

NOESIS
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I'm sorry we got behind again and had to revert to a multiple mailing. Chris Cole and I each changed domiciles, and Chris relocated his business as well.

AN ALMOST ENTIRELY KEVIN LANGDON ISSUE:
POSTCARD FROM RICHARD MAY
LETTER FROM ROBERT BURNS?
COMMENTS ON RECENT ISSUES OF NOESIS BY K.L.
REPLY TO ROBERT DICK ON THE STATE OF THE EARTH FROM K.L.
REPLY TO CHRIS LANGAN ON INTELLIGENCE AND CREDIT FOR
ONE'S INTELLECTUAL PRODUCTIONS FROM K.L.
REPLY TO PAUL MAXIM'S CRITICISM OF THE NORMING OF K.L.'S LAIT
THE HISTORY OF POLYMATH SYSTEMS
NORMING #1 OF THE LANGDON SHORT FORM INTELLIGENCE TEST

R. W. MAY'S POSTCARD

Dear Rick

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Originally there were an infinite number of distinct and mutually contradictory divine revelations to an infinity of prophets. Endless free-market competition among various infinities of revelations culminated in the torah of Moses (and the Quran, etc.) which outsold the others shekel for shekel, thereby validating its value. Hence we see that the free market is the source of revelation itself.

As always,

Without a hint of sardonic irony, Richard

LETTER FROM ROBERT BURNS?

[Ed's comment--As you know, I do well on IQ tests but am an idiot in certain other areas. A couple months ago, I received a letter and tossed away the envelope. Turns out the letter is unsigned. I think it's from Robert Burns. Let me know.]

Question: To address specific interests of members, Mensa has S.I.G.'s. Would Special Interest Groups work with Mega Society members? I think that probably there are informal groups but saw nothing clearly identified as such in the back issues. If there seems to be interest in S.I.G.'s among Mega Society members or readers of *Noesis*, would anyone be interested in Accelerated Achievement Techniques, which I am researching?

Accelerated Achievement Techniques differ slightly in focus and topic from accelerated learning techniques such as NLP, speed reading and such which focus more on skills rather than rapid goal achievement, which is actually the primary focus of A.A. techniques.

Subjects which can be successfully addressed and mastered (in the sense that the goal has been achieved) with these techniques are, among other things:

- 1) Financial independence
- 2) Fast-tracking to the upper levels of one's organization or career field
- 3) Spiritual, mental, physical development

In theory, at least, goal achievement can be sped up by 10X in most areas. In practice, however, one's rate of achievement depends on the intensity and consistency with which one applies these techniques/principles.

In brief, they are:

- 1) Knowing exactly what you want
- 2) Intense and non-stop pursuit of that goal
- 3) Keeping the goal constantly before your awareness
- 4) A sense of urgency
- 5) Constantly asking oneself, "What can I do NOW that might bring me closer to my goal?"
- 6) Acting immediately on any insights or hints of the next step to take
- 7) Distraction-proofing your mind with written reminders everywhere and a list of the next several steps to be taken
- 8) Cultivating the habit of saying "No" to distractions
- 9) Asking everyone for helpful ideas
- 10) Constantly-applied pressure which gives momentum to speed your progress towards the goal

Comments on Recent Issues of Noesis

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I was glad to see Michael Price's review of Frank Tipler's *The Physics of Immortality* in *Noesis* #101. Tipler has some interesting ideas, though his opposition to the SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) program is dumb and probably contributed to NASA's withdrawal of funding for this important area of research (fortunately, the SETI program has continued with private funding).

Michael found Tipler's use of religious language distasteful. I disagree. I think that it's very interesting when ideas customarily treated as belonging to separate domains of knowledge are related to one another. But this does not interfere with my enjoyment of Michael's analysis of Tipler's argument.

Michael classifies Tipler as a "great scientist turned crank," along with Penrose, Eddington, and Hoyle. I'm not familiar enough with Eddington's work to comment, and I agree that Fred Hoyle made a religion of his "steady state" theory after its scientific basis collapsed, but I think it's a mistake to write off Roger Penrose. His ideas about artificial intelligence are a little strange, but he continues to come up with important concepts. This shouldn't be too surprising; while his interests swung toward the weird side as he grew older, Sir Isaac Newton pursued his alchemical interests simultaneously with his work in physics for many years.

Michael is skeptical of the "Strong Anthropic Principle," which holds, as he puts it, that "only those universes that contained conscious observers, at some point in their history, exist." I share his reservations. I also find the whole idea unimaginative. It seems reasonable to me that "uninhabited" universes may play a part in the necessary machinery to support "inhabited" ones, as cells without complex nervous systems support higher organisms with complex nervous organization. Possibly such universes serve as preliminary experiments in world creation by a Deity and are observed only "from the outside" by this Deity or only collectively in their statistical behavior.

Michael wrote:

All Tipler does is derive the existence of the Omega Point by *assuming* the existence of the Omega Point as a final boundary condition. Tipler has derive[d] what he has assumed. A completely circular argument which medieval theologians would have been proud of.

Tipler's ideas are very interesting speculations; it's too bad that he was not content to present them as speculations.

While I appreciate Michael's demolition of Tipler's assumptions about the Omega Point, I part company with him regarding the principal proposition expounded in the following passage:

There is also no reason for supposing that future societies would share our concept of morality and feel obliged to bring us back to life. An argument from super-rationality could have been presented here, but Tipler does not do that, unfortunately. Instead Tipler argues that there is common morality which we all agree on which we can expect the Omega Point to share.

All the great wisdom traditions share a moral perspective based on the fundamental identity of all beings (though this is much more explicit in some traditions than in others). It seems reasonable to me that the Omega Point would be ultimately benevolent, if it actually existed at the end of time.

The traditions are generally more inclined to speak of an Alpha Point, with the notable exception of Buddhism as it has come down to us over the past two and a half millenia, which dispenses with both Alpha and Omega (there are some indications that the Buddha knew more about Alpha than he was willing to say much about; see "Lost Buddhism," by Stuart Smithers, in *Material for Thought* #14, available from Far West Editions, P.O. Box 27901-113, San Francisco, CA 94127, for \$15 postpaid [plus sales tax for California residents]).

An article in *Noesis* #102, also by Michael Price, entitled "Some More Frequently Asked Questions about the Many-Worlds or Relative State Formulation of Quantum Theory," contains the following "Note added in proof":

In reply to a preprint of this article some correspondents have raised the question of the "transition from possible to actual," arguing that in "reality" there is--as our experience testifies--no such splitting of observers['] states, so that only one branch can ever actually exist. Since this point may occur to other readers the following is offered in explanation. The whole issue of the the transition from "possible" to "actual" is taken care of in the theory in a very simple way--there is no such transition, nor is such a transition necessary for the theory to be in accord with experience. From the viewpoint of the theory *all* elements of a superposition (all "branches") are "actual," none are any more "real" than the rest. It is unnecessary to suppose that all but one are somehow destroyed, since all separate elements of a superposition individually obey the wave equation with complete indifference to the presence or absence ("actuality" or not) of any other elements. This total lack of effect of one branch on another also implies that no observer will ever be aware of any "splitting" process. Arguments that the world picture presented by this theory is contradicted by experience, because we are unaware of any branching process, are like the criticism of the Copernican theory that the mobility of the earth as a real physical fact is incompatible with the the common sense interpretation of nature be-cause we feel no such motion. In both case[s] the argument fails when it is shown that the theory itself predicts that our experience will be what it in fact is. (In the Copernican case the addition of Newtonian physics was required to be able to show that the earth's inhabitants would be unaware of any motion of the earth.)

Those who oppose the "many worlds" interpretation of quantum mechanics do not generally believe that branches are "destroyed"; some would be willing to say that the *possibilities* represented by untaken branches are "destroyed" when the wave function "collapses," while others contend that events unfold in the only way they can, the appearance of quantum uncertainty to the contrary notwithstanding.

While I agree with the main line of Michael's argument in this passage, it is interesting to note that we may just not be far enough evolved to be aware of "branching"; "leakage" between parallel worlds would help to explain the enormous

data-processing power of the human brain (although the conventional locution "parallel" doesn't seem quite right in relation to a branching tree of worlds).

I was touched by Chris Cole's "Comments on the Society" on the last page of #102, as I also wish for the collective brainpower of those belonging to the community of the profoundly gifted to be put to work for the benefit of humanity. Chris is right about the obstacles, both internal and external, which have largely prevented this from occurring. But it may be that we will discover better methods--or they will discover us. All it would take would be one billionaire who wishes for his philanthropy to be maximally effective to endow our members (*a la* the MacArthur Foundation) with the funds to pursue their individual aims--and to be able to confer in person periodically--for a large effect to be produced within a few years.

