

NOESIS

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EDITOR

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In the December issue, I ran the sequence 6,2,5,5,4,5,6,4,? Anyone who solved it would receive 10 free issues. Chris Cole called and said it's a famous series, always on the net and listed in that book of famous series. He suggested I claim editorial incompetence and rescind the offer. Rather than do that, I was going to set aside a pool of 30 free issues, and if three or more people sent in the correct answer, I would divide the 30 issues among them. But besides Chris, Peter Schmies submitted the only answer. He writes: The next two terms in the sequence are 7 6. They are the number of segments composing the numbers 0, 1, 2, 3, . . . on a calculator display.

Dues are still two bucks per issue. Checks are payable to me, not Mega or Noesis. You get an extra issue for every two pages of published material you submit.

IN THIS ISSUE

LETTER, PLUS IS THE U.S. FACING A SECOND CIVIL WAR?

BY GLENN MORRISON

THE U.S. GOVERNMENT IS CORRUPT AS THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLES SHOW

BY ROBERT DICK

LETTER FROM JEFF WARD

COMMUNICATIONS FROM RICHARD MAY

ANSWERS TO PAUL MAXIM'S CITIES OF THE WORLD

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE ON I.D. CHECKING FROM WILLIAM SHARP

LETTER FROM PAUL MAXIM

Glenn A. Morrison, 706 Brown Av, Evanston, IL 60202-1908 12-11-95

Dear Rick,

Re your questions in #105:

Something tells me car shimmy has to do with shifting area of tire contact with the road due to rubber flex. The exact area of contact, and thus the restoring force for the shimmy, depends on this non-linear flex; and possibly on inadequate damping in the suspension. So the shimmy would seem to occur mainly in the tire itself rather than the car.

What will probably happen is, before we learn to download ourselves, the machines will just get smart, become alarmed at this prospect, and take over, in 30-50 years, unless eco-collapse and stressed-out armageddon catch up with us sooner.

My guess for the most famous person in own lifetime is Genghis Khan: as far as I'm aware he didn't enjoy the benefits of spin doctors and image consultants on his payroll.

Falling bug problem: Find the speed in terms of angle ϕ from the top: $v^2 = 2gR(1 - \cos \phi)$. The radial acceleration is $a(r) = v^2 / R$; the tangential accel. is $a(t) = g \sin \phi$. The bug departs from the cylinder when the vector sum of $a(r)$ and $a(t)$ becomes equal to g straight downward, i.e. when $a(r)^2 + a(t)^2 = g^2$. Then $\cos(\phi) = 2/3$, $\phi = 48.19$ degrees (1:36, 23 sec).

Pete Pomfrit: That's a clever solution, but not it. I much enjoyed reading through your list of offbeat words!

Rick, unfortunately I have been too lazy to modify this alarmist piece (necessarily condensed) to provide a little more O.J. emphasis. What I am trying to do here is guess probabilities of experiencing certain varieties of Everett universes. With that caveat, welcome to my nightmare...

Is the United States Facing a Second Civil War?

Recent events in this country have suggested to me certain analogies to the "tormented decades" of the 1840s and 50s, prior to the great conflagration of '61-'65. Observe the increasing frequency of events serving to inflame emotions, wear away at the political center and augment the extreme ends of the political spectrum. These I call John Brown incidents. One of the root issues of that war is unresolved to this day: Race. Another is a recycled ghost from the past: economic instability due to technological change has left behind heavy casualties among some formerly prosperous segments of the population, and led to greater income stratification. These issues possess an intractability not seen in previous decades. A clear danger sign is the fanaticism surrounding issues such as abortion: we see no budge on either side.

Another sign of possible approaching civil conflict is fragmentation of political parties. Compromise after compromise between the sections on slavery marked the pre Civil war years. Contrary to intent, these most

often served to exacerbate political tension, acting like John Brown incidents. In the late 1850s Democrats split into two sectional parts, the Republicans and a splinter compromise party arose out of nowhere: yielding four parties lined up for the 1860 election. What we have today is the possibility if not the likelihood of four major parties vying for the Presidency, at least as of last week: Republican, Democrat, Colin Powell (independent), and Ross Perot (independent). Powell has now declined, reducing centrist choice still further, all this notwithstanding the helluva lot of people who are simply stoked to the gills with a fearsome urge to kick politicians' butts.

