry Potter Common Room, M Escape, which is four escape rooms. Right now, they're doing online escape rooms.

**Jacobsen:** That's pretty interesting.

**Bakerink:** Investment club, sci-fi writers, Spanish, sports fans, M Winers – that's for wine, not for whining. Military history, multi-sport, musical theater, naturists, needle and thread.

**Jacobsen:** A common sentiment, I've heard there's a couple of things that come up from just that list. Actually, there's another point that comes from the very start of the interview as well, at least start of the conversation. I mean, if people are looking for a solid organization in the high IQ community, then a good couple rule of thumbs is look for ones that have been established for a long time, which was a trust among the membership. Two, look for ones that are democratic, it's not just one person making decisions top down sort of a deal. Rather, it's bottom up, and then it's top down based on the democratic structure of it.

**Bakerink:** Our national board is fifteen voting members plus four non-voting members, so it's a nineteen-member board.

**Jacobsen:** That's a lot.

**Bakerink:** It's a lot. Most of the local groups, their boards are five people.

**Jacobsen:** That makes a sort of sense if they're going to be local and smaller. That does make more sense.

**Bakerink:** But the national board is there are ten RVC's, regional vice chairs. Since we have ten regions, each of the vice chairs is elected by their region. Then we have five national officers, chair, first vice chair, second vice chair, treasurer and secretary. And then we have four appointed officers, director of science and education, which is our link to the foundation because the foundation designates someone that they're going to have fill that spot. And then we have a membership communication and marketing officer, which are appointees and approved by the board. And those are the ones where you want them to have experience in those areas, so they bring that expertise to the board.

**Jacobsen:** This is all, I think, just fantastic because it provides a buffer against certain things that can go wrong, as have gone wrong in some other societies. For those who want, I think there's one article entitled "A Short (and Bloody) History of the High I.Q. Societies," by Darryl Miyaguchi. So, you have these special interest groups. You have a lot more social engagement. Also, a unique aspect with more social engagement in person outside of Covid times compared to pretty much every other high IQ society that I'm aware of. So, there's a lot of unique qualities that Mensa brings. I've heard some commentary critiquing Mensa as "only" a social club. Yet, I do not see anything particularly negative about that because a lot of people who are aiming for these societies are looking for people that they do not have to talk about their scores, that they can just talk to naturally with, be themselves as you were saying earlier.

**Bakerink:** And that's funny. We never talk about our scores. I mean, if someone tries to bring up their score, we're all like, 'Where do you think you are? We all are at the 98th percentile or higher. So, who cares?'

**Jacobsen:** It's been settled. It's not an issue.

**Bakerink:** And it's really funny. I'll have a lot of people contact me and say this person swears they're in Mensa and I know they're not. "Can we check?", and it's like, "You have access to the member directory. If you're a member, you can look for yourself." But it's funny to see the people who claim that they're in Mensa that are not, and then claim that they are in Mensa and then try to trash us in the process. It's like: If you're in Mensa, you wouldn't trash Mensa. Unless, you specifically set out to do that.

## Appendix I: Footnotes

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

[2] Individual Publication Date: November 22, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/bakerink-4>; Full Issue Publication Date: January 1, 2022: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.



# Conversation with Larae Bakerink on Mensa Demographics and Testing: (Former) Elected Chair, American Mensa; (Former) Member, International Board of Directors, Mensa International (5)

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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## Abstract

LaRae Bakerink was 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: staff; tests for acceptance; the magazine; demographics; younger people; and types of email.

*Keywords:* American Mensa, EQ, Executive Committee, intelligence, IQ, Larae Bakerink, Mensa Foundation, Mensa International, San Diego.

Conversation with Larae Bakerink on Mensa Demographics and Testing: (Former) Elected Chair, American Mensa; (Former) Member, International Board of Directors, Mensa International (5)

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

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen:** We covered some of the tests. That's for psychiatrists and psychologists. We covered the social aspects of history, covered the important aspects around the fact that it's democratic. And it's volunteer based.

**Larae Bakerink[1],[2]:** Yes, we do have a staff at the national office. We actually have paid employees. We have the largest staff of any of the national Mensa's, but we're the largest national Mensa of any of the national Mensa's, but yes, the direction is given by the board to the staff, and then the staff carries it out under the executive director.