In "Wonderful Copenhagen Many Worlds?" (*Noesis* #103), Robert Low wrote:

Second, there is the question of when universes split. To argue that this happens when something thermodynamically irreversible occurs in the apparatus is almost to smuggle a Copenhagen interpretation in through the back door. For irreversibility is a property of macroscopic, classical processes. The evolution of the Schrodinger equation does not give rise to irreversible processes itself, so there seems to be a missing chunk of theory here, to explain how irreversible processes can occur *within quantum mechanics*. Some explanation of the mechanism by which irreversible changes cause the universe to split would not go amiss [sic] either.

Macroscopic, thermodynamic events are no more irreversible than microscopic, quantum events, in an absolute sense; such reversals are simply highly improbable. But improbability is not particularly problematic in the context of the "many worlds" *weltanschauung*.

#103 also contains a long letter from someone named Kevin Langdon, in response to which I wish to offer a few comments.

I'm disappointed that we have not heard, as yet, from Jane Clifton regarding her analysis of the *Omni Mega* data, referred to all the way back in #67, and would like once again to encourage her to submit it for publication in *Noesis*.

In my letter, I wrote:

An excerpt from *Maximum Brain Power* [without an indication of who the author of this book is] in #73 refers to "I.Q. inflation." It is true that mean scores on certain tests have risen markedly over a period of a few decades. The tests this is true of are generally tests of crystallized intelligence, neglecting the fact that people are dealing with more sophisticated systems of information than they used to, due to the rise of technology and the mass media.

As "I.Q. inflation" has been in the public eye recently, I'd like to revisit this subject.

The following quotation, from an article entitled "Testing the Science of Intelligence," by Geoffrey Cowley, in the October 24, 1994 issue of *Newsweek*, summarizes current scientific opinion on this subject (despite the obvious arithmetic error):

For reasons no one fully understands, average ability can shift slightly as generations pass. Throughout the developed world, raw IQ scores have risen by about 3 points every decade since the early part of the century, meaning that a performance that drew a score of 100 in the 1930's would rate only 85 today.

It is unlikely that natural selection is responsible for such a large change in such a short time; the improvement in performance is probably largely a practice effect.

On page 39 of *Noesis* #105, an issue devoted almost entirely to Peter Pomfrit's useless word lists, appeared a note from Pomfrit in which he wrote, "Hopefully, you should have received the 58 pages of reference material that I sent to you last week." Apparently Peter hopes for different things than I do. I understand that Rick is reluctant to exercise editorial discretion (on page one of #106, he wrote, "Send anything in--gas bill, lima beans [that's what he wrote], dryer lint, whatever"), but it seems clear to me that reference books are one thing and the journal of the Mega Society is something else. Please, no more laundry lists! (Also, the tiny reduced type is unreadable.)

Robert Dick wrote quite a bit in response to my remarks in *Noesis* #103 and 104 in his comments in #107. I have replied to many of his comments at length in a separate article, entitled "Reply to Robert Dick on the State of the Earth," but I want to address a subject here which doesn't fit within that rubric.

Robert wrote:

I find Kevin's statement on "major tranquilizers" and antidepressants to be perverse in the extreme (*Noesis* 104, p. 10):

These drugs dull one's consciousness. I have known many people who used them and, without exception, they were sleepwalking through life--even more so than is generally the case in Western society, in which people are lost in dreams of material wealth, comfort, and ego-inflation. In my opinion, the use of these medications by the psychiatric "profession" is nothing short of criminal.

No matter what your condition, these drugs are a cure worse than the disease.

Kevin does not know what he is talking about. The phenothiazines have been responsible for breaking the shackles off millions of mental patients. These drugs are known medically as major tranquilizers, but their true function is to act as anti-psychotic agents. True, they slow down your brain, but that is precisely what millions of people need.

Until about 1960 half the hospital beds in the United States were mental hospital beds. Today the big mental hospitals are closing, possibly too quickly. Why? Because of major tranquilizers.

I don't know what more to write about this. The liberals and radicals are doing a grave disservice to America's mentally ill by badmouthing the best thing that has ever happened to them.

First of all, I would like to point out that Robert has not responded to my primary point in the passage he quoted above: my experience of the spaced-out quality of people who are taking the drugs in question. People on these drugs aren't just slowed down mentally, they're less alert and less in question than others. This is a grave difficulty. Real-time awareness and active questioning are at the heart of real engagement in life.

Robert is a very smart guy, with a history of thinking seriously about things. He's pretty sharp in a lot of ways. But he could *be more* and *do more* if he weren't taking these infernal drugs.

But what if a man finds himself with the psychological problems these drugs are designed to handle? There are other approaches. Some of the ingredients are:

1. associating with saner people;
2. living in a calm, rural area;
3. getting out into nature frequently;
4. regular, vigorous exercise;
5. harnessing the energy of a highly active mind in constructive ways;
6. eating a natural, healthy, balanced diet;
7. avoiding drugs of all kinds (there are a few exceptions);
8. some form of regular meditative practice;
9. a therapist who understands enough to do more good than harm.

Numbers one and nine are not necessarily easy to come by.

The most important factor in emptying the mental hospitals was Ronald Reagan's ruthless cutting of government services. Most of the people who would have been in the mental health system before Reagan are now roaming the streets of our major cities asking for spare change.

I don't know what more to write about this, either. I can only point out that there are a lot of people who think that Scientology or the Unification Church is the best thing that ever happened to them, too.

I am not coming from the same place as the "liberals and radicals"; I do not sympathize with the left-wing nuts, the right-wing nuts, or the fuselage nuts. The most vociferous opponents of the psychiatric establishment are the Scientologists, who are pretty right-wing.

#107 also contained comments by Ron Hoeflin on a number of points I made in ##103 and 104. Ron wrote:

In issue #103, page 7, Kevin says regarding the idea of Rick Rosner and Chris Cole to require ten pages of material from each member per year, "Who the hell do you two bozos think you are to dictate to the members of the Mega Society?" Yet Kevin apparently sees no dictating when he remarks in issue #104, page 6, regarding the verbal problems I constructed to which Chris Cole revealed his answers (one of which was wrong, incidentally), "No item that has been the subject of these discussions can be used [in any new test I, Ron Hoeflin, construct] as the answers are now public information." But since the circulation of *Noesis* is only 25 or 30, I personally do not consider this sufficiently "public" to bar use of the test items in, say, *Omni* magazine. I would simply have to exclude the readers of *Noesis* from taking the test. If *Noesis* readers were to share their answers with others, that would be little different from a person who scored high on the LAIT or Mega Tests sharing his or her answers with others--a shortcoming that none of these self-administered tests are immune to. To sum up, then, Kevin does not speak for me on this matter, and I really do not appreciate his *ex cathedra* tone.

It was certainly not my intention to dictate to Ron regarding this matter, but I'm a little surprised that he sees it differently than I do. Also, I would like to point

out that this whole discussion was in the context of the "Short Form" test, which was supposed to be a project of the Mega Society and not one of Ron's tests. As a member of Mega, I have as much right to an opinion on this as Ron does.

Although the circulation of *Noesis* is small, our society, with the highest cutoff of any of the active high-I.Q. societies, is closely watched. I know for sure that a number of Mega-wannabes read *Noesis*. There's a difference between a person sharing answers that he worked hard to find and someone passing along information that he just happened to read in the journal. A person who's done the work is usually not anxious to help someone who hasn't done the work get the credit. I can only say that I wouldn't use an item whose answer had been published in *Noesis*.

Still, I suspect that, in practice, Ron and I would probably draw the line in a similar place with regard to compromised items or compromised tests. I have had to bite the bullet and stop scoring the *LAIT*; I expect that Ron will know when it's time to retire one of his own tests.

Ron took exception to my remark that "The *Hyper Test* Ron has written about, which will contain his best spatial problems, will be much less strongly loaded on crystallized intelligence and will have a higher ceiling than the *Mega Test*," on the grounds that he intends to make use of an equal number of verbal and nonverbal items. I was only relying on something Ron himself said at one time. Ron has been known to change his mind--and so have I. Some of my tests have gone through as many as ten different projected organizations before arriving at their final form.