Fistfights, shootings and canings broke out even in the august halls of Congress. Then on Oct. 16, 1859 an abolitionist zealot called John Brown lit the final match. Here is historian Bruce Catton:

"...Brown seized the Federal Arsenal at Harpers Ferry...to start a slave insurrection in the South...a detachment of Marines overpowered him... Brown was quickly tried and...hanged. But what he had done had a most disastrous effect on men's minds. To...the South, it seemed that Brown confirmed their worst fears; this was what ...abolitionists really wanted -a servile insurrection with unlimited bloodshed...the fact that some persons in the North regarded Brown as a martyr simply made things worse. After the Brown raid the chances that the bitter sectional argument could be harmonized faded close to the vanishing point."

Somehow this explanatory account resonates with events in today's headlines. Although the sectional factor is not now so much present, the same psychology of escalating resentments and irrationality characteristic of a "culture war" applies. An abstract culture war alone is not sufficient to ignite a physical war; it must have an economic dimension, as slavery had; then it becomes "live" as an armed grenade. What was the basis of the culture war of 1859? The South was agrarian, chivalric; it longed for a somnolent stability with slavery as foundation. The North meanwhile forged ahead full blast into industrial revolution, international competition, these requiring free labor, leaving Southern values behind.

...Enter the New Class

The American New Class (NC), as one of its favorite philosophers, Karl Marx, might have called it, has become an immensely powerful force in society since World War II, elbowing its way to a position alongside Big Business as a dominant player in the society. The utility of the terminology has been recognized by, for example, both conservative Irving Kristol and neo-Marxist Alvin Gouldner, defining a bifurcation of the middle class: the producers of tangible economic goods and related services on one hand and on the other, the non-technical information workers: bureaucrats, lobbyists, lawyers, non-tech academics, media workers, and mental therapists. This latter conglomeration is the New Class; its formation was allegedly forced by automation's reduction in demand for physical labor. Here the two pundits part company. Kristol considers NC ascendancy as Bad News, Gouldner welcomes it as a beneficial force, able to guide society to a more egalitarian future through social engineering. In this connection we must remember what Marx actually

advocated: not that the proletariat itself should lead, but that it would be led by a special educated socialist ruling group -analogous to the medieval clergy- which in theory would keep the proletariat's interests foremost on its agenda.

NC job security is typically high; many are public employees. Thus one might expect the NC to support the expansion of government at the expense of the private economy. When one thinks, for example, of powerful unions today, one does not think so much of the AFL-CIO or the UAW as one did a few decades ago, but of such NC organizations as the National Education Association (NEA) and other public employee PACs. NEA spends much of its resources lobbying Congress, opposing measures that it perceives would weaken the power of the education establishment, such as parental choice of schools.

At this point I wish to suggest a parallel of the American New Class with the former Soviet ruling class or Nomenklatura (in our less coercive environment, sans Gulag). Both are nonproducers, both make up about 10% of the population. Both are more or less hostile to private enterprise. Both became the most powerful cultural arbiters of their respective societies. For the first time in history, producers of culture have little or no connection with producers of tangible products. Perhaps it is not surprising that some curious, even bizarre ideologies have wafted out of academe in recent decades, presently under the banner of "postmodernism" and "multiculturalism". They have in common a set of ideas which constitute on a fundamental level a form of nihilism, which means a denial of hierarchy of quality among any set of concepts or objects; to put it bluntly, that nothing is better than anything else. Puzzling however, is the cause. After all, if NC has achieved such overwhelming hegemony and prestige, why would it fall victim to such a poignant, pathetic angst? I speculate that nihilism in academe and other NC havens is the unconscious result of frustration at the inability to be productive in a tangible sense, or originally creative. Literary theorists for instance, have introduced one critical system after another, succeeding one another like dress styles, analyzing the same literary works in attempted imitation of the sciences; for little other purpose, it would appear, than to generate new thesis topics for Phd dissertations.