**Jacobsen:** So, how many staff and executive directors are there?

**Bakerink:** One executive director, I believe there's a total of nineteen staff.

**Jacobsen:** That's quite hefty.

**Bakerink:** It is, but when you consider the fact that we have so many members and we have these huge events, we have the world gathering coming up this year, and then we have Mind Games, which is another national event that's just game playing. Now, you want to be a board game nerd. That's the place to go. It's four hundred people. You have forty hours to play thirty games. There's usually seventy games. They're submitted by game board companies. The games have to be less than two years old, but they have to be on the market. So, no prototypes which is too bad because I'd love to get my hands on some prototypes, but everybody in a big room. You play the games together. You rate them. You score them, and then the top five winners at the end of the weekend get what's called the Mensa Select seal.

And that means that they're allowed to put this golden seal on their box that says it was voted one of the highest for whatever year by Mensa members. And it's a big competition, the game companies like it because we're the only non-paid award they can get. All the other awards that game companies get, they can put money up for it. For us, they have to earn it. Our members have to grade them high for them to earn it. So, they really like getting our award. And it's a blast. It is so much fun because you stay up all night. Because you want to make sure you get your thirty games, but, most of the people who attend, they want to play every single game there because you get to take a couple of them home at the end of the event. So, they want to pick the game that they want to take home.

So, we have that plus all the regional gatherings. We have a huge magazine that's put out every month. There's a lot to running our organization and the employees also support the foundation. And the foundation is a whole separate thing, its own separate board, separate company. So, we do have a big staff, but every one of them plays a really important role in helping our local groups with leadership development, making sure that everything's all up to date plus taking in all the scoring because the proctors do not score any of the tests. The proctors give the tests then pack them up, and they all get sent to the national office. They're scored there. So, the staff handles a lot that you would not want to volunteer to handle. Plus, our website is huge and database management is a big deal. That's all stuff that you do not want volunteers doing.

**Jacobsen:** So, some of these tests that you're permitting for admission. How do they go? What's the reasonable limit in terms of the scores 160?

**Bakerink:** See, the scores are on percentiles. They're not on IQ. Only a psychiatrist can determine an IQ. Our supervisory psychologist is very adamant about that because we're not licensed to do that. All the tests can do is give you a percentile, and then a psychologist can interpret it for you because it depends on your age and that sort of thing, depending on the test. So, I honestly do not know how high it can go. I know we've got members from, I believe, right now our youngest member's two and a half years old and our oldest member's one hundred and three. We just had a 92-year-old guy join for the first time. He found some old military whatever. He was so excited that he could qualify and join. So, it's really neat to see people get excited about it.

**Jacobsen:** This magazine, how big is the publication?

**Bakerink:** I think its 48 pages. I never remember, but it's full color magazine. You can choose to get it mailed to you or by email. It's a lot. We have a lot of articles submitted. In fact, I have to finish writing my column today. We have a lot of articles submitted by members. Our biggest one every year, our fiction issue where we have fiction submitted by all the members that gets scored and only certain ones actually make it into the magazine. And that one's really, really popular. People just love getting that one and seeing what their friends are writing. And I hate

writing, that's the one thing I hate. I'm a math person. Give me numbers. That is the hardest part for me being chair is having to write a monthly column.

**Jacobsen:** Do you do like a monthly newsletter things like this to?

**Bakerink:** Our local group does a monthly newsletter. In fact, most local groups do so they have their own private newsletter along with the national magazine. Because that lists their events that are happening right in their local area. And then the local group newsletters, everyone. They have some kind of puzzle. They have some kind of trivia quiz. There's always some kind of game or some games in them. And these are new ones that members are coming up with every month and submitting to their editor to put in. So, it's pretty amazing. Just the amount of information that comes out of our members that they want to put out and show to other members.

**Jacobsen:** What would you say are the main hunks, demographics, of America Mensa?

**Bakerink:** Member age breakdown: Currently, our membership is 47,778 seven hundred and twenty eight. We are over 30,000 male, about 16,000 female. Our officer breakdown is almost half and half male and female. Our officer age breakdown, our average age, is between 46 and 65 for officers, but average age of a new members right now is 28. Average age of members as a whole 53, average age of our officers is 60.

**Jacobsen:** There's a certain building up to an officer position that makes some sense too. Building up reputation, knowing organization more, and then deciding to sign up for a potential democratically elected position.

**Bakerink:** So, the majority of our membership right now is between 46, like two thirds of our membership right now is 46 years and older, but all of our incoming members, the average new member age, is 28. So, the age range is actually going down because the newer members joining have been younger.