Ron wrote:

I think it can be shown that Kevin's critique of free will suffers from analogous intellectual problems to those that Creationism does. What Creationism can't adequately explain is why it is *as if* the world were billions of years old rather than the mere thousands specified in the Bible. Fossils could perhaps be explained as artifacts that God left around to lead the unfaithful astray. But then God would be a deceiver, which seems inconsistent with his purportedly all-good nature. The ancient Greeks invented a dictum in connection with the motions of the planets, namely, that the scientist's role is to "save the appearances." We might add to this the dictum of William of Ockham that "entities are not to be multiplied without necessity" . . . Kevin believes . . . that "voluntary muscular action" can be given a "mechanical," i.e., deterministic, explanation. Now the problem with mechanism is that it has no evident use for a *feeling* of struggle or muscular strain at all. The feelings are dangling out there in mid-air just as fossils are for Creationists with no rationale for their existence.

Alfred North Whitehead propounded the dictum "Seek simplicity and distrust it." There often is a necessity for adding complexity. It *appears* that the earth is flat and motionless, that the sun revolves around the earth, and that we live in a Newtonian universe. Protons, neutrons, and electrons seemed to account for the physics of subatomic particles, but we know now that that picture was too simple. Many other examples could be added to these.

The feeling of muscular strain is like the feeling of pain; it makes it possible for the organism to gauge the resistance of the medium it's acting on and when it's overdoing and putting itself at risk. No free will is required, any more than the fuse in your fuse box needs to be a conscious agent acting independently.

Ron wrote:

The puzzle is that Kevin appears to struggle mightily to convince us of his points of view. But if this whole process is mechanical, then what possible difference could it make what we believe? We would be like shadows who are condemned to go wherever our masters walk. The decisions are not our concern, since we merely fall in line with whatever Destiny--in the form of a mechanized universe--has in store for us. So there is really an inherent contradiction in Kevin's system, just as there is one in the Creationst's position.

It's interesting that Ron compares the position of human beings, according to my view, with shadows. As a student of philosophy, I'm sure he's familiar with Plato's famous analogy of the cave. What man sees is only a shadow of the real world, one that contains certain systematic distortions, particularly with regard to his own nature and position in the scheme of things. I do not hold that free will is impossible, only that it doesn't exist where we naively believe it to. *The possibility of freedom resides in the attention.* I have written about this in my "Reply to Jerry Bails on Understanding Ourselves," in *Noesis* #73, and will not repeat myself here.

In *Noesis* #109, Ron Yannone offered his own "AIDS recovery program." I don't think that Mega members are likely either to be HIV-positive or to fall for Yannone's snake oil, but he's apparently offering his "program" to the general public. God help any AIDS patient who follows Yannone's advice instead of getting competent medical help. I say this despite some similarities between Yannone's recommendations for AIDS patients and mine (above) for those suffering from mental disorders; the medical treatments available for AIDS leave a lot to be desired, but what the psychiatric profession does to its victims is barbaric and will be placed alongside witch-burnings and clitoridectomies by future historians.

Yannone's herbal tea recipe contains at least three ingredients to which I am violently allergic. Too bad if an AIDS patient has similar sensitivities. It may also be worth noting that Yannone is too dumb to use integers in his recipe; instead it's 2 parts of this, 1 part of that, 1/2 part of the other thing.

At the end of his screed, Yannone wrote:

If you have any questions regarding the specifics of the AIDS program, I have a 30+ page hand-printed writeup I can send you upon request. I would merely charge for the copy/postage costs. A "love" gift would be very much appreciated, if possible.

This is a *prime* example of the kind of crap that shouldn't be printed in *Noesis*. I have no personal beef with Ron Yannone, but I believe that what he's trying to peddle is harmful. I don't think we should give him a platform. Not printing any more of Yannone's stuff would be a "love" gift to humanity.

In "Pyramids and Hierarchies Are Small at the Top," in *Noesis* #111, Robert Dick wrote:

The more I read Chris Langan's letter to me (*Noesis* 108, pp. 5-6) the more peculiar it seems. First of all, Chris states that his tone matches mine. That is definitely not so. I never accused him of spitting on me or of neglecting his duty to mankind, or of excoriating me. There is an old game that used to be played in the British Navy. A group of men and boys would be stationed around a mast, each with, say, his left hand tied to the mast. They were told that they would be hit from behind and to pass the hit

along to the back of the man in front of them. The blows were to be equal in severity to the ones they received. The game was then started with a gentle tap on the shoulder of one of them. It never failed that, in spite of everyone's [sic] best efforts the blows would get stronger and stronger, until the men were hitting with all the force at their disposal. So it seems to be with Chris's letter to me. Obviously he found my letter highly insulting and replied in kind. Shame on you, Chris.

In *Noesis* ##103 and 104, I responded to Robert's remarks in ##69 and 93, regarding overpopulation and psychiatric medication, respectively. I disagreed with Robert's conclusions without any personal comments whatsoever. Then, in replying to my remarks in #107, Robert attacked me personally, making use of such phrases as "Kevin enters fantasyland . . .," "Kevin grows ludicrous . . .," "It is people with Kevin's mentality . . .," "I find Kevin's statement on 'major tranquilizers' and antidepressants to be perverse in the extreme," and "Kevin does not know what he is talking about." Shame on you, Robert. Better watch out for that beam in your eye.

Robert Low's "Rationality: Absolute and Context Sensitive," in #111, brings a welcome dose of common sense to the "Newcomb's {Problem|Paradox}" debate. Real human utility functions are not necessarily the same as "maximizing expected earnings."

Noesis ##111 and 112 contained two versions of a letter from Paul Maxim attacking the norming of the LAIT. As the letter in #112 was identical to a letter published in *Vidya* #147/148, I have submitted my response to that letter from the same issue of *Vidya* for publication in *Noesis*. I have also submitted a more general reply to critics of my business practices and policies, entitled "The History of Polymath Systems." My apologies to readers of *Noesis* for the overlap of content between these two documents.

Accompanying Paul's letter in #112 was a page of commentary by Ron Hoeflin on *Gift of Fire* #16, originally published in *Gift of Fire* #17 (these two issues of the Prometheus Society journal were dated May and June 1986). In this letter, Ron wrote, "I believe that about 10,000 people who submitted answers to Kevin's test never received score reports, at least not within several years, for which reason *Omni* eventually sued Kevin and won a \$25,000 judgment against him." Ron confirmed in a recent telephone conversation that this statement was based on inaccurate information which he had obtained from another source. In fact, the lawsuit with *Omni* was settled; no judgment was obtained for \$25,000 or any other amount.

Paul Maxim has made some very serious accusations. It's incumbent upon anyone making such allegations, and upon any editor publishing them, to verify the facts prior to publication. Rick has graciously apologized to me. I wonder if Paul will be man enough to do the same.

J. Albert Geerken gave the solution to his number series (15 1/4, 6 1/2, 3 15/16, 2 15/16, ?) in *Noesis* #112, p. 2. He managed to stump the readers of the journals of most of the higher-I.Q. societies. But it should be noted that a letter from Bob Park of Australia, printed in *OATH* #33 (the journal of Ron Hoeflin's One-in-a-Thousand Society), dated September 1995, contained the correct solution. Congratulations to Mr. Park!

Reply to Robert Dick on the State of the Earth

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In *Noesis* #107, Robert Dick responded to a number of my remarks in ##103 and 104. I disagree with Robert on a number of points.

Robert wrote:

Kevin quotes *Scientific American* on the supposed decline of the ozone layer. This claim is pure speculation. There is no known natural history of the ozone layer. It was never measured systematically until a few decades ago. What, for example, is the effect of the sunspot cycle on the ozone layer? We don't know.

At the risk of sounding paranoid, let me state that I do not trust *Scientific American*. It has never ever run a piece favorable to the defense of America and the West since the cold war began. Some say it is because the publisher's wife is a Communist. Anyway, it publishes ideology disguised as science.

Despite a certain liberal *editorial* bias, the news notes in *Scientific American* are simply a convenient source of reports on the state of the art in various fields of science. Similar reports are published elsewhere in the popular and professional scientific literature.

Certain gases produced by human activity, most notoriously CFC's, release quantities of chlorine in the upper atmosphere, which reacts with ozone, severely reducing the ozone supply there and significantly increasing the amount of ultraviolet radiation that reaches the surface of the earth.

Increases in solar energy reaching the earth may well accelerate the creation of ozone in the upper atmosphere through dissociation of molecular oxygen, but not on the time scale of the 11-year sunspot cycle (11 years is the relevant period here, not 22 years; the two halves of the cycle are essentially identical except for the predominant position of sunspots above or below the solar equator). Ozone variations on an 11-year cycle would surely have been detected by now. If some longer-term cycle acts to renew the ozone layer, this affords us little relief from the immediate problem of ozone depletion. And it's not something I'd care to bet on.