John Kenneth Galbraith (a quintessential New Classer) wrote in the '60s, whether as warning or advocacy, -I suspect the latter-, that Russia would gravitate toward the US system -liberalize- and the US would move toward the Soviet variety of socialism. In the wake of Soviet collapse, we acclaim the first part of this prophecy, but overlook the second. NC ideology supports the indefinite expansion of the welfare state until it entirely supplants the private sector; showing perhaps a greater spiritual affinity with Stalin than Jefferson. As an instrument in this campaign, the NC has for all practical purposes controlled the Democratic party since the 1960s, displacing the old Roosevelt coalition of Labor, Southerners, and the old middle class. NC's livelihood actually depends on the continuing existence of crime, poverty and ignorance. Its main strategy is to maneuver certain other segments of society, especially the disadvantaged, into a condition of dependency on services that it provides. In turn it can not only continue to justify its own existence as the gatekeeper of ever-burgeoning "programs", but can effectively command

its dependents' loyalty come election day. Note that a large fraction of the tax money spent on "anti-poverty" programs goes not to the poor themselves, but directly into the NC's pockets.

From where does the frustration, and even violence, of the "Old Class"(OC), come? Obviously from deterioration of economic living standards, with the resulting mental stress. Unconsciously many realize that after the first industrial revolution devaluing muscles, the second devaluing routine brainwork, the third revolution is arrived; human life is on the verge of total domination by artificial intelligence. Some, as before, react hysterically as to a mortal threat. As one might expect, nihilism is no stranger here either. However, it typically takes the more disguised, less intellectual form of apocalyptic, millennial beliefs about the second coming of Jesus and the end of the world. What distinguishes the so-called Religious Right? Paul Tillich wrote that American Fundamentalism, in context of Protestant history, is actually a "radical evangelicalism" which curiously parallels Marx in emphasizing the idea of the End of History, a final, literal "steady state" of salvation which requires the world first to endure catastrophic tribulations and purification.

Beneath the surface we see that most of this group has been deprived of any real "cultural" power in the society, even on so elementary a level as being reassured by hearing one's views represented among commentators on the nightly news: They "...are frozen out of the dominant institutions of the society where culture is produced: the universities, the elite media, the entertainment world, advertizing, public education, the large charitable foundations. They have no voice, they are totally ghettoized..." - James D. Hunter, prof. of sociology and religion, U. of Virginia. Indeed, the reason for the uproar over Rush Limbaugh is that he is such a rare and paradoxical bird: an anti-NC media personality.

Tragically, nihilism is not mere pastime of the ivory-tower set; it is the historic precursor to mass destruction. When quality judgments disappear, so does any way to distinguish violence in any of a myriad criminal forms from that violence which restrains other forms. The fragile barrier civilization has erected is breached; and savage instincts know no limits. Prior to several major outbreaks of violence of the past, particularly in this century, we find nihilism diffusing into and poisoning the mind, subsequently the whole spirit of the times. When, as today, the establishment ideology is nothing if not nihilistic, one can hardly be surprised at the accelerated fraying of our social fabric, the ever worsening barbarism spreading out before our eyes.

It is interesting to compare the religious proclivities of the NC and the Religious Right. Presently NC is not so much into the formerly fashionable atheism as one might expect. Recoiling from the ennui of Nietzsche's Death of God, many NCers embrace the rising, mystical "New Age" movement, even while perhaps remaining nominally Christians or Jews. New Age might profitably be viewed as part of a long-term process, beginning in the Renaissance, of reversal of the Christianization of the late Roman Empire. Nevertheless, while being "religious", New Age is recognizably tinged with nihilism, as we see from briefly examining a few of its main tenets: 1. We are all "gods" determining our own reality; emphasis is on immanence.

2. "hierarchy" is denied; all conscious entities, in some versions even all things, have equal status and validity; value judgments are taboo. (Scratch one of the more extreme "animal rights" adherents and you will likely uncover a New Ager). NC leans towards spiritual nihilism with an Eastern tinge, the RR to a peculiarly Western form of the same malady; both retrogress to magical thought patterns, the attempt to control of events directly by the human will alone. But that's another article.

The following is a simplified enumeration of some John Brown incidents from the past two years: Side A (nonproducers) includes the New Class and its satellite groups ("entitled" and "underclass"). Side B (producers) includes most of what is left out of category A: the old middle class, the religious Right, even some of the "old left": private sector union organizers, etc).