**Jacobsen:** What do you think is the reason for an influx of younger people?

**Bakerink:** I honestly do not know. It's interesting because we will get a big influx of like kids who just started college and they found out about Mensa. They thought they would help with their college career, but then you get busy. You get married, or you have kids, and that kind of falls off. but then you're looking for more interaction again as your life settles. And then they come back into the fold. So, it's really interesting to see the waves and the dynamic of how that works, but we've been getting our officers age range down more too because our younger group, especially Gen Y, has become more and more involved in it. They want to have a say in what's happening. And I'm like, "OK, you want to have a say in what's happening, put your seat, put your butt in a leadership seat," and they took me up on it. And I'm really glad they did.

They have just done some amazing stuff. Our Gen Y and Gen X have really started putting efforts into participating in leadership and leadership development where we do leadership development workshops, which can be used outside of Mensa. But it's to help them learn leadership roles in Mensa. So, I think that that's something that they like a lot because some of them have actually told me that it has helped them at work. Some of the things they've learned in leadership from Mensa. So, I do not know why we may be getting new members in. I know that we get a big influx whenever there's an article about a 4-year-old that has joined Mensa or a two year old that has joined Mensa because it always makes great news. And then all of a sudden, I will get one hundred emails from parents, "My child's really smart too." I'm very happy to hear that. You will need to have them tested.

**Jacobsen:** Is this next to the conspiracy theory emails you get – the hundreds you get every day?

**Bakerink:** I mean they're excited and they want to know that their child is smart, but we do not test anyone under the age of 14. So, if someone's under that age, they're going to have to go to their own psychologist or have school testing done, but we always get a big influx of participants and people wanting to get involved once there's some kind of news article out about a young child joining. So, it's interesting. Or if there's a movie star, it's like every once in a while; something will come out about Gina Davis. And she'll be asked about Mensa. She'll go take the test. She's a hoot. She's just an amazing person. All the stuff she's done for women in Hollywood. She's working with female directors and that kind of stuff. It's pretty awesome.

But I guess it depends on what's out in the news and that's kind of how we'll get a big influx. We used to joke one of our biggest influxes ever was in, I think, the early 70s from a *Reader's Digest* article because *Reader's Digest* was the thing. It was the bomb for years and years and years. Everybody had it in their house. And they got a huge influx of applications and people wanting to take the test for Mensa because of that article in *Reader's Digest*.

**Jacobsen:** What was the particular article?

**Bakerink:** It was someone who was a writer for *Reader's Digest* who took the Mensa test and then talked about like their first couple of events that they went to, and that they were excited about it. And since it was a positive article. It really had a great repercussions for us. And even if there's something that happens in Japan with Mensa or Britain or something, we see ripples from that. People wanting to join or at least asking questions about Mensa.

## Appendix I: Footnotes

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

[2] Individual Publication Date: December 1, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/bakerink-5>; Full Issue Publication Date: January 1, 2022: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

## **Conversation with Larae Bakerink on Intelligence Culture: (Former) Elected Chair, American Mensa; (Former) Member, International Board of Directors, Mensa International (6)**

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### **Abstract**

LaRae Bakerink was 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: Covid time and organization maintenance; SIGs; intellectual ability; a higher general awareness than others; a gender skew; and where you learn more about her.

*Keywords:* American Mensa, EQ, Executive Committee, intelligence, IQ, Larae Bakerink, Mensa Foundation, Mensa International, San Diego.

Conversation with Larae Bakerink on Intelligence Culture: (Former) Elected Chair, American Mensa; (Former) Member, International Board of Directors, Mensa International (6)

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

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen:** So, what are your newest experimental projects or initiatives coming out Mensa now, or is it more in Covid times that you want to keep things at maintenance level?

**Larae Bakerink[1],[2]:** Yes, Covid times has made things very tough. We have a world gathering coming up this year since it is the seventy fifth anniversary of Mensa International. And world gathering is going to be in Houston. So, American Mensa gets to host the world gathering this year. So, not only do we have the international board of directors coming for their meeting then we're going to have our board of directors there for the meeting plus the big convention for the whole thing. So, it's going to be a 9-day event in Houston. So, our biggest thing is trying to figure out, "Can we still make it happen? What are the things we need to put in place?" So, we're really working

on trying to get that, but since it's late August we think we're going to be in pretty good shape, but more of it on American Mensa's level. We're really trying to focus on focused marketing, how we can give our members more satisfaction because there are so many venues out there for them to find social venues for high IQ.