The magnitude of the problem is clear in this item from Steve Newman's "Earth Week" column, printed in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on December 2, 1995:

The hole in the earth's protective ozone shield grew to an area twice the size of Europe at its peak during October, growing at an unprecedented rate during 1995. The World Meteorological Organization said the ozone hole over Antarctica began to grow earlier than usual this year as well. "During the entire winter-spring season of 1995, major ozone deficiencies of more than 10 percent have also been observed over the northern middle latitudes, expanding to a record 35 percent over Siberia," WMO expert Rumen Bojkov told a preparatory meeting in Vienna. The southern ozone hole results in a 60 percent decrease in the total ozone concentration over Antarctica.

Robert wrote:

Kevin continues: "The world's rainforests, marshes . . . continue to be destroyed . . ." [ellipses Robert's] Yes, swamps and jungles are being tamed. Places such as these, and deserts, and mountains, are all hostile to human life. Only wealthy people have the luxury of enjoying pestholes and wildernesses.

Funny, I'm barely a member of the middle class and I enjoy these natural wonders. The inner cities are much more hostile to human life. Robert fails to take into account non-recreational ways in which natural ecosystems are of use to humanity, including cleansing of the atmosphere and removal of pollutants, recycling of solid wastes, and biodiversity (which provides a reservoir of genetic material useful for the development of medicines, for agriculture, and for industrial processes).

Robert wrote:

Kevin enters fantasyland in his claim that "Most scientists studying the earth and its waters and atmosphere now believe that global warming is a real phenomenon . . ." I know of one study that refutes global warming definitively. A scientist studied a grove of "alerce" trees growing on the west coast of Chile. These are extremely long-lived trees, and the grove has been in existence for many millenia. The trees grew thick rings in warm years, and thin rings in cool years. It was therefore possible to trace global temperature for many thousands of years. The earth has warmed and cooled many times over that span, but since the Industrial Revolution there has been no change in temperature.

The most that the study Robert refers to can be claimed to measure is *local temperature* variations, in an area remote from the greater part of the world's industrial activity. The long baseline is irrelevant; human activity has only existed on a scale large enough to significantly effect the earth's heat economy in this century.

I would now like to offer some specifics regarding current scientific thinking about global warming, from Steve Newman's "Earth Week" column:

July 22, 1995

Scientists have detected an acceleration in the melting of the Arctic ice cap in what could be a sign of long-term global warming, the journal *Nature* reported. In the same issue, a team of European scientists wrote that Siberia is now warmer than it has been during the past 1,000 years.

December 2, 1995

An international gathering of scientists and government experts in Madrid formally agreed that global warming is already occurring. The opinion of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is that recent temperature rises cannot be explained by natural climatic variations, leaving human influence as the only possible cause.

January 27, 1996

British scientists reported that Antarctica's ice shelves are melting away as temperatures over the frozen continent rise by about .12 degrees per year. At least five of the thick ice shelves that make up Antarctica have retreated dramatically over the past 50 years, during which temperatures have risen by 4.2 degrees, according to David Vaughan and colleagues at the British Antarctic Survey.

Robert wrote:

Kevin grows ludicrous with his claim (*Noesis* #103) p. 10) that "The rise of deadly diseases like AIDS is a predictable consequence of overpopulation." Pardon me, but the sexual revolution gave rise to AIDS. It has been spread mainly by homosexuals. AIDS reared its ugly head just a decade or two after liberals and radicals insisted on legalizing and destigmatizing sodomy. It's as simple as that.

There are at least a dozen varieties of the HIV virus which causes AIDS. According to a recent newspaper article, "Foreign HIV Strains Found in California," by Lisa M. Krieger (*San Francisco Examiner*, January 21, 1996):

The strain of the virus found in the Western world, called subtype B, has infected about 1.5 million people, primarily gay men and intravenous drug users. Incidence seems to be leveling off, even declining in places.

By comparison, the viruses found in Africa and Asia--mostly subtypes E, C, D and A--have infected 15 million to 20 million heterosexual men, women and children. In this epidemic, there is no end in sight.

While more liberal sexual mores almost everywhere but in the Islamic world and the "People's Republic of China" may, indeed, have played an important role in the spread of AIDS, the worldwide epidemic owes very little to changes in the legal and moral climate of the West.

Robert wrote:

The problem is not overpopulation, it is ubiquitous transportation. A deadly virus could only too easily spread around the whole world in one or two weeks, allowing no time for a vaccine to be mass produced and administered.

It's not either/or. Overpopulation is problematic because a large population is a large laboratory for random mutations to produce new microorganisms that the human immune system can't handle and new strains that are resistant to our medicines. As for the *spread* of deadly microbes, Robert greatly *understated* the problem here; before a vaccine can be mass produced, years of research are generally necessary to develop it.

Robert wrote:

Kevin reveals his religious beliefs when he writes that "There are too many people for humanity to live in harmony with nature." I do not believe in living in harmony with nature. I believe nature was made for man, not man for nature. We should be good stewards of nature, not for the sake of the furbish lousewort or the snail darter, but for the sake of posterity.

I won't deny that I have what could be called a "religious" feeling of reverence for life. But you don't have to take the beasts of the field as being equal to man to have some compassion for them. Peoples who understand that man is part of nature, even if he's a very special part, are happier and healthier than those who don't. Nature *does* serve man's needs. She's our beast of burden, but we're abusing her; if we don't change our ways soon, she won't be able to carry the load any more.

It's strange that someone as intelligent as Robert has bought into the anti-intellectual positions and suspicion of science typical of the Christian right.

Reply to Chris Langan on Intelligence and Credit for One's Intellectual Productions

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I was interested to read Chris Langan's responses to my remarks in *Noesis* ##103 and 104, in #108. Chris wrote:

[A]ny high-ceiling test whose problems have not been rigorously solved with respect to a closed, meticulously defined set of conditions must allow for the chance that an extremely intelligent test subject may give an answer superior to the one considered correct. If the tester is not himself a genius, he will fail to recognize this and mismark the test.

This is a real problem, but not a terribly difficult one. The test maker simply has to be on the lookout for better answers. Many testees provide detailed reasoning to justify their answers to the items contained in a test when they submit their answers. When a particular alternative answer is submitted by several high-scoring testees, the test maker will take a closer look. Of course, if the testee is much smarter than the whole tested population, or if the test maker is an ignoramus, this won't work, but it's close enough for the actual situation with regard to the tests used for admission to the high-I.Q. societies.

Chris wrote:

[Y]ou elsewhere concede that "IQ," which you associate with the intellectual adaptivity required to solve a number of independent problems, is not the only component of intelligence. There is also a major component of intelligence which is responsible for scheduling and orchestrating large numbers of dependent subroutines within larger routines designed to solve larger and more important problems whose complexity far exceeds any random relationship of IQ test items. Whereas IQ tests merely require solution of a number of independent pre-specified components, more profound intellectual abilities are required to identify and solve a number of dependent but unspecified components in the proper arrangement and order. This is where the *real* ceiling of intelligence resides, and it occurs far above the level of any problem on the Mega Test. So we needed a new kind of test to measure this factor, call it *h*.

Yes, I agree that there is a higher-level intelligence, beyond psychometric *g*. I also agree that, as Chris put it, "If you propose to measure [someone's] level of 'genius,' you must be one yourself." It is obvious to me that it's possible to do a more adequate job of assessing a person's intelligence through interaction with that person --through the written word, by telephone, or (much better) in person--than through the use of even the best psychometric instrument, but many people may find it more difficult than Chris and I do.

Chris wrote:

It's not hard to see that *h* "regresses" to the general problem of which specific problems are the most important. The true genius is distinguished precisely by his ability to choose or invent the "best problems" on which to target his intellect.

I agree with this, too, with the reservation that it may take some time for even the most brilliant person to discover his calling. In an article in *Net*, a magazine I published in the 1980's, Eduardo de la Mancha mentioned a quotation, from a source I don't have at hand, to the effect that "A man of fifty is responsible for his face." The same is clearly true of certain other attributes as well. Genius can only be known by its fruits.

I am not convinced, at this point, that Chris' CTMU represents "the best problem," nor that it's incumbent on the Mega Society to respond to his challenge to go head-to-head with him. Chris is the one who craves recognition and has something to prove. It's up to him to get his audience's attention as well as to convince us of the superior quality of his intellectual product, and his arrogant posturing isn't helping.

Chris wrote:

I was also a little confused by your belief that all anyone has to do to avoid getting ripped off is publish his work "somewhere, anywhere." I'm curious—how would you make a thief or his accomplices acknowledge this in the absence of legal force?

First, you put your stuff out there, where publication can be verified. It helps if you include some propositions that interest others enough that they comment on them. Avoid lavish self-praise; let others draw the conclusion that your work is important. There are people who will bear witness to any legitimate claim of priority; not everyone is interested in cheating you.

