

NOESIS

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IN THIS ISSUE:

RON HOEFLIN ON KEVIN LANGDON AND FREE WILL
CHRIS LANGAN RESPONDS TO KEVIN LANGDON
KEVIN LANGDON'S COMMENTS ON RECENT ISSUES OF *NOESIS*
RON HOEFLIN ON HIGH-END IQ TESTING
(RESPONDING TO LANGDON AND LANGAN)
ROBERT DICK ON PSYCHIATRIC MEDICATION
(RESPONDING TO LANGDON)
KEVIN LANGDON'S REPLY TO PAUL MAXIM
ROBERT DICK RESPONDS TO KEVIN LANGDON
THE FIRST HALF OF MALLARMÉ'S CRYPTOPUZZLE
ON GUSTAV MAHLER BY PAUL MAXIM (& EDITOR'S QUESTION)

RON HOEFLIN ON KEVIN LANGDON AND FREE WILL

Dear Rick Rosner:

In Noesis #115, page 9, Kevin Langdon concedes that there may be free will, but "The possibility of freedom resides in the attention." But it remains unclear to me why attention itself exists if it cannot be put to use to accomplish anything.

As for Kevin likening pain to a fuse box, the fuse box does not need to experience pain or any other feeling in order to accomplish its task, so it is not clear why human beings need pain in order to accomplish some mechanical switching process.

Regarding Plato's cave allegory, let me concede that things may not be what they initially seem to be. But this does not change the fact that even shadows are real in the sense that they involve real physical processes.

Suppose there were a deity that gave us the power of free will only with regard to attention but not with regard to physical action. Such a deity would be about as aesthetically unsophisticated as an automobile designer of the 1950's who thinks it's clever to give cars tail fins. Or, to take a more serious analogy, such a deity would be like an Inquisitor who gives his creatures the ability to feel pain, only in order to tie them helplessly to stakes and burn them alive. In short, Kevin is opting either for an aesthetically vile or an ethically vile picture of the universe. I can't prove that the purported Deity is either aesthetically or ethically sound of mind, but it seems to me that a well-constructed universe would be like a jigsaw puzzle in which all the pieces would eventually find their reasonable place in the overall scheme of things without any pieces left over as what Herbert Feigl calls "nomological danglers" and Stephen Pepper calls "cosmic luxuries." Kevin's universe has such pointless jigsaw pieces, namely the power of attention that cannot be put to any physical use. If Kevin argues that attention serves some spiritual rather than physical use, such as getting closer to God or Nirvana, my reply to that would be that then it would be the physical universe itself that would be the left-over "dangler" or "luxury" because if our purpose is purely spiritual, then the physical universe has no purpose for us, as if there were two totally unrelated universes in collision with one another, the spiritual and the physical, and the sooner they pass by each other, the better! Again, I can't prove that this picture of the universe is wrong, but think we ought to try at least to fit everything together into a unified whole before we opt for such a defeatist viewpoint. My own philosophy, I think, goes rather far towards fitting all the basic fragments of the philosopher's universe together in a harmonious way. In my theory mysticism and mechanism both find their respective places in the overall scheme of things. No radical dualisms are called for.

Sincerely,
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CHRIS LANGAN RESPONDS TO KEVIN LANGDON

This regards Kevin Langdon's comments on pages 14-16, *Noesis* 115. I'll address my response personally to Kevin. Let's go for the small stuff first.

On the basis of what you refer to as an "election", you've graciously resigned the Mega Society to Rick Rosner's continued "editorship" of *Noesis*. However, there are a few aspects of this democratic milestone that you may, in a valiant effort to keep track of so much activity, have overlooked.

1. When I called for an election, it was supposed to include editorial guidelines on content, scheduling, circulation, and so on. Since no guidelines were included, the election I called for has not yet been held. Personally, I didn't even bother to vote.
2. Rick announced a deadline for voting. After the deadline passed, incoming votes were still tallied. That's not the way it's supposed to work.
3. Democracies which don't want to be hijacked by small minorities set quorums for their elections. Everybody already knew that Rick has a diehard cadre of eight or nine toadies, most of whom fear that nobody else would stoop to publishing their writings. But there are almost thirty, possibly more, qualified voters in this group. The fact that most of them didn't vote for Rick, despite his direct request that they participate, is proof positive that he lacks the confidence of a majority of our members. You say Rick is bound to shape up, but his record tells a different story.
4. In light of points 1-3, *Noesis* has no official editor. At this point in time, the job is up for grabs.