Like I said, there's Meetup and a bunch of other groups and Facebook, where I can just get my interaction over here instead of having to pay membership to Mensa for it. So, those are the key things, how to keep and satisfy our current members and how to attract new members because since one out of 50 people can qualify; we should have a lot more members if we could get them to join or even know about Mensa. I was so excited when I qualified. I knew that I would qualify, but when I finally submitted everything and joined. I told a cousin of mine. I was so excited. I was in Mensa. And she looks at me, says, "What is that?" You know what that does to your ego, and you do not even know what it is.

**Jacobsen:** It's a rarefied thing. It's not necessarily something everyone will know about or if they do know about it, whether or not they will have a high degree of concern for it.

**Bakerink:** Yes, or they'll have a positive response to it.

**Jacobsen:** Sure.

**Bakerink:** Because it's been made fun of for so long. I mean being a high IQ, smart, geek, nerd, whatever you want to call it, for so many years was looked down upon. And now, it's like that's the cool thing. I was so excited. I know people have different ideas about this when *Big Bang Theory* came out, the television show. And every one of those guys is someone I grew up with. Yes, those are the people that I hung out with. Although, I was the girl in the comic book shop with all the guys because I was hanging out with my cousin, my friends, but that coming out. That becoming more mainstream while, yes, they did poke fun at certain things because anything to the extreme is going to be laughable.

But they brought out a lot of the angst and the concerns that can happen during this, being around those kind of people, and what it entails and how hard it can be. So, I think that was like the turning point for us. I really think it was that it was okay. It's okay to be smart. Yes, you're going to be a little different. We're all a little different, but I think that that really kind of made it more acceptable. Even though, there are still going to be people who make fun and all that. Differences are going to cause that. It's human nature.

**Jacobsen:** Do you think the Underachiever Special Interest Group is something reflective of a category of those kinds of individuals based on their experience, more or less, licking their wounds and commiserating with one another?

**Bakerink:** It's a big joke. It's like, "I could have done this, and I didn't." Some parts of it are serious. I think some of them do commiserate like, "I probably should have gone on and got my Ph.D." But why? Because my younger sister has her Ph.D. She's always gone, "Ha, ha! I'm a doctor." So, I just think the underachievers is: I think we all feel that way, like the Imposter Syndrome. "Why are we here? I do not feel like I deserve it." So, I think that happens a lot.

**Jacobsen:** There is also a certain egalitarian mild denial social culture that people differ on a lot of traits including intellectual ability, cognitive ability. Do you think that's a common thing in North America?

**Bakerink:** I do not think everyone is really aware. I find that people with a higher IQ are more aware of that and tend to feel like they do not meet their own expectations, but I do not feel like it's something that's a common awareness. I think people more in general – trying not to be too general, but, in general, they just view things, "Oh,

she's much better at math than I am," or, "He's a great handyman. He can figure anything out kind of thing." I think that's more how they look at it rather than as intelligence or a form of intelligence, just in general feeling. Those of us in the High IQ societies. We're the ones who focus more on whether it's intelligence or not, but the general population they do not look at it that way. They just think, "Well, that person." They do not even think that person is smarter than I am.

They think that person is better at this particular thing than I am. So, they're better at working on their car, or they're better at building a computer, or they're better at doing math. That kind of thing. I do not even think, just my conversations with friends, because I have a lot of friends who are not in Mensa; they do not even think about it that way. Their conversations are more, "Steve just is really great at that," if he can fix any car.

**Jacobsen:** So, based on that, it seems more surface level direct observation rather than "What's the root variable for those individuals potentially being better in those domains?"

**Bakerink:** I do not think that. That's just not in their realm. I do not mean it to be degrading. I do not mean it in a way that they're not smart enough to think that. I just think that in general; their perception doesn't go that way. Their perception is more as I see this, "Hey, that was pretty smart. That was cool. I would not have figured that out. Ok, cool. That was nice," and kind of move on.

**Jacobsen:** So, maybe, it's something like having a higher cognitive ability or rare cognitive ability. You have a certain expanded awareness in general about ideas, social surroundings, and culture. And at the same time, there's also been an amplification of that within the culture of the High IQ societies. So, it's just that much more.

**Bakerink:** It's that much more for us because it's something we are aware of, because it's something that we focused on to get into a society. And it's something we talk about in the society because we're constantly discussing the testing and how to qualify, and how are you going to do this and then making sure that presentations are exciting and interesting enough. So, they focus on that more. I think it's just your general awareness of your surroundings and the IQ part's just not the focus. "How do I accomplish this?" And I do not even think that sometimes people are smarter than others. It's just that I got to this place in three seconds. It took you ten, but we got to the same place. I just got there faster.