1. Rodney King beating, trial of police, acquittal. B attacks A.
2. Los Angeles Riot: A counterattacks B. Open support of rioters by many of group A.
3. Second trial of police, conviction. A attacks B.
4. Waco raid on Branch Davidians: A attacks B.
5. Ruby Ridge: A attacks B. Relatively minor incident, but illustrates authoritarian trend of the liberal establishment (New Class). At one time, I thought a ban on firearms might reduce the violence problem, and that opposition to gun registration and restriction on ownership was a mere conspiracy-freak's paranoid fantasy. Then I began to notice the NC's increasingly ghoulish enthusiasm over such legislation; the very same NC famous for its no-nonsense-no-coddling-hang-'em-high Draconian stance against crime.
6. November election: B counterattacks A, having recognized its enemy. The first "shot across the bow of the New Class". The halls of Congress have become more rancorous, perhaps not yet at the 1859 level (whoa, dude. just heard two senators went mano a mano outside the Chambers last week...).
7. Oklahoma City Bombing: B attacks A.
8. Decision on Unabomber manifesto: a curiously meek surrender by A to fringe A.
9. O.J. Simpson verdict: a powerful symbolic A counterattack on B. Johnny B. himself would be impressed. Deep in the white unconscious lies the sleeping Klansman. He begins to stir...

Is the American culture war of which Hunter speaks morphing into a shooting war? Or should the question be: is the war already here, but not called by its proper name? The point to these examples is that we seem to be in early stage of a downward spiral of self-reinforcing cultural hammer blows against rationality itself, as occurred in the 1850s and the 1930s. Quoting Hunter again: "Culture wars always precede a shooting war. They

provide a reason for violence".

Some say that if an issue is ignored for long enough it gets tired, gives up and goes away. The Race Problem, disappointingly, is quite robust for a 300 year old. The black ghetto has fallen into the advanced stage of nihilism, -moreso even than that of the NC-, with an astronomical crime rate which is really a form of civil warfare. From here the plague begins to spread to the rest of the population. Both NC and OC pour gasoline on the fire by hanging tough with the "drug war", probably the most idiotic policy fiasco of all time, other than (fill in your favorite). The Problem appears insoluble, because it is really a conflict of irreconcilable world views; in Nietzschean terms, between Dionysian romanticism and Apollonian classicism. For this reason, the race-related-IQ controversy misses the point, because if intelligence is statistically race-linked, it would account for economic differences but fail to explain this profound cultural conflict. To "solve" it requires a highly unlikely scenario: one combatant or the other must surrender and adopt the enemy Weltanschauung.

Increasingly irrational pressure groups dominate the two major political parties: Democrats by the sophisticated, deconstructionist New Class, Republicans traditionally by business interests, now increasingly by the millenarian, apocalyptic Religious Right. Those of us who are not True Believers rebound desperately from one to the other like a multiply spurned lover, now and then hopefully embracing an independent would-be savior. For a glimpse into America's future, let us try pushing Galbraith's convergence theory somewhat further than he might prefer, and consider today's Russia. It confronts the chaotic, amoral legacy of the Soviet New Class: a devil's brew of crime, rampant superstition, and corrupt economy, and a work ethic destroyed by 75 years of an extreme welfare mentality. Few have considered the possibility of Russia simply remaining mired in its present condition. There exist only two exit doors. To return to a totalitarian empire mode it must isolate its people from the world and restore the methods and practices which led to the collapse in the first place; the other door leads to Western style democracy for which unfortunately Russia has no cultural background.

What will be the role of Corporate America (CA), this uncomfortable bedfellow of the New Class? As long as the NC is able to hold its clients down on the plantation with "welfare colonialism", things sail smoothly along and CA is willing to not only coexist but collaborate with it. Now however, a dangerous wild card is dealt, a consequence of NC policy itself: the looming catastrophe of the runaway National Debt, like the greenhouse effect on Venus. In the ensuing financial meltdown, NC will catch a bad case of unemployment, its dependents will rise in wrath, savings may be wiped out, conjuring up visions of the Weimar debacle and its dreadful sequel. CA will no doubt reassess the situation, calculate for its own survival, and begin to repair its relations with OC which it has treated rather shabbily of late.

Dare we hope for a miraculous escape from implacable fate? Might the nation luck out and sleepwalk the tightrope over the dark and terrible abyss? Well, if our Northwestern Mildc...uh, Wildcats (old habits die hard) can accomplish the impossible, who can say?