But I'm dubious about overbroad claims, as in Chris' examples contained in the following passage:

Long ago I published several detailed articles in *Noesis* on the relative nature of probability. A few months later, I heard that another member had gotten a lot of publicity for solving a problem in applied probability theory using . . . yep, a relativization of probability to initial data! . . . More recently, Richard May proudly announced a "new" concept: a cybernetic approach to religion. The funniest part: he appears to have no clue how to make it happen, despite five years of detailed explanations from me.

The subjects in question are in the air and many people have written about them. Chris would need to show exactly where his ideas have been appropriated in order to make a case for plagiarism.

Chris wrote:

One of your letters contained an interesting turn of speech: you say that I've made "liberal use" of free space in "our journal" to write about the CTMU. When you say "use," you ostensibly refer to some form of *utility*, thereby implying that I've received some kind of reward or recognition.

If you used a hammer to hit yourself on the head, that would be a *use* of the hammer, in the most simple and ordinary sense of the word, but you might not get

much benefit from it. I leave the completion of the analogy as an exercise for the reader.

Chris wrote:

Democracy is at last a serious business; even if 99% of *Mega* does want to wallow decadently in "psychological diversity," it cannot do so at the expense of more serious members. Unfortunately, there is a generalizative tendency of human nature, "guilt by association," through which a little "psychological diversity" can go a very long way towards diverting all attention, and any possibility of recognition, away from those who might deserve it. For example, if you put the entirety of your democratic media under the control of someone given to front-page soliloquies on the less savory aspects of his personal biological functions, which will tend by natural psychological mechanisms to be mistaken for a generic label on content, then you're walking all over the rights of other members to be taken seriously. I didn't sign on for that and no "democratic principle" says I did. Saying otherwise amounts to saying that if you were on a moving bus full of suicidal loons, and every other passenger voted "democratically" to let it go off a cliff, you wouldn't grab the wheel anyway.

You have to know when to get off the bus. But that doesn't mean that there aren't times when you can profitably ride the bus; there might be a few sensible passengers with whom you can do business.

Noesis isn't perfect and the results of the recent election make it clear that we aren't going to have a new Editor soon, but I've found Rick to be fairly responsive to criticism; he's trying to make some changes and has even told me he's willing not to publish some of the worst drivel. Let's stick with it and see what happens next.

Chris wrote:

Nevertheless, so impressed am I by the perspicuity of your remarks that I'm considering taking your advice and prettying up my ideas. Of course, because I can't rationally do this in any journal which stoops to [material that Chris has repeatedly objected to in these pages], this can only occur in the pages of an auxiliary journal . . . All I need to know is this: will you, at least, acknowledge such a journal, vouch for its exact contents, and if necessary, exhibit the *cajones* [sic] to stand by me should any writer, philosopher, mathematician, or physicist in or out of *Mega* make a dishonest play for credit?

I'm certainly willing to look at Chris' material. If a dispute arises at a later date about priority of publication of certain ideas, I'll call it as I see it, within the limits of my expertise in the fields of knowledge in question. I'd prefer to see something more like a book or a monograph than a journal, though, setting forth Chris' principal ideas in a simple and direct style.

I'm not convinced that Chris' work is as important as he thinks it is, but it could be much less earthshaking and still represent a valuable contribution to human knowledge. As for recognition, many great geniuses have had to wait a long time for it; some have not been recognized in their lifetimes. Those who whine about being misunderstood are not helping the world to appreciate them; quite the reverse.

Reply to Paul Maxim's Criticism of the Norming of the LAIT

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This letter was originally published in Vidya #147/148, October/November 1995.

I have received a copy of Paul Maxim's letter to the Editor of *Vidya* which contains numerous assertions regarding the norming of my *Langdon Adult Intelligence Test*. I will respond to the points raised in Paul's letter below.

It is, of course, the case that it is very difficult to establish reliable norms for the extreme right tail of the normal curve. I have learned a great deal since the *LAIT* was first released, but I still have reservations about the precision of percentiles calculated for high-range tests.

What is quite certain is that there is a huge difference between an I.Q. of 100 and one of 150. The I.Q. scale is useful as a sorting filter. And the *LAIT* is a good measure of I.Q., in the sense of fluid *g*.

Estimates of the ceiling of the *LAIT* have varied from about 174 to 180. According to the official norms, the ceiling is 176, or one in a million. But no test is accurate at the extreme limit of its range. Scot Morris was right when he wrote in *Omni* that the *LAIT* is "most effective in measuring IQ's between about 130 and 170" (Paul reproduced this quotation). An I.Q. of 170 indicates a rarity of about one in 165,000.

Also contained in the Scot Morris quotation reproduced by Paul Maxim was the statement that the average *LAIT* testee scored "just short of 150." This was on the first norming of the *LAIT*, dated January 1978 (N=147). Subsequent norming studies showed that this was somewhat of an overestimate. The average for this sample was actually in the mid-140's. The mean I.Q. as of the second norming (July 1979, N=553) was 141. A sample of 20,000 testees (the vast bulk of them from *Omni*) had a mean I.Q. of 137. The difference in means reflects the fact that the initial sample was largely drawn from a population consisting of ISPE members and selected Mensa members.

Paul wrote:

By July 1979, Mr. Langdon reported (in his "LAIT Norming Report #2") that he had scored 553 LAITs to that point in time. But then, due to computer problems, he fell behind in scoring the LAITs which were being sent in by OMNI readers--a circumstance which ultimately led OMNI to file a lawsuit against him in 1982.

This is not quite accurate. There were long delays in scoring the *LAIT* after its publication in *Omni* because neither *Omni* nor I had anticipated the over 20,000 answer sheets that were submitted during the first few months after publication of the test in *Omni*.

Shortly after I had finally caught up with the backlog, in mid-1980, scoring approximately 23,000 tests, the computer that I had purchased to score the *LAIT* suffered a catastrophic breakdown. I was unable to score any tests for several years, as I had no money to replace the computer (the scoring fees for the *LAIT* had been consumed by expenses, particularly the labor of the people that I had opening mail, entering answer sheets, and mailing score reports), and a backlog accumulated again, though a considerably smaller one.

It was during this period that *Omni* sued me for a million dollars. I was later able to purchase a new computer, score a backlog of about 2500 tests, and catch up again. I settled the lawsuit with *Omni* by scoring these tests and supplying *Omni* with a list of names and addresses for verification that the scoring had actually been completed; I did not have to pay *Omni* a cent.

Paul wrote:

Mr. Langdon recently stated . . . that his Four Sigma Society reached a membership peak of 250 in 1980. I do not know exactly how many LAITs he had scored by that point in time, but by way of comparison, it should be noted that ISPE, a 3-sigma group, had 150 members in 1980 and fewer than 100 in 1979. In other words, even though 4-sigma IQ's are thirty times rarer than 3-sigmas in the general population, Mr. Langdon claimed to have recruited more 4-sigma individuals in three years than the number of 3-sigmas ISPE had enrolled in six.

Although Mr. Langdon has not disclosed the number of LAIT tests he employed to arrive at his claimed "250" qualifiers, I estimate that (by 1980) it could not have exceeded about 2,500, and might have been considerably less. This means, in turn, that Mr. Langdon is claiming (or attributing) a 4-sigma IQ to more than 10% of his sample--an incredibly high figure, considering the "one in 30,000" average incidence of 4-sigma in the general population.

The figure of 250 was not Four Sigma members but *subscribers* to Four Sigma's journal, *Sigma Four*. Approximately 600 people have made four sigma scores, out of about 27,000 who have taken the *LAIT*.

There are two reasons for these large numbers. One is that I had a far greater sample, from *Omni's* circulation of nearly a million, than the ISPE was able to draw from. The second is that there is a very significant self-selection factor in submission of answer sheets for a difficult high-range test which takes many hours to complete, offering ample opportunity for those who are not doing well to abandon the project. The percentage of four-sigma scores is closer to 2 or 3 percent of testees than to 10 percent.

Paul wrote:

As regards the category of "OMNI readers who take high-IQ tests," the anticipated incidence of 4-sigma scores is even lower, based on the estimated IQ for such individuals of 127 (please see OMNI, May 1993, p. 94, Col. 2). In other words, about one thousand people must be tested, to arrive at the expectation of one 4-sigma score.

The test on which the average score of *Omni* participants was 127 was the *Quest Test*, by Daryl Inman. The *Quest Test* has severe problems and, to my knowledge, has not been accepted for admission to any high-I.Q. society except Ron Hoeflin's Top One Percent and One-in-a-Thousand societies; Ron has explicitly

stated that he is more interested in increasing the membership of these groups than in adhering to strict membership standards.