Does that make me smarter, or does it just make me a little quicker? So, I try really hard to look at it from that point of view. I'm not necessarily smarter. I just got to that place a little faster. And to me, that makes me faster on test. That makes me able to do things or to come up with a solution a little faster, but doesn't make me necessarily smarter. Someone asked me one time, "Well, do you consider yourself a genius?" I'm like, "No."

**Jacobsen:** That's a very rare title.

**Bakerink:** That was a reporter that had asked me that. "Do you consider yourself a genius?" I'm like, "No." And he goes, "But you're in this high IQ society, yes?" What do I consider genius? Someone who actually takes their ability and does something with it. To me, that's genius. Just having the smarts doesn't.

**Jacobsen:** I mean for every person that's really good in school. There's a lot of other people who have the same ability level that aren't motivated at all or they might have a comorbidity that could prevent learning sufficiently at a particular time. Dyslexia, it's undiagnosed. English is a core course to graduate high school. It could even be a social thing that impacts like a young male on the autism spectrum. If social life is not too well, they do not understand what's going on. That's a lack of self-insight. They're isolated. They drop out sort of thing. These things happen all the time.



**Bakerink:** Now, I spent three months training a young Mensan who kept losing his job. He would fight with his bosses all the time and say, “No, this is the right answer. I know better than you.” So, I worked with him for three months. He was a friend. I was really trying to help him and just explain to him, “No, you do not tell your boss you’re smarter than he is.” I go, “Number one, do not ever say that.” I go, “You stop and listen, figure out what they’re trying to tell you. And then say, ‘Well, this is how I see it,’ and give them the work and show them where you may be right and do not insist that you’re right.” He’s been in the same job now for five years, so I’m really happy.

**Jacobsen:** Congratulations, you’re z.

**Bakerink:** So, like I said it’s all the EQ with the IQ, can make a big difference.

**Jacobsen:** Now, in some of the demographics, you’re mentioning there were thirty plus thousand men, fifteen plus thousand women. So, it’s about a two to one ratio. So, obvious question, why?

**Bakerink:** I have my personal opinion that I think women, often, do not think they’re as smart as they are. It could be the way they were raised just general. Like I said, I’ve had women tell me the only reason they joined Mensa was because their husband told them they were stupid and they had to prove otherwise. And they really didn’t think they would qualify. And the other thing too is women are the ones who have the children and stay home. Not so much anymore that is changing quite a bit. So, they’re social. What they’re seeking for social interaction is not the same. So, many times the men are out there looking for a smart woman.

**Jacobsen:** So, they join Mensa.

**Bakerink:** M Available, that’s one of the SIGs. That’s the dating one. That’s the one. They’re looking for a significant other.

**Jacobsen:** So, what areas have we not covered? That’s a wide range.

**Bakerink:** It always is when you’re talking about Mensa. That’s one of the beauties and the absolute horrors of Mensa. We are the two percent of everything. How do you run an organization and get people excited when they have nothing in common, but their IQ? That’s why we have SIGs. If we didn’t have SIGs Mensa wouldn’t really be what it is because you’d have fifty thousand people with absolutely nothing in common and nothing to talk about because they do not know who to talk to, but the SIGs provide that for them. And how do you figure out how do you lead? How do you figure out the path for the organization? Like I said, I’ve been in a bunch of different organizations. They have a specific purpose or a goal to get to. Like DARs, Daughters of American Revolution that’s all based on your history. Or, in trade organizations, you’re focusing on whatever your industry is.

Mensa is not that. We’re supposed to seek out and foster intelligence in humanity and that sort of thing, and part of what the foundation does helps us with that goal, but to provide a stimulating atmosphere is another one of our missions. So, that’s kind of what we focus on is the events, and then the SIGs because those are all different things that can provide a stimulating atmosphere to people in varied interests. There are people who take such joy in Mensa. We’ve had people that have been members for fifty years. I’m a life member, and I didn’t join until I was forty. So, I’m over twenty years now, but, yes, it’s crazy. It’s weird, but it brings great joy. There are people who absolutely do not know what they would do with their lives without Mensa. Because we have second generation members in leadership now. Now, our national treasurer, she’s a second generation member. She attended her first event in the womb. So, for some people, it’s what they need in their life. And for others, it’s just a little badge of honor.