If you disagree, I'd love to hear why.

I'm not sure you understood me when I asked how to elicit a confession of plagiarism in the absence of legal force. Of the three kinds of proprietary law affecting U.S. citizens, none covers either mathematical or philosophical ideas. If these can be paraphrased, then in the absence of special agreements, they can be stolen with legal impunity. That leaves only professional censure as a deterrent. Unfortunately, professionals tend to run in herds. They aren't generally too interested in what nonprofessionals claim to have thought of first. So when you suggest that I put my (unprotected) ideas out there where publication can be verified, you're assuming that somebody important will be sufficiently interested to actually do the verifying. This assumption inspires no faith.

While we're still on the topic of plagiarism, let me point out that I haven't accused anyone in this group of any such thing. However, there have been several occasions on which subscribers have used, or announced an intention to use, ideas that I have previously introduced in *Noesis* without the courtesy of acknowledgement. It may not be plagiarism, but it's annoying, and it isn't polite. Case closed.

I took a shot at completing the analogy you offered as an exercise for the reader. But I'm afraid we still don't see eye to eye on the relation of "use" to "utility". Were I to voluntarily hit myself on the head with a hammer, would I not at least have benefited by fulfilling my intent? If you doubt that this constitutes utility, consider what it would be

like to live without this generic "benefit". Don't you think you might get a little frustrated? And what about those crazy masochists?

I agree with your comment about whining. However, you inadvertently let it appear that you were talking about *me*. So for those who might not have guessed that this wasn't your intention, let me point out that defending one's person or one's work, or trying honestly to make oneself appear sympathetic enough to stimulate some kind of meaningful recognition for that work, doesn't qualify as "whining". You'll note that even after reading about all your heartrending tribulations on pages 20-24, I'm not accusing *you* of whining. That's also because I value my self-respect, and I'd lose it if I tried to divert hostile attention from myself by joining in against a convenient scapegoat (I do, for that matter, cop to some occasional "arrogant posturing".)

I appreciate being cited, and as always, I'm impressed by your punctilious attention to typos. But it distracts from content. Call me sensitive, but if I see one more "sic" in your quotes of my work, I fear I'll get violently sic [sic].

You point out that one on a moving bus full of suicidal loons has to know when to get off the bus. Unfortunately, there *is* no good time to get off a moving bus. This bus is "moving" because I have a big stake in defending a lot of past contributions to *Noesis*. As for those "sensible passengers" you mention, I'm counting very few hands.

I understand that you're not convinced of the importance of the CTMU. However, this information alone is insufficient for purposes of dialogue. You see, after all these years, I'm no longer sure that *anything* of a philosophical nature is capable of impressing any Mega member at this point in his or her life. Those who exhaustively tour the history of science and philosophy tend to become jaded by its seemingly endless string of ideological wreckages and forsaken paradigms. Even as they come to believe that their eyes have been opened, their hopes sour and their minds quietly close. Petitioning such people for the kind of attention I need is an exercise in self-flagellation. My back is already raw, so unless somebody on the receiving end wants to establish some credibility of his own - e.g., by demonstrating that he or she actually understands something out of the hundreds of pages of material I've already provided - I'm currently inclined to pass.

If you will, give me another try at putting this situation in perspective. Long ago, I realized what other members of this group still have not: that without at least one really, *really* newsworthy example of brilliance, the Mega Society will never amount to more than a burp in the wind. People don't care about mere high IQ's any more; they need to see extraordinary achievement. Knowing the spectacular nature of what I had under my hat - including several "impossible" mathematical proofs and an integrated set of fresh paradigms for the pursuit of human knowledge - and noting the apparent absence of anyone else to fill the required position, I generously offered my services. As a

matter of organizational history, I was spurned.