The items comprising the *Quest Test* have been the subject of devastating critiques by many different authors in *In-Genius*, the journal of the Top One Percent Society, and *Noesis*, the journal of the Mega Society. There is clearly a very high percentage of bad items. Daryl Inman has not responded to any of this criticism.

There are even more serious difficulties with the norming of the *Quest Test*. As Daryl Inman does not have a background in psychometric statistics, Chris Harding performed the norming study that resulted in *Quest Test* scores. As with the norming of his own tests, Chris has not provided a detailed description of the procedures used in this norming (as Ron Hoeflin and I routinely do for our tests). It is suspicious, to say the least, that the highest I.Q. among almost a thousand *Omni* readers was only 160., though this number matches the theoretical expectation if the mean of *Omni* readers were actually 127 and there were no self-selection factor.

The average I.Q. of *Omni* readers who completed the *LAIT* (on both reported previous scores and the *LAIT* itself) was 137. The average I.Q. for the *Mega Test* was approximately 140. The difference in mean score between the *Quest Test* and the *LAIT* and *Mega Test* is significant, as it indicates a difference of a factor of five in rarity.

In a table on page 5 of Ron Hoeflin's report on the sixth norming of the *Mega Test*, Ron reported that 120 people, out of 3920, had scores at or above the four sigma level; this is a slightly higher percentage of four sigma scores than I obtained with the *LAIT*.

It is apparent that Paul has not done his homework. The numbers he has used in his calculations are wrong and he has not considered the self-selection factor.

Paul wrote:

Since I was not affiliated with any of the "super" high-IQ groups during the time period aforementioned, I have no idea of whether Mr. Langdon's announced results were subjected to any scepticism during that period.

The *LAIT* norming reports (with some additional data, in some cases) have been reviewed by a number of independent investigators, including Ed Van Vleck (one of the founders of TNS), Fred Britton, Grady Towers, and Alan Aax. All have found the *LAIT* to be a valid test with a high loading on fluid *g*.

The History of Polymath Systems

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I've been seeing various critical remarks about my company, Polymath Systems, lately, some by ignorant, self-righteous jerks and some by people who have just been waiting a long time for their test results, so I'm going to lay out in some detail what Polymath Systems is and does, why there have been persistent problems, and what has been done to solve them.

I was hungry, from a very early age, for understanding of myself and the world in which I found myself. My questions deepened progressively as I grew older. As a teenager, I realized that part of what I was looking for was a community of intelligent seekers of truth. I was particularly struck, during this period, by the works of Olaf Stapledon, particularly his *Odd John* (subtitled "a story between jest and earnest"), a science fiction novel about a young man of a superior type, not only intellectually, but also morally, in sensitivity, in detachment, and in depth of questioning.

I explored all sorts of philosophical, religious, psychotherapeutic, and other teachings, movements, and organizations, including Mensa (I founded the San Francisco chapter). After a few years, I dropped out of Mensa because I was disappointed with the intellectual environment I found there.

Twenty years ago, I rejoined Mensa, after an absence of about ten years. When I rejoined, the general level hadn't improved much, but Mensa was much larger, which meant more people and more circles to choose from, and I found that I was able to get something out of it.

I also discovered that there were groups with higher I.Q. cut-offs. The most elite of the organizations operating at that time was a new club called The Thousand, later to change its name to the International Society for Philosophical Enquiry and its *modus operandi* to snobbery and dictatorship.

I joined The Thousand. It was clear that this group was, in fact, selecting people at a somewhat higher level than Mensa.

(ISPE members generally don't do appreciably better than Mensans on my tests or Ron Hoeflin's [although members of the Triple Nine Society do]; I think the contradiction between this fact and the difference I noticed is due partly to a decline in the average caliber of ISPE members over time and partly to the fact that a selected sample of Mensans is being compared with a relatively unselected sample of ISPE members.)

After a few months, I realized that I was looking for people a whole lot smarter than Thousands and began to think about founding an organization at a still-higher level. When I looked at the tests that were available at the time, it became clear to me that none of them were adequate for this purpose; they just didn't have the ceiling to discriminate adequately above about the one-in-5000 level of the general population in reasoning ability.

After giving it much thought, I decided to develop my own test.

I was dubious about how finely I'd be able to discriminate and about assuming the role of *testmeister*, with the public perception of me that was sure to result from it, but I saw that there was a crying need for a place where people who were bright enough to be really isolated, and who really needed contact with one another, could meet and work out their destiny together. Testing and particular organizations were subordinate, for me, to the aim of creating a community of the profoundly gifted. This was the genesis of the *LAIT* and the Four Sigma Society.

In constructing the *LAIT*, I began from the tests then in use. I examined the various item types, determined that some types were unsuitable for a test administered unsupervised and untimed, and developed harder items of several remaining types.

Although the *LAIT* had some bad items, even after two revisions, and had relatively few really difficult items (by my current standards), it had enough ceiling to discriminate well at the four sigma level, and thus was a suitable instrument for selecting members of the Four Sigma Society.

(Bad items can greatly reduce the reliability of a test--if the test scorer doesn't take them into account. I paid attention to the feedback of testees [particularly those who made the highest scores] and didn't count problematical items in norming and scoring the *LAIT*.)

At first, the *LAIT* was distributed under the aegis of the Four Sigma Society; later my tests and a few other products were distributed by a company which, following a suggestion by Ed Van Vleck, I named Polymath Systems.

In 1979, I had a big break. The *LAIT* came to the notice of Scot Morris, an editor for a new magazine called *Omni*. Publication of the *LAIT* in *Omni* resulted in well over 20,000 answer sheet submissions within the space of a few months and over 27,000 to date. This was both a windfall and a logistical nightmare. It soon became apparent that the windfall aspect was an illusion. *Omni's* Managing Editor, Frank Kendig, had talked me into offering *Omni* readers half-price scoring (I was charging all of \$5 at the time). I discovered that the costs of renting an office and hiring people to open envelopes, deposit checks, enter answer sheet data into my computer, and assemble and mail score report packages was taking the whole of the \$2.50 I was getting for each answer sheet. I worked at it full time for over a year and wound up with nothing.

In the first months following publication of the *LAIT* in *Omni*, there was a tremendous scoring backlog. Neither *Omni* nor I had anticipated anything like the volume of answer sheets I received. Eventually, I got caught up. After this, the typical turnaround time for test scoring was two or three months. Then, in October 1980, I faced a major catastrophe. The C/P/M computer I'd bought for \$10,000 a year and a half earlier broke down.

This was a major problem because the scoring algorithm, while not involving much in the way of higher mathematics, did require a lot of arithmetic calculations. I timed hand-scoring the answer sheets. It would have taken between half an hour and an hour per answer sheet. There was a backlog of perhaps a thousand answer sheets when the computer broke down, with more coming in every day. For all practical purposes, the hand-scoring option was prohibitive.

I'd been having hardware problems all along, but the man I bought the computer from had always gotten me up and running again. I only found out later that he was a con artist. Whenever one of his customers had trouble, he'd switch bad components out of that customer's system into that of his next call. His customers always had problems--and he kept "earning" fees for service calls.

This was in 1979 and 1980 and it wasn't easy to get a computer repaired in those days. He knew the technical side of my machine, about which I knew nothing, and I was largely at his mercy. When he couldn't keep up the charade any longer, he left town. When I spoke with someone in the D.A.'s office about this man and gave the prosecutor his name, he said, "I've prosecuted him before."

I took my machine to another dealer that I thought was just someone the con man had gotten components from, but it turned out that he had known what was going on and profited from the situation; he was as bad as the first guy. He kept my machine for almost a year. He moved and I had to track him down, then he kept promising to return my machine but nothing happened. Only after I got the authorities involved did he return my computer. I never did get my printer back.

When I turned the machine on, toxic fumes billowed out of it. I fell off my chair and had to crawl out of the room on my hands and knees. For several years after that incident--as long as we lived in that house--we called the room where the machine had been turned on "the poison room" and never went into it except to get something or put something down; we couldn't use it for anything but a storeroom. I literally held my breath every time I set foot in the room. Later I learned that the second man had kept my computer at a garage where his roommate was working on electric cars. The batteries involved some nasty chemicals, which had been spilled into my computer.

One thing that was disappointing to me about Four Sigma was the lack of active participation (though I had some sympathy for the main reason for it: these were bright, productive people busy with their own lives). In 1982 I got tired of making Four Sigma go by doing all the work myself and I stopped doing it, with the result that Four Sigma became dormant. Ron Hoeflin founded the Prometheus Society as an active group at the same level in 1984.