**Jacobsen:** Now, the proper website is, to close, USMENSA.org.

**Bakerink:** Yes. If you want to see my full go to my website, Bakerink.com has my CV on it.

**Jacobsen:** Thank you so much. And have a lovely Pfizer field trip.

**Bakerink:** Yes, thank you very much. Me too. All right. Well, it was very nice to meet you. Thank you for the opportunity.

**Jacobsen:** Thank you too.

## **Appendix I: Footnotes**

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

[2] Individual Publication Date: December 15, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/bakerink-6>; Full Issue Publication Date: January 1, 2022: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.

## Free of Charge 12 – Foundation

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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: Kurtz's intention behind such a comprehensive statement of Secular Humanism; Kurtz; free inquiry; the separation of religion and state; critical intelligence; a moral education without supernaturalism; religion and supernaturalism; reason; evolutionary theory; an education broader than simply critical intelligence, moral education, and defining what is and what is not Secular Humanism; and to get right and appear to miss.

**Keywords:** ethics, Herb Silverman, Humanism, morality, Paul Kurtz, supernaturalism.

Free of Charge 12 – Foundation

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

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen:** With the large number of manifestos on offer including the Humanist Manifesto I (1933), Amsterdam Declaration (1952), Humanist Manifesto II (1973), A Secular Humanist Declaration (1980), A Declaration of Interdependence (1988), Humanism: Why, What, and What For, In 882 Words (1996), IHEU Minimum Statement on Humanism (1996), Humanist Manifesto 2000: A Call For A New Planetary Humanism, The Promise of Manifesto 2000, Amsterdam Declaration (2002), Humanist Manifesto III/Humanism and Its Aspirations (2003), Manifeste pour un humanisme contemporain/Manifesto for a contemporary humanism (2012), I find the analysis of each by a distinguished and elder member of the community welcome, and enlightening,

especially with the third Amsterdam Declaration coming from Humanists International with input from the global Humanist community. A document representative, insofar as possible within C-19 conditions, of the democratic aspirations of the practices of Secular Humanism. One of the larger documents is A Secular Humanist Declaration (1980). What was Kurtz's intention behind such a comprehensive statement of Secular Humanism?

**Dr. Herb Silverman[1],[2]:** Paul Kurtz's Secular Humanist Declaration (1980) described why democratic secular humanism has been a powerful force in world culture, and what we can do to fight anti-secularist trends posed by religion. Kurtz explained why the separation of religion and government is essential and why we needed to oppose the shackling of any type of free thought. He supported trust in human reason and compassion, rather than in divine guidance or untested superstitious beliefs. Kurtz promoted following the best science available.

Paul Kurtz's greatest strengths were his abilities to found and grow organizations, including the current Center for Inquiry (formerly named the Council for Secular Humanism). He will be remembered as perhaps the most significant force in the second half of the 20th century supporting secular humanism and the ability to live a good life without religion.

**Jacobsen:** Also, as a short aside, what was Kurtz like as a person – behind the curtain so to speak?

**Silverman:** I first met Paul in the early 1990s at a meeting of the Council for Secular Humanism (CSH), and I became a regional director of CSH. It was the only nontheistic organization I had known about, and its fine magazine *Free Inquiry* was the only publication I knew that supported living a good and reasoned life without religion. Prometheus Books, another creation of Paul Kurtz, was the only publisher I knew that was devoted to books about Freethought.

I think Paul's greatest weakness was his less than enthusiastic willingness to play well with others he saw as competitors. Kurtz became upset with me when I joined the board of the American Humanist Association (AHA). Both CSH and AHA seemed to be fine organizations worthy of my support, but I soon learned about their divisive history. Kurtz had been on the board of AHA and was the editor of *The Humanist* magazine, published by AHA. After Kurtz and the AHA parted ways in 1978, on less than friendly terms, Kurtz founded the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry, the Council for Secular Humanism, and the Center for Inquiry. When I helped found the Secular Coalition for America in 2002, Kurtz wanted no part of it. He tended to view with suspicion any organization he didn't lead or create. Shortly after Kurtz left CSH, they joined the Secular Coalition for America.

I was pleased when, in 2007, the AHA, at its annual conference, presented Kurtz with its Humanist Lifetime Achievement Award, which I think he richly deserved.

**Jacobsen:** One of the main emphases of American Secular Humanism has been freedom of speech. In other countries and at the United Nations, this gets labelled as freedom of expression in legal documents and human rights stipulations. The fundamental idea here seems as if the free inquiry, which is the first idea presented in A Secular Humanist Declaration – a document founded well before I was born. Why is free inquiry the first point made in such a document by a pillar of the intellectual history of Secular Humanism?