According to you, I'm "the one who craves recognition". If you mean that I'm the *only* such person in this group, you're dead wrong. Not only would you fall afoul of human psychology, but several members (you included) have announced various high-profile projects of your own, and at least one other member - Rick Rosner - has stated repeatedly, in his habitual eye-catching way, that he wants to be famous. As we all know, Rick has tried hard to realize this dream through behavior that qualifies, within the staid category of journal editors, as outrageous (you know what I'm talking about - those editorials on boogers, feces, masturbation, sodomy and so on). There can be no denying that Rick, at least on an in-house basis, has succeeded in drawing a lot of attention to himself at the expense of responsible editorial standards.

In retrospect, I'm almost sorry I didn't adopt a wacky, Rosneresque persona when I was editing *Noesis*. Then I might have had a legitimate chance to make this group what it could have been. Instead, I stuck with a different persona, and the joke was on me. Now, however, the joke is on everybody else. Because even though Rick knows which way to stroke a weasel, he doesn't know the second part of the script...the part where he actually delivers the goods that put Mega on the map and thereby give its members a real chance to win recognition as individuals. If Rick had such goods, he could have used the editorship to create the impression that we had a societal consensus on them, and then used the apparent consensus (which is actually impossible) to get enough publicity to start the ball rolling. But by his own published admission, he has nothing warranting this degree of confidence. There is too great a possibility that somebody who knows the con would shoot him down and make laughing stocks of us all.

Kevin, one thing should by now be obvious to you: my work isn't easy to shoot down. You attribute this to impenetrability, but you're dissembling. Men have tried, and men have died. Given the extent to which I've actually described it, your denial of its "earthshaking" potential is hard to figure; the proofs I submitted to our best-qualified member (Thorp) are of famous conjectures, and on any level of philosophical generality, a verifiable "theory of everything" would be front-page material. Over the last six or seven years, I've trustingly shared hundreds of pages of topflight math and philosophy with people who apparently couldn't give half a hoot. We have now reached the point at which somebody else antes up, or we have no game.

One thing we do agree on is that books are better than journals. Mine's in the pipe. That's my top project until I decide whether or not it's to my advantage to publish excerpts in *Noesis-A*. Meanwhile, despite the fact that this group has again impaled itself on the spiked fence of high school politics, I welcome further dialogue with one who is surely in the top ranks of its membership...you.

Christopher Langan

Comments on Recent Issues of Noesis

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Paul Maxim's translation of Appollinaire's poem "The Synagogue" was printed in *Noesis* #113, along with a letter from Maxim in which he examined the question of whether the poem is anti-Semitic. I agree with Paul that there doesn't appear to be any anti-Jewish intent.

Anti-Semitism and other forms of racism are really stupid. Hating people based on their membership in one or another class is dumb, given the prevalence in the world today of malicious behavior that would provide much better reasons for hating particular individuals--although I sympathize with the spirit of the Christian dictum "Hate the sin; love the sinner" and do not believe that hating people is a good thing.

I also take a dim view of the readiness of many people to label others as racist if they depart from "political correctness," as, e.g., if they observe that some races do better than others on I.Q. tests and that there is considerable evidence that this is at least partially due to their genetic inheritance.

Maxim wrote:

The question of anti-Semitism and art has swirled around for many years, with particular focus on figures such as Wagner, who was a notorious anti-Semite, and published at least one article condemning Jewish culture. But at the same time, Wagner was the greatest opera composer who ever lived, thus seeming to raise a conundrum for modern Jews, to wit: should they rightfully enjoy Wagner's music, while overlooking his anti-Jewish bias?

Wagner's music sucks, in my opinion. It's full of overdramatized fake emotionality--but, of course, this is true of most opera, which I regard, along with ballet, as a degenerate art form symptomatic of the narcissism and spiritual poverty of the West.

But, aside from that, I can't help laughing at the image conjured up in my mind by the passage above of a row of solemn orthodox Jews, with their beards, yarmulkes, and dark clothing, sitting stonily trying their damndest not to enjoy a Wagner opera.

As for Maxim's attempt to extract some sort of cosmic meaning from Mallarme's "Cigar Sonnet," this reminds me of the preoccupation of certain people with reading coded meanings into cryptic Biblical passages or the impenetrable prose of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. Who cares? Publishing stuff like this is a waste of paper, postage, and the time of readers of *Noesis*.