In 1983, I was able to buy a Columbia PC, one of the earliest IBM clones. This machine was very buggy, too, but I managed to use it to score all the answer sheets in my possession and once again get current.

It took longer than I'd hoped to norm both the *Four Sigma Qualifying Test (FSQT, 1985)* and the *Polymath Intellectual Ability Scale (PIAS, 1987)*. The main problem with the *FSQT* was lack of a large enough norming sample; with the *PIAS*, it was partly that I was juggling a lot of things (e.g., that's the year I got married) and partly that I had to rewrite some of my norming software, but the *PIAS* norming was only a few months late.

In the late 1980's, I attempted to revive Four Sigma in the form of a magazine, the *Four Sigma Bulletin*, but have only been able to publish two issues to date, largely due to lack of funds.

In 1992, I undertook a major revision of the *LAIT*, a 40-item test called the *Langdon Intellectual Gradient High-range Test (LIGHT)*. I had long been dissatisfied with two of the seven parts of the *LAIT*: number series (which are tedious and give

an advantage to people with a certain type of math background) and vocabulary (too easy; not culture-free). I removed both of these item types and all known bad items and added ten new items.

The *LIGHT* was released in July 1992. I had difficulty with initial distribution and had received only a handful of submissions when I discovered, in April 1993, that the copyright on the *LAIT* had been infringed. Sections from the test had been printed in the newsletters of Mensa Singapore and Mensa New Zealand. They had conducted contests, asking their members to submit answers to the test items and then combining the information received to compile answer keys, which were subsequently published in their newsletters.

Even though only part of the test was compromised and despite the fact that publication was on the other side of the planet, I felt that I could not ethically continue to score the *LAIT* following publication of answers to items contained in the test. I therefore announced a deadline for submission of answer sheets for the *LAIT* and the *LIGHT* of December 31, 1993. Only 30 *LIGHT* answer sheets were received. All *LAIT* answer sheets received by the deadline were scored; score reports were sent to those submitting these answer sheets.

At the time I made the decision to stop scoring the *LAIT*, there were still several months before the deadline I'd decided on. I realized that it would be difficult for many people to complete a long and difficult test in a short time, so I decided to create a shorter test, the *Langdon Short Form Intelligence Test (LSFIT)*, which was published in July 1993, with the same scoring deadline as the *LAIT* and the *LIGHT*.

Unfortunately, it was again difficult to get adequate distribution, with the result that *LSFIT* answer sheets were submitted by only 175 people before the scoring deadline, greatly complicating the task of norming the test.

Following the end of 1993, I faced a series of upheavals in my life. I lost my job. My home was burglarized. I moved within the area, then out of the area, then back. My storage space was flooded, then burglarized; each time, I had to move many hundreds of boxes, a considerable amount of furniture, and much miscellaneous "stuff," with minimal help and at great cost. My computer had three separate, serious problems, requiring heavy repair expenses and much down time.

I could go on, but the point has been made: I have been faced repeatedly with situations beyond my control, involving many areas of my life, which have competed with scoring I.Q. tests for top priority. My time, energy, and (especially) funds are limited and I've done the best I could to fulfill my obligations.

Making use of refined norming methods, I have been able to complete a norming of the *LSFIT*. Making use of the scores of nine people who took both the *LSFIT* and the *LIGHT*, I've also completed a rough norming of the *LIGHT*, even though the test was taken by only 30 people. Score reports for both tests have been sent to all tessees; all have been offered free scoring on new Polymath tests and certain other compensation for their patience.

I have also released Polymath's new *Mobius Test*, a collaboration between Cyril Edwards and me, a high-range intelligence test of a new type. I am working on another test, the *Stratospheric Test of Attention in Reasoning (STAR)*, which will be the next test released, and a further test to be released later.

Those who have submitted *LAIT* answer sheets after the deadline, or who submit them in the future, will receive unofficial score reports and copies of the new tests as they are published. I am returning money sent with these after-the-deadline answer sheets and asking for a voluntary contribution of \$5 for the unofficial score reports—but I'm not waiting for a contribution to mail the score reports.

While it's true that I've had a tendency to bite off more than I could chew; I would like to ask those who are inclined to criticize me and my company to take into account that:

1. I have pioneered a new type of high-range cognitive test which makes possible accurate discrimination up to at least the 99.999th percentile in abstract reasoning ability.
2. I've always insisted on value and accuracy; timeliness has sometimes suffered as a result.
3. While I've often been late in scoring tests and filling orders, I provide excellent value for the cost of my products (compare what I charge with Ron Hoeflin's prices, those of ETS, or the cost of an assessment by a psychologist) and I do eventually deliver what I've promised.
4. My testing activity is largely a labor of love. My primary interest in all of this has been the creation of a community of highly intelligent people; my involvement in the affairs of the "higher-I.Q. societies" (99.9th-percentile-plus) bears this out. I've hardly become rich as a result of my small, part-time business. I have had to surmount great obstacles in order to provide my goods and services.
5. The original response to the appearance of the *LAIT* in *Omni* was enormous; processing the over 20,000 answer sheets which arrived during the first three months after publication of the *LAIT* in *Omni* took time. Delays under such circumstances are inevitable.
6. It takes time to accumulate a norming sample. The norming of several of my tests has been delayed due to unexpectedly low response rates.
7. The response rate for most non-test items, and some of the tests, has been so small that the work involved did not make economic sense, and thus had to be scheduled as making a living and having a life allowed.

I appreciate the help I have received from many kind individuals who have seen the value of what I'm trying to do and have contributed time, money, and ideas and those who have offered help which, for one reason or another, I have not been able to accept at a given time (as, for example, during certain periods when I was involved in dealing with crises in other areas of my life).

I now appeal to the community of the higher-I.Q. societies for assistance in taking our common project to a new level. I hope that you will be able to see your way clear to becoming part of the solution rather than, through threats and accusations, being part of the problem.

Some people have gone so far as to accuse me of mail fraud. As I have pointed out, it has not always been possible to score my tests and fulfill orders in a timely manner, but I have never taken the public's money without fully intending to deliver what I have promised and I have done so time and again, through great labors and at great cost.

The third norming of the *LAIT* will be completed soon. *Hallucinations 2.0* and the *STAR* will be released within the next few months.

I invite anyone with an unsettled transaction involving anything but the three items mentioned in the paragraph above to write to me. If you're writing about a test answer sheet, enclose a copy of the answer sheet, if possible. I'll make sure you get what you paid for.

Langdon Short Form Intelligence Test

by Kevin Langdon

Statistical Report

Norming #1, January 23, 1996

The *Langdon Short Form Intelligence Test (LSFIT)* was printed in a number of high-I.Q.-society newsletters in 1993, and also mailed to several hundred individuals. The test is composed of 30 items, including 26 items drawn from the *Langdon Adult Intelligence Test (LAIT, 1977, published in Omni, April 1979; no longer scored)* and four new items. The scoring deadline for the test was December 31, 1993.

175 people submitted answer sheets before the deadline. They are the population on which this norming study is based. These 175 people reported a total of 217 scores on previously-taken tests, of which only 62 (on three tests, the *LAIT*, the *Mega Test*, and the *Titan Test*) were used in norming the *LSFIT*. The author and publisher of the *Mega* and *Titan* tests is Dr. Ronald K. Hoeflin (P.O. Box 539, New York, NY 10101).

More than four previous scores were reported for only eight tests. Of these, one (the *Graduate Record Examination*) correlated negatively with the *LSFIT* and four more (the *Cattell Verbal*, the *California Test of Mental Maturity*, the *Quest Test* [by Daryl Inman], and the *Scholastic Aptitude Test*) do not have sufficient ceiling to discriminate accurately within the highly selected population of testees reporting usable previous scores, whose mean I.Q. was 150.7 (the mean for all testees was 141.9).

Table 1
Number, Mean I.Q. on the Previous Test (sigma = 16),
LSFIT Scaled Score Mean, and Correlation with Scaled Scores
for the Eight Most Frequently Reported Previous Tests

Test	Number	Prev. Mean	Scaled Mean	Correlation with <i>LSFIT</i>
LAIT	30	152	66	.86
Titan Test	6	145	59	.81
CTMM	18	137	31	.76
Quest Test	24	146	48	.74
Mega Test	26	151	68	.67
SAT	26	142	57	.64
Cattell Verbal	27	135	38	.55
GRE	11	153	67	-.62

Preliminary weighted scores were calculated, with each item weighted by the reciprocal of the number of testees answering the item correctly. The point biserial correlation of each item with these weighted scores was computed. Scaled scores were calculated, with each item weighted by its point biserial correlation divided by the number of testees who answered the item correctly.