**Silverman:** First, *Free Inquiry* was the magazine that Paul Kurtz started, so you would expect his document to emphasize free inquiry. Commitment to free inquiry means we tolerate diversity of opinion and respect the right of individuals to express unpopular beliefs. Of course, all views should be open to critical scrutiny. The premise is that free inquiry is more likely to lead to truths with a free exchange of ideas. This applies to science, as well as to politics, economics, morality, and religion. Free inquiry also necessitates recognition of civil liberties, which

include freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of and from religion. Neither states nor religions may impose a religious doctrine on people.

**Jacobsen:** With the Trump Administration over, another poignant point made by Kurtz was the separation of religion and state, what have been some more aggressive moves in various states in the United States of concern and hammering home the points made by Kurtz once more?

**Silverman:** Currently, one of the most aggressive moves against separation of religion and government is in the state of Texas, which wants to allow a woman who has an abortion or someone who performs an abortion to be charged with assault or homicide, a crime punishable by death in the state of Texas. Other states have passed bills that greatly restrict a woman's right to an abortion. The Supreme Court is also imposing a set of religious views on the rest of the country, like insisting a fetus is a person from conception. Our courts and our democracy face a crisis of credibility.

The good news is that many Americans are abandoning organized religious institutions. The “nones,” people who describe themselves as atheists, agnostics, or “nothing in particular,” has risen to 29 percent in America. The Make America Great Again crowd appeals to the nostalgia of a 1950s-era White Christian America. Before he ran for president, Donald Trump favored abortion rights. He changed to get the support of White Evangelical Christians, who rely on the politics of grievance and resentment. Rather than trying to expand its base, the Republican Party is passing restrictive voting and voter suppression laws in different states, and looking for ways to allow Republican-controlled state legislatures to throw out the results of fair elections. This attempt to turn the United States into a Christian authoritarian regime is a grave threat to the secular democracy that Kurtz wrote about.

Other similar concerns include adoption and foster care service where taxpayer funding is going to some faith-based institutions that discriminate against same-sex couples. School voucher programs are funneling taxpayer money to private religious schools that can be exempt from civil rights laws protecting minority faiths, atheists, and LGBTQ students. Tax-exempt nonprofit organizations, including churches, are not allowed to endorse candidates. With Donald Trump's “blessing,” during his administration many churches endorsed candidates with no negative consequences to the churches. Using public funds to support religiously based discrimination violates the Establishment clause of the US Constitution and the civil rights of those who are denied access to government services. To promote separation of religion and government, we need to ensure that government money is made available only to programs and institutions that provide religiously neutral services without discrimination.

**Jacobsen:** What is critical intelligence? How is this an important part of living an ethically good life via Secular Humanism?

**Silverman:** Secular humanists are much more than just atheists, those without a belief in any gods. A secular humanist generally has a positive outlook on life, the view that we can do good and make a difference in our one and only life. Secular humanists recognize that ethics was developed as a branch of human knowledge long before religionists created moral systems based on divine authority. Some early developers of ethics include Socrates, Democritus, Epicurus, Erasmus, Hume, Voltaire, and Kant. They felt that ethical judgments are independent of revealed religion, and that we can apply our intelligence, reason, and wisdom to achieve the good life. For secular humanists, ethical conduct should be judged by critical reason, and the goal is to develop autonomous and responsible individuals capable of making their own choices in life based on an understanding of human behavior.

As Bertrand Russell said, “A good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge.” I'll close with two quotes from Robert Ingersoll, the Great Agnostic: “The hands that help are better far than the lips that pray.” And,

“Reason, observation and experience, the Holy Trinity of science, have taught us that happiness is the only good, the time to be happy is now, and the way to be happy is to make others so.”

**Jacobsen:** What should be the contents of a moral education without supernaturalism?

**Silverman:** The real question is: What should be the contents of a moral education *with* supernaturalism? I see no realistic answer. We live in a natural, not a supernatural, world. We can make up the supernatural, and somehow bring morality into it. But that is just a fantasy, and people have a wide variety of supernatural beliefs.

Moral development should be promoted in children and young adults by public schools dealing with these values independent of religion. Children should learn about the history of religious moral practices, but they should not be indoctrinated in a faith before they are mature enough to evaluate the merits for themselves. A moral education makes use of the scientific method, which is the most reliable way of understanding the world. Science and technology have improved the human condition. They have had a positive effect on reducing poverty, suffering, and disease in various parts of the world, in extending longevity, and in making the good life possible for more and more people. And while technology can be good, we should not accept what we see on the Internet without evaluating it critically.