Glenn Morrison's remarks about the American New Class, which he defined as "the non-technical information workers: bureaucrats, lobbyists, lawyers, non-tech academics, media workers, and mental therapists," in *Noesis* #114, interested me. There is no doubt that membership in this class has burgeoned recently, but I don't

agree that most of these people are "hostile to private enterprise"; mostly, they suck up to it (although I agree that some of them also cater to the perceived interests of the disadvantaged). I also find it puzzling that Morrison identifies these people as "producers of culture." They generally lack the creativity of starving artists and *technical* information workers and "produce" derivative schlock and B.S.

Galbraith's prediction that the U.S. and Russian systems would approach one another has obviously been borne out by the collapse of the Soviet Union and subsequent events in Eastern Europe, but the continuing domination of American politics by right-wing ideologues and the unprincipled centrists who pander to them has resulted in the dismantling of social programs and the sale of natural resources to the highest bidder on an unprecedented scale. A correction toward the left is inevitable sooner or later, but I doubt that this will take a form resembling "the Soviet variety of socialism."

Morrison wrote:

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, [and] the second devaluing routine brainwork, the third revolution is [sic] arrived; human life is on the verge of total domination by artificial intelligence.

"Routine brainwork" is alive and well and artificial intelligence is in its infancy. The rapid pace of cultural and technological change has undoubtedly resulted in disruption of the careers of millions of people, and limits to economic growth have eroded the living standard of many American families (to a relatively minor extent) recently, but human beings are not about to be replaced by machines.

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 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. "[H]ierarchy" is denied; all conscious entities, in some versions even all things, have equal status and validity; value judgments are taboo. . . . 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 [sic] events directly by the human will alone.

Adherents of various New Age groups now form a distinct subculture, but there's little overlap with Morrison's New Class (except among therapists); the common element between the New Agers and the Religious Right is a lack of critical thinking, largely due to a reaction against the rise of science and technology and to the void left by the demise of traditional religion as a guide to things on a scale beyond everyday practicalities. Magical thinking fills the mental vacuum.

The notion that "you create your own reality" can be taken to absurd extremes. Someone mentioned a small child who had been run over by a reckless driver at a meeting of a discussion group I attended, and a Scientologist said, "He [the child] created that." Are masochistic "gods" so common as to account for the human misery we see everywhere? I'm reminded of one of my aphorisms: If God's not crazy, why are you?

There's a tacit agreement in New Age circles not to question one another's beliefs too closely. It's interesting to listen to a group of New Agers talking about their ideas. Often two people will say completely contradictory things and everyone will nod their heads to both of them.

But the screwballs at opposite ends of the political spectrum are unlikely to go head-to-head with one another. They act as spoilers within the left and right wings of American politics. A shooting war is unlikely because most of the population is neither on one side nor the other. People are trying to get by and they don't believe in the solutions proffered by the extremists.

I predict that things will continue to become more confused and that the human race will continue to dig itself in deeper over the next several decades, until the carrying capacity of the earth has been stretched to the point of a catastrophic breakdown some time in the next century. When that happens, we can expect to see a quantum leap in irrationality as humanity descends into the kind of mass psychosis we've seen so often before (e.g., in the Inquisition and witch-burnings, in Nazi Germany, and in China's cultural revolution), but this time on a planetary scale.

Can anything stop it? Pray for a miracle.

In his article "The US Government Is Corrupt As the Following Examples Show," in *Noesis* #114, Robert Dick cited a number of examples of government corruption or damn foolishness, including the Waco massacre, Ruby Ridge, and a number of questionable laws and policies. I agree that there are plenty of examples of corruption in government, but this is not the same thing as asserting that "the US government is corrupt." Government officials are individuals. Some of them are crooks; many of them are stupid; most of them make bad decisions from time to time. But we could have a lot more official corruption. Bribery is a way of life and effective political opposition is banned in most Third World countries. We should count our blessings.

Poor Glenn Morrison. He only got one vote in the election for Editor--and then Jeff Ward misspelled his name (as "Greg Morrison") in his report on the results in #114.

I want to correct a mistake in my "Reply to Paul Maxim's Criticism of the Norming of the LAIT," reprinted from *Vidya* #147/148. The number 250 refers not to *Sigma Four* subscribers but to those submitting completed Four Sigma questionnaires. There were about 150 *Sigma Four* subscribers.