There were ten scaled scores of zero, corresponding to an I.Q. of 116, and two perfect scores of 100 (the first ever recorded on Polymath Systems intelligence tests), corresponding to an I.Q. of 169.

Table 2
Number and Average Scaled Score of Testees Choosing Each Alternative,
Point Biserial Correlation with *LSFIT* Raw Scores, Number of Testees
Answering the Item Correctly, and Weight, for Each Item

Item Num.	Alternative										Point Biserial Correl.	Number Correct	Weight
	A		B		C		D		E				
	No.	Av.	No.	Av.	No.	Av.	No.	Av.	No.	Av.			
1	17	35.2	2	47.5	127	57.9	0	--	25	19.1	.50	127	3.16
2	7	13.9	109	63.3	9	18.2	32	28.3	10	25.3	.67	109	4.91
3	8	25.6	19	39.7	9	14.1	24	21.6	109	62.7	.63	109	4.61
4	34	25.1	30	40.5	7	21.1	82	68.3	17	36.1	.66	82	6.41
5	19	47.3	101	40.2	2	4.0	44	78.3	8	27.1	.61	44	11.17
6	114	57.6	8	39.3	17	24.8	32	38.9	3	14.7	.42	114	2.91
7	28	41.4	9	33.1	13	23.8	81	60.1	39	44.9	.37	81	3.70
8	19	50.8	9	49.6	45	41.9	47	37.3	49	66.6	.40	49	6.59
9	5	0.0	152	54.6	11	20.8	4	11.8	1	0.0	.50	152	2.64
10	42	40.1	10	8.8	8	29.9	16	30.9	97	62.7	.54	97	4.46
11	2	61.0	148	53.5	3	26.3	4	25.5	16	21.6	.35	148	1.91
12	15	51.9	7	43.1	27	35.6	117	52.3	7	51.4	.16	117	1.11
13	8	34.6	116	55.5	46	40.3	3	1.0	0	--	.31	116	2.14
14	8	53.0	0	--	128	52.7	18	39.6	18	34.1	.21	128	1.29
15	140	51.6	1	0.0	4	46.8	9	38.3	19	40.8	.17	140	0.99
16	102	57.8	11	36.2	45	37.4	11	39.0	2	11.0	.38	102	2.96
17	14	38.8	50	41.8	4	34.0	9	31.9	95	57.3	.32	95	2.69
18	0	--	27	25.3	1	29.0	143	54.9	4	18.5	.43	143	2.41
19	0	--	2	13.5	2	16.0	2	26.0	169	50.4	.21	169	1.01
20	10	30.2	146	53.4	1	17.0	14	27.1	4	36.8	.33	146	1.81
21	2	24.5	18	47.7	14	21.1	31	34.4	103	59.9	.42	103	3.29
22	13	37.6	4	14.8	16	22.7	41	39.0	93	61.9	.50	93	4.34
23	129	59.9	6	9.2	23	25.7	7	7.9	7	13.6	.66	129	4.07
24	14	30.4	36	53.0	10	27.5	8	15.3	101	55.5	.27	101	2.16
25	4	37.8	21	20.2	3	7.3	0	--	145	54.9	.45	145	2.59
26	6	4.7	0	--	138	55.6	0	--	31	30.0	.45	138	2.59
27	10	10.8	150	54.8	10	13.1	4	46.3	1	0.0	.49	150	2.61
28	3	34.0	16	13.8	18	27.8	120	60.4	14	31.3	.60	120	3.98
29	6	6.7	4	42.8	120	60.4	8	33.9	35	24.2	.60	120	3.99
30	4	7.8	10	35.6	9	48.9	29	44.8	115	54.7	.23	115	1.62

Note: Data for the correct alternative is italicized, for each item. The items discriminate well, but the table shows some anomalous behavior for numbers 12, 14, and 24 and marginal point biserial correlations for .numbers 12, 14, 15, 19, and 30, the lowest-weighted items.

LAIT, *Mega*, and *Titan* score pairs were weighted by the correlation of the previous test involved, for each pair, with *LSFIT* scaled scores, in computing and equating scaled and previous score means and average deviations and in computing standard deviations and the overall correlation of scaled scores with previous scores used, which was .71.

Average deviations were used instead of standard deviations in test equating, because the standard deviations of the far-right-tail samples involved in norming tests designed to assess very high I.Q.'s are highly susceptible to distortion by a few outlying points, due to the squared term involved. Using average deviations reduces this problem to a manageable level and improves the accuracy of the resulting scaling of raw scores to I.Q. Standard deviation was set at 16 in calculating I.Q.'s.

The reliability of the *LSFIT*, calculated using Kuder-Richardson formula 20, is .94. The standard error of measurement is 6.4 scaled score points, or 3.6 points of I.Q. The norming method used aims for maximum accuracy at the high end; the *LSFIT* is probably most accurate between two and four standard deviations above the general population mean. The floor of the *LSFIT* is identical to that of the *LAIT*; its ceiling is seven points lower. This is not completely unexpected, as most of the hardest problems on the *LAIT* were not included on the *LSFIT*.

Table 3
Scatter Diagram of *LSFIT* and Previous Scores
Used in Norming, in Standard Deviations Above the Mean

		LSFIT												Total		
		1.00	1.50	2.00	2.50	3.00	3.50	4.00								
		1.25	1.75	2.25	2.75	3.25	3.75	4.25								
P	1.75	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
r	2.00	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
e	2.25	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
v	2.50	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	4
i	2.75	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	1	1	1	0	0	9
o	3.00	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	4	0	0	1	0	1	0	9
u	3.25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	2	0	1	9
s	3.50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	3
	3.75	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	1	1	6	
S	4.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	0	0	6	
c	4.25	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	3	
o	4.50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
r																
e	Total	1	0	2	0	5	0	5	11	8	5	10	7	5	3	62

Table 4
Mean, Average Deviation, Standard Deviation,
and Correlation with *LSFIT* (where applicable) of *LSFIT*
and Reported Previous Score Distributions

Test	Number	Mean	Average Deviation	Standard Deviation	Correlation with <i>LSFIT</i>
LSFIT Total (Scaled)	175	49.3	22.2	27.1	
LSFIT Total (I.Q.)	175	141.9	11.7	14.3	
LSFIT Used (Scaled)	62	66.2	17.4	22.2	
LSFIT Used (I.Q.)	62	150.6	9.2	11.3	
LAIT/Mega/Titan	62	3.17	.58	.71	.71
LAIT	30	3.24	.62	.77	.86
Titan Test	6	2.83	.47	.68	.81
CTMM	18	2.34	.36	.55	.76
Quest Test	24	2.85	.33	.41	.74
Mega Test	26	3.16	.50	.60	.67
SAT	26	2.63	.38	.51	.64
Cattell Verbal	27	2.16	.33	.46	.55
GRE	11	3.30	.41	.50	-.62

Note: Previous score means are in standard deviations above the mean of the general population; average deviations and standard deviations are in general population standard deviation units.

Table 5
I.Q.'s and Tested Group Percentiles
Corresponding to Scaled Scores

Scaled Score	I.Q.	Tested Grp %ile	Scaled Score	I.Q.	Tested Grp %ile	IQ Range	Num.
00	116	00	55	145	54	116-119	12
05	118	05	60	147	61	120-123	13
10	121	07	65	150	66	124-127	14
15	124	14	70	153	73	128-131	6
20	126	20	75	155	78	132-135	12
25	129	20	80	158	84	136-139	15
30	132	25	85	161	90	140-143	16
35	134	28	90	163	93	144-147	22
40	137	33	95	166	97	148-151	15
45	139	38	100	169	98	152-155	17
50	142	43				156-159	13
						160-163	11
						164-167	7
						168-169	2

Table 6
Distribution
of I.Q. Scores

Table 7
Number Tested and Mean I.Q. for Selected Groups

Group	Number	Mean I.Q.	Society I.Q. Cutoff
Total	175	141.9	
Males	148	143.7	
Females	26	132.2	
Age 10-19	2	146.5	
Age 20-29	23	146.5	
Age 30-39	48	140.7	
Age 40-49	47	142.3	
Age 50-59	34	140.8	
Age 60-69	12	141.2	
Age 70-79	7	137.0	
Mensa	84	141.8	133
Intertel	13	139.0	138
Top One Pct.	64	141.3	138
ISPE	26	146.8	150
One-in-1000	24	148.5	150
Triple Nine	18	150.3	150
Prometheus	4	153.8	164
Four Sigma	3	165.3	164
Mega	1	160.0	176

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