The US Government is Corrupt
As the Following Examples Show

By Robert Dick

- 1) Waco
- 2) Ruby Ridge
- 3) Foster
- 4) Menem
- 5) Arbitrary Laws
 - a) Anti-Trust
 - b) Insider Trading
 - c) Money Laundering
- 6) Unjust Laws
 - a) Affirmative Action
 - b) Exit Tax
- 7) Unjust Money Policy
 - a) Debasing the Currency Unexpectedly
 - b) Refusing to Index Taxes for Inflation

I make no claim to have a strong memory, but a number of things have stuck in my memory, such as it is, and I want to bring them to the attention of the Mega Society.

- 1) The first thing is the Waco massacre.

A man named Koresh had a religious cult of about 80 persons with himself as the object of adoration. It turns out that he was having sex with a number of boys in the cult. It was known that the cult was heavily (and illegally?) armed and lived in a big wooden building near Waco, Texas.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF) tried to sneak into the cult's building, but it appears that cult was ready for them and several agents were killed.

There was a standoff for several weeks, and then the government sent a tank to smash in the door of the cult's building. The building burst into flames and most of the cult members were killed, including (as I recall) about 30 children.

Now I have no sympathy for sodomy and child-molesting, but at the same time the authorities have a duty to bring suspected malefactors to custody with the minimum amount of force necessary, and then to tell the truth about what happened.

The authorities claimed that the cult set their building on fire themselves. However, a press photograph of the tank breaking in the door clearly shows that the tank carried a flamethrower. This can be seen by the slender tube coming out of the turret of the tank, much too slender to be the barrel of a gun. If you want to see what such a tank can do, watch the movie "The Sands of Iwo Jima." Toward the end you can see a tank-mounted flamethrower in action. Now imagine that going on inside a dry wooden building.

I have never seen Attorney General Janet Reno admit that the attacking force carried a flamethrower. But the evidence is clear that it did.

2) Ruby Ridge

An anti-government survivalist and his family lived in Ruby Ridge, Idaho. One day a government agent was approaching the house, whether sneaking or not I do not know. The son of the survivalist shot and killed the agent.

More government agents surrounded the house. The family refused to come out. At one point the survivalist's wife appeared in the doorway of the house carrying her baby. A government sniper shot her dead.

At some level of the Justice Department bureaucracy the same man directed both operations. The Clinton administration reacted to the above outrages by promoting him.

3) The strange death of Vince Foster

The death of Vince Foster has loosed a can of worms in a wealth of evidence that Foster did not die in Fort Marcy Park where his body was found. People who were supposed to gather evidence either botched the collection or deliberately tampered with the evidence. It is standard police procedure to consider every violent death a homicide until the evidence shows suicide. That is, suicide is a verdict of last resort. No such policy was followed in the Foster case.

The volume and variety of "botched" evidence is astounding. For example, certain FBI instant ("Polaroid") photographs available as evidence turned out to be copies of copies.

A torn-up suicide note mysteriously appeared in Foster's briefcase a while after his death. Not one but three forensic handwriting experts declared the note a forgery.

And there is much more. But you didn't hear about all this on the evening news. The idea that a high White House official was murdered because he knew too much about the President's doings is a truly frightening thought. The mainstream American press wants no part of it, or of evidence pointing to it. But, as the late Herman Kahn said about nuclear war, we must think about the unthinkable. And there is a saying: "Murder will out."

4) Menem

Menem is a small town in Arkansas with a small airport. Its claim to fame is that while Nicaragua was aflame with fighting it was a base for flights to Nicaragua carrying arms to the Contras. "What was wrong with that?" conservatives may say. What was wrong is that it is alleged by some people who ought to know that the planes returned north loaded with illegal drugs. In particular, it is alleged that over the lifetime of the operation 100 tons of cocaine were brought into this country in this manner.

This was a CIA operation at a time when George Bush was head of the CIA. Obviously it was an Arkansas operation--at a time when Bill Clinton was governor of Arkansas.

Murder is also alleged about this operation. Several residents of Menem were found dead, possibly because they found out too much about the operation. The coroner's verdicts were--you guessed it--suicide.