RON HOEFLIN ON HIGH-END IQ TESTING

Dear Rick,

In Noesis #115, page 14, Kevin Langdon quotes Chris Langan on the topic of "genius." The first quote is this: "If the tester is not himself a genius, he will fail to recognize this [i.e., an answer that is superior to his own] and mismark the test." The second quote is this: "If you propose to measure [someone's] level of 'genius' you must be one yourself."

Chris seems to have me in mind, for another quote reads: "...the real ceiling of intelligence resides . . . far above the level of any problem on the Mega Test. So we need a new kind of test to measure this factor...."

I personally was impressed by the fact that one could score so high on a test like the Concept Mastery Test, which has a ceiling at about the 99.999 percentile or one-in-100,000 level, without there being very many particularly difficult problems on the test. The chief advantage of using a simple-looking test is that you can get a larger number of people to try it than would be willing to try the recondite sort of test that Chris has in mind. You need a largish sample in order to norm these tests, after all.

As for measuring human intelligence at its "limits," a problem like Fermat's Last Theorem no doubt provides such a test, but that sort of test is a lifelong project. Since at its limits human intelligence comes in different varieties or goes in different directions, like the uppermost branches in a tree, I fear that any serious attempt to measure human intelligence at its limits is likely to reflect the intellectual biases of the test designer even more than tests like my Mega Test or Langdon's LAIT already do.

I consider the "ceiling" of the Mega Test to be about the one-in-a-million level, which I equate with a raw score of 43 out of 48. If this level is inadequate for Chris Langan's purposes, I wonder how much ceiling he thinks the ideal test should have. Can he specify a percentile? And since there are only about 200,000,000 adults in the U.S., of whom presumably only about 200 could score 43 or higher on the Mega Test, how does Chris propose to gather a large enough sample of people to norm his much-higher-ceiling ideal test? And what would be the practical purpose for such a higher-ceiling test? Guinness no longer has a "Highest IQ" entry, at least in its U.S. edition. Are we trying to lure Guinness into recognizing some one person as the smartest person in the world based on some new, higher-ceiling test?

My advice would be to have five or ten people jointly construct a highest-ceiling test by simply requiring participants to take one test designed by each of them and combining the results. In this way the biases of any one test designer would be reduced in significance.

Many eccentric test designers pride themselves on the many unsolvable problems in their tests, but such test items are, of course, entirely useless as a practical measure of intelligence--more a sign of the test designer's megalomania than of his (or her) wisdom.

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April 6, 1996
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To the Editor of Noesis:

In Noesis num 115 Feb 96 pp 6-7 Kevin Langdon answers my charge that his opposition to psychiatric medication is "perverse in the extreme."

He stands by his opposition. I stand by my affirmation. Needless to say, as one who has taken this medication for 24 years, I have devoted considerable thought to it.

First let me note that there are two different kinds of "spaced-outedness" in the "mentally" ill. First historically, after many years of being overexcited, people fall into a burnt-out stupor. The mental health professionals call this regression.

The problem I am most interested in, because it seems to be mine, is an excess of dopamine in the brain. I think of dopamine as the significance chemical. When I have too much everything seems to be highly significant. You may think you would keep your bearings if this happened to you, but I assure you you wouldn't. Anyway, after decades of universal high significance you burn out. Nothing seems any more significant than anything else, and it all makes no sense, so why bother? You sit in a chair all day, if you are lucky, or you wander the streets a "spaced-out" relic, if you are not.

The other "spaced out" effect is a side effect of medication. As recently as two years ago I used to sit at my desk in a daze. When I walked down the hall I had to concentrate hard to avoid falling over. I assume this is the effect Kevin was referring to. It turned out that the effect was activity-dependent. When I was assigned to do clerical work (because we didn't have enough clerks) I did a terrific job, and more or less felt good. Needless to say, I lost that job. Clerks work much cheaper than I do.

Just a couple of weeks ago, I forgot to take my morning medication. I felt happy and competent at my new job. So since then I have cut out most morning medication, just taking my daily doses in the evening. I feel good. Credit must also be given to a new antidepressant called Paxil. I feel happier as a result of taking it than for any previous antidepressant. Believe me, it is an incredible relief feeling happy after many years of gloom.