In comparing religious and secular morality, we should ask whether it is right to stone homosexuals and disobedient children to death or whether it's okay to beat people you own as property. If you don't think it's moral to do these things, then your moral principles do not come from holy books.

**Jacobsen:** Kurtz synonymizes religion and supernaturalism in the point about religious skepticism. How are they the same? Are they different? If so, how so?

**Silverman:** Religion and supernaturalism have much in common. Most religious people believe in a supernatural deity. However, not all religions believe in the supernatural. I belong to three different religions: American Ethical Union, with Ethical Culture Societies; Society for Humanistic Judaism, with atheist rabbis; and the UU Humanists. All three religions are nontheistic and active participants in the Secular Coalition for America. I've also met people who claim not to be religious, but believe in supernatural things like astrology, psychics, and crystals.

**Jacobsen:** What is reason, properly defined, in a secular humanist philosophy?

**Silverman:** Reason, for secular humanists, is the use of the rational methods of inquiry, logic, and evidence to develop knowledge and test truth claims. Since humans are prone to err, future corrections sometime need to be made. There are no dogmas in secular humanism. Though our reasoning isn't infallible, we think reason and science make major contributions to human knowledge and intelligence. Reason has led to the emancipation of hundreds of millions of people from a blind faith in religion and has contributed to their education and the enrichment of their lives.

**Jacobsen:** How does evolutionary theory present a robust support for a secular humanist philosophy and ethic compared to religious ethics based on interpretations of holy scriptures or holy books?

**Silverman:** The theory of evolution is under attack by religious fundamentalists, who would like to see creationism taught in schools. A scientific theory like evolution or gravity is a well-substantiated explanation of some aspect of the natural world that is acquired through observation and experimentation. From Darwin on, countless peer-reviewed scientific papers have supported evolution. We wouldn't have expected scientifically ignorant writers of so-called holy books who lived thousands of years ago to have described the theory of evolution, DNA, or any discovery of modern science, and they didn't. Evolution is controversial, but the

controversy is religious and political, not scientific. Some religions feel threatened by evolution because it contradicts the creation story in Genesis. Even though there is a Flat Earth Society, we don't teach the flat/round controversy in science class. Creationism should no more be taught as an alternative to the theory of natural selection than "stork theory" should be taught as an alternative to sexual reproduction. Creationism is an alternative to Zeus or Krishna, not Darwin.

As secular humanists, we recognize that we are a highly social and cooperative species. We have evolved to have an innate sense of empathy as a survival mechanism, coupled with thousands of years of experience creating and maintaining complex societies. We have learned what behaviors are best at keeping our species functioning smoothly.

**Jacobsen:** What might an education broader than simply critical intelligence, moral education, and defining what is and what is not Secular Humanism, to encapsulate Kurtz's ideas of a "melioristic" form of educational mindset?

**Silverman:** Meliorism is the belief that the human condition can be improved through concerted effort, and that we have an inherent tendency toward progress. This fits in well with Kurtz's view on democratic secular humanism, where we look forward with hope rather than backward with despair. We are committed to extending the ideals of reason, freedom, individual and collective opportunity, and democracy throughout the world. The problems we will face in the future, as in the past, will be complex and difficult. Secular humanism places trust in human intelligence rather than in divine guidance. Secular humanists approach the human situation in realistic terms, holding human beings responsible for their own destinies. We believe it is possible to bring about a more humane world based on reason, tolerance, compromise, and negotiations of difference.

**Jacobsen:** What does this 1980 document seem to get right and appear to miss?

**Silverman:** I agree with just about everything in the document, possibly with one minor exception: "This declaration defends only that form of secular humanism which is explicitly committed to democracy." While I certainly favor democracy, I can picture a country with a benevolent dictator who is a secular humanist and supports human rights. Since secular humanism continues to evolve with new information and evidence, an update to the 1980 document should probably address climate change, racism, sexism, and LGBTQ rights. I would also add suggestions on how secular humanists can improve the quality of their personal life, which includes physical activity, a good diet (perhaps vegetarian), getting enough sleep, reducing stress, and having a sense of humor with lots of laughter.

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

## 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: December 22, 2021: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com/free-of-charge-12>; Full Issue Publication Date: January 1, 2022: <https://in-sightjournal.com/insight-issues/>.



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