5a) Anti-Trust Laws

I owe the following insight to Justice Robert Bork:

Anti-Trust Laws outlaw "Conspiracies in restraint of trade." Noble words, eh? No. If I sign a contract with you that you will supply my need for widgets I have violated the law. You and I form a "conspiracy" and my declaration to buy widgets from you and nobody else restrains trade. Thus the decision to invoke anti-trust laws is purely arbitrary, a rule of men and not of laws.

5b) Insider Trading Laws

Insider trading refers to someone knowing more about a stock than the general public. This is a stupid law because it stifles intelligent stock trading. If you, an investor, investigate a certain company to the extent where you know a lot about it you can be arrested and sent to prison if you then invest in (or sell short) that company.

5c) Money Laundering

The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) is zealous to track down money derived from drug trading. Anyone who shows suspicious financial activity, particularly with large amounts of cash, will cause the DEA to pounce. Example: An airline traveller paid for his ticket in cash. The airline clerk notified the government, and government agents confiscated all his cash. After a few hours of interrogation the agents returned the cash, except that they kept the cash used to purchase the ticket.

There is a typical government pattern. The government confiscates all the property, money, stocks, etc. of a suspect, leaving him unable to hire a lawyer for his upcoming trial. Then his conviction supposedly justifies the confiscation. Dare I use the phrase "witch hunt?"

Putting it another way, the government confiscates a man's property and will not give it back until he proves himself innocent. This, of course, is a gross corruption of the spirit of American law.

6a) Affirmative Action

Martin Luther King strove for a color-blind society where a man would be judged by the content of his character, and not by the color of his skin. King's dream today is fostered by conservatives. The liberals believe in a very color-conscious society. Are you an employer? Then your workforce should have at least the proportion of blacks as exists in the surrounding community.

The same supposedly applies to universities. Never mind that the Asians and whites in a given university intellectually far outclass the blacks, we've got to have "diversity."

Liberals want affirmative action until American racism is dead. I have news for them: Affirmative action makes racism worse.

6b) The Clinton administration is trying for a hefty tax on Americans who renounce their American citizenship and remove their wealth from the United States. One investment advisor called this tax "America's Berlin Wall."

The liberals counter that the tax applies only to about a dozen

billionaires. If I stole (say) ten million dollars from each of a dozen billionaires, could I plead innocence because they are so rich? I doubt it.

In Rush Limbaugh's famous words, "Washington, it ain't your money!"

7a) Debasing the Currency Unexpectedly

American government policy has made many contracts that should be rock-solid safe into riverboat gambles. I refer in particular to bonds. "Yes," you may say, "but just factor in the rate of inflation when calculating the price a bond should fetch." That is why I say "Unexpectedly". It is unexpected inflation that wipes out savings and distorts contracts. It is unexpected inflation that acts as a vicious tax, allowing the government to pay off its obligations (e.g. T-bills) with funny money.

The more people allow for inflation the higher the rate has to be to be unexpected. The result is hyper-inflation. The usual result of any prolonged period of hyper-inflation is the fall of the government.

7b) This may seem unimportant compared to the corruption noted above, but I get worked up about it anyway. The government refuses to index capital gains taxes to inflation. You can lose money on an investment, but show a profit in dollars, and have to pay tax on your paper gain.

America has shown again and again that it can renew itself, that its corruption can be cleansed. I pin my hopes to this happening again.

13155 Wimberly Square #284
San Diego, CA 92128

December 4, 1995

Dear Rick:

The final election results for Editor Of *Noesis* are as follows:

Total votes cast: 9

Rick Rosner	8 votes
Greg Morrison	1 vote
Chris Langan	0 votes

Sincerely,



Jeff Ward

Richard W. May
Founder/Director, The Aleph Group
463 Beacon St
Boston, MA 02115-1301

July 14, 1988

Dolores Perelli
Encyclopedia of Associations
Book Tower
Detroit MI 48226

Dear Ms. Perelli,

The Aleph Group is an international think-tank/consultancy, also called the Aleph or simply "A", previously unnamed. Membership is at the sole discretion of the Founder/Director on the basis of demonstrated problem-solving ability, intellectual potential and "real-world track-record" and consists of fewer than a dozen participants worldwide. The flow of information among participants determines the structure of the group in time. Participants are cognizant of information to a degree requisite at a given time and level of participation.

Yours truly,

Richard W. May

R. W. May
12/17/91

Wayne,

I am Abram by negation. I have no faith and this is my faith. I have to God to sacrifice my son to and no son to sacrifice to my God in absentia. Therefore, I can only sacrifice my God in absentia to my semen or my semen to my God in absentia or my semen in absentia to my God in absentia. This is the covenant of Abram by negation. Buddhism, Halakah/Dharma.

Where are the panties is the ultimate question. Do you get \$1,000/month, tax free? Is it a TA-ship or fellowship or what? Is the program difficult intellectually or only labor-intensive?

"CITIES OF THE WORLD"

ANSWERS

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Felicity | 17. Propensity | 33. Elasticity |
| 2. Tenacity | 18. University | 34. Monstrosity |
| 3. Duplicity | 19. Grandiosity | 35. Rapacity |
| 4. Lubricity | 20. Complicity | 36. Eccentricity |
| 5. Diversity | 21. Rapacity | 37. Synchronicity |
| 6. Immensity | 22. Nicety | 38. Density |
| 7. Mendacity | 23. Viscosity | 39. Curiosity |
| 8. Plasticity | 24. Ethnicity | 40. Pomposity |
| 9. Capacity | 25. Adversity | 41. Atrocity |
| 10. Spacticity | 26. Electricity | 42. Domesticity |
| 11. Causticity | 27. Specificity | 43. Perspicacity |
| 12. Loquacity; Verbosity | 28. Obesity | 44. Precocity |
| 13. Audacity | 29. Opacity | 45. Reciprocity |
| 14. Velocity | 30. Simplicity | 46. Scarcity (i.e.,
"scare city") |
| 15. Intensity | 31. Authenticity | |
| 16. Paucity; Scarcity | 32. Veracity | |

ARTICLE FROM WILLIAM SHARP

Brain has a knack for checking ID

HEALTH & FITNESS NEWS SERVICE

Humans, rest easy. Computers are not about to take over.

Researchers at the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot, Israel, are demonstrating how the human brain can recognize objects under a variety of conditions, such as different lighting, distances, positions and viewing angles.

Until now it was widely believed that the brain processes visual information by sending images to its "lower" area for analysis, then passing it up to the "higher" visual area, where it is matched against previously stored images. But researchers were stumped because they saw the same number of "pathways" coming down as going up. What was going on in the nether regions?

Professor Shimon Ullman of the institute now has discovered that during recognition, information flows both ways; the new image goes from the lower to the higher

region, while the previously stored image descends to the lower area.

So in the middle of the brain — where the image is studied for contour, lighting, size, variations in angle — recognition takes place.

"Recognition is not a straightforward comparison — it's an active trial-and-error process involving multiple transformations that take place before a comparison with a stored image is performed," Ullman says.

How can the brain recognize an object within a fraction of a second? Ullman says the brain can simultaneously generate myriads of versions of the same image along the pathways, in counterstreams.

You can, of course, store a couple of snapshots of a person on a computer so that it can recognize an endless number of views of a particular face. But that recognition takes time — up to several minutes.

So far, the human brain is the best "seeing" machine around.

Dear Rick,

In the Summer 1989 issue of his Four Sigma Bulletin (No. 2), Kevin Langdon published a listing of 650 names and addresses of individuals whom (he claimed) had scored at 4-sigma or higher on certain self-administered IQ tests -- principally the LAIT. Recently he added that his LAIT tessees had numbered about 27,000 in the aggregate, and that he attributed to them a mean IQ of 137, which is exactly equal to the threshold entry level for Intertel, a society that, at its peak, had only 2,100 members. In other words, by means of a one-shot publication of the LAIT in OMNI (1979), Mr. Langdon was able to accumulate a group of individuals more than ten times greater than those whom Intertel recruited, via its ongoing publicity in the Mensa Bulletin, year after year.

In December 1995, I sent a request to Ron Hoeflin, asking whether I could consult his data files (on high-IQ tessees), in order to perform an independent check (or verification) on the results Kevin Langdon had reported. The procedure I had in mind was fairly simple: first, I intended to match the names on Mr. Langdon's list against those in Dr. Hoeflin's file. Then, for any matches so obtained, I intended to record the IQ scores on record for any non-LAIT tests the "matchees" had reported. Finally, I intended to group these non-LAIT scores into "4-sigma" and "below 4-sigma" categories, so as to ascertain what percentage of those on Mr. Langdon's list had performed equally as well on non-LAIT tests.

Dr. Hoeflin's response to my request was NO. He said he would not allow me access to his data files, because he saw "no point" to my investigation. Instead, he provided me with an assortment of data which he said confirmed Kevin Langdon's conclusions. In particular, he said that his own testing on OMNI readers had revealed that one in 40 of them scored at the 4-sigma level. This is an astonishingly high percentage, as compared with the normal incidence of 4-sigma in the general population (about 1 in 30,000); it seems even more astonishing to me because OMNI is not generally regarded as an "intellectual" magazine, but rather a pop-cult magazine with intellectual aspirations (does anyone really believe in "alien abductions"?).

When I translated Dr. Hoeflin's assertion into an equivalent mean IQ figure, it came out to approximately 147. This is ten points above Mr. Langdon's estimate of the mean IQ of his OMNI tessees, and only two points below the threshold entry level for "3-sigma" societies such as ISPE and TNS. By way of comparison, Daryl Inman had estimated that the OMNI readers who took his Quest test had a mean IQ of about 127. What Dr. Hoeflin would have us believe is that, although the "3-sigma" societies have barely managed to accumulate 1,000 members in 20 years of recruitment and testing, the one-shot publication of LAIT in OMNI brought forth a group 27 times larger, and only slightly inferior in average IQ. Miraculous though it may seem, those OMNI readers appear to be getting more intelligent all the time!

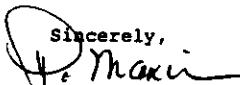
In my opinion, the most pertinent commentary on Dr. Hoeflin's current psychometric dictum is one provided by Dr. Hoeflin himself, in the form of his 1986 article in Gift of Fire (reprinted in NOESIS No. 112, November 1995, P. 34), in which he said: "...I do not trust the norming of the Langdon test (i.e., the LAIT)...Inflated IQ scores which are not in harmony with real world facts strike me as dishonest, and had a lot to do with why I dropped out of the Mega Society." Now, very little has changed in the domain of "real world facts" since Dr. Hoeflin published these words in 1986; what has changed, in a real-world sense, is that Dr. Hoeflin is now financially dependent on income he derives from his two high-IQ societies, of which he is the sole proprietor, and whose members have been recruited largely on the basis of self-administered tests such as LAIT.

I also recently learned, through an intermediary, that Mr. Langdon has likewise taken the position that his data files are "confidential," and cannot be accessed by other researchers -- particularly those interested in checking the reliability of Mr. Langdon. This tends to suggest that these files represent not only Mr. Langdon's data-base, but his power base as well, and that he is intent on preventing any erosion thereof. In science, published conclusions are not accepted as valid unless they can be independently confirmed, but it appears as though Mr. Langdon wants us simply to take his word as confirmation of its own validity -- just as did his estimated 10,000 LAIT testees who waited, in some cases, as long as ten years for their score reports to be returned.

I am likewise reluctant to posit conclusions before inspecting all the data, but since it is permissible to formulate a working hypothesis, I am going to voice my suspicion that less than half of the individuals on Mr. Langdon's "list of 650" ever scored 4-sigma on a supervised IQ test. In other words, what I am saying (just as Ron Hoeflin did in 1986) is that the LAIT norming and scoring process has inflated the IQ assessments of most of its testees.

Now, since Mr. Langdon assumedly has the data in his files to "show me up," and prove (or disprove) the accuracy of his claims, it would be very easy for him to do so. If he doesn't want me poking into his files, I would suggest that he permit an audit by some other reputable person: for example, Bob Kopp, the former Membership Officer of Triple Nine, who has a good psychometric background. All Mr. Langdon has to do, therefore, is to photocopy for Mr. Kopp his complete data file on his "650 qualifiers," and let Mr. Kopp take it from there. In my opinion, Mr. Langdon does not shed luster on himself by remaining uncooperative; based on his testing activities, he claimed a leadership role for himself in the high-IQ world, and now it is time for him to "put up or shut up."

Sincerely,



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