So, yes, Kevin has a point that medication can make people "spaced out." I am afraid, however, that the alternative is much worse. Then too, I have heard some professionals claim that the great majority of mental patients are under-medicated, and would be more normal on higher doses. I don't know.

Psychiatric illnesses can be tricky to form conclusions on. I subscribe to the rule of thirds. One third of the ill will recover without help. One third will recover with help. One third will not recover. Possibly Kevin has observed the first third and has drawn unwarranted conclusions about the majority of patients.

A rising tide lifts all boats. Both the second and last thirds

have benefited from medication. As one hospital attendant told me, "It used to be that you went to a mental hospital to stay." Now the middle third can be released and live near-healthy, near-normal lives in the general community--just so long as they take their medication. The bottom third can usually live in the community, but cannot function at a high level. These people often relapse and go back to the hospital for short stays.

Kevin writes, "But what if a man finds himself with the psychological problems these drugs are designed to handle?" First of all, these drugs do not handle psychological problems. They handle problems of brain biochemistry. If Kevin has a history of calming and restoring to normal severely psychotic people may he trumpet his success to the world. (But let him be sure he is not just dealing with the top third of psychotics).

I commend Kevin's 9 treatments to those who like that sort of thing. I like working on national defense projects, because that is where I strongly believe I can do the most good. Needless to say, this is not always a calm environment. During the Cold War I lived for a while next to a Strategic Air Command (SAC) base. Every time I saw a heavy bomber take off I would wonder "Is this IT?" I assume Kevin does not approve of this environment. But it was only when I was off my medication for six or seven months that I got into trouble there.

Ronald Reagan was not an important factor in emptying the mental hospitals. First of all, these were STATE hospitals. Second, Reagan only slowed the rate of growth of social spending, he didn't cut it. (This is one point where I see Kevin's left-wing environment showing through).

Emptying the state hospitals was a reasonable decision, except that the community mental health centers that were to be built to replace them were in large measure never built. Also the courts kept many ill persons on the streets in the same way they keep many criminals on the streets.

Psychosis to me resembles heaven and hell, i.e. it is terribly intense. Holding people in this state because we don't want to violate their "rights" I think borders on the criminal.

Very truly,

Robert Dick

Robert Dick

Reply to Paul Maxim's Letters in Noesis ##114 and 116

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I'm sorry to have to take Mega members on yet another excursion through the twisted, vindictive imagination of Paul Maxim, but I must set the record straight with regard to his latest accusations against me.

In a letter in *Noesis* #114, Paul wrote:

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* testees 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.

The cutoff for Intertel is 138, not 137, using the conventional mean 100, sigma 16 scaling. Comparing the membership of Intertel with the number of people who took the *LAIT* is a textbook case of apples and oranges. Intertel, like the other high-I.Q. societies, has a high turnover rate; the number of people who have been members of Intertel at one time or another is substantially greater than 2,100. And a lot more people are interested in getting their I.Q. tested than in becoming members of a high-I.Q. society.

In December 1995, I sent a request to Ron Hoeflin, asking whether I could consult his data files (on high-IQ testees), 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 percentages 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.

What a surprise that Dr. Hoeflin refused to grant a request that would have violated the confidentiality of his testing procedure and the privacy of those who took his tests!

Of course, as scores on "non-*LAIT* tests" are not, in general, correlated 1.0 with *LAIT* scores, it would be unreasonable to expect that the mean scores of four-sigma *LAIT* testees on these other tests would be 4.2 sigma (as is the case with their *LAIT* scores); some degree of regression toward the mean would be expected.

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 testees, 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.

Those who took the *LAIT*, the *Mega Test*, and the *Quest Test* are three separate populations. It is to be expected that testees would be influenced by the difficulty of the test involved, in each case, and that those who were capable of solving harder problems would turn out to have higher mean I.Q.'s. As Paul mentioned, the average I.Q. of the *Quest Test* sample was 127 and that of the *LAIT* sample was 137. The mean I.Q. of the *Mega Test* sample was 141.

Paul's deduction of a mean of 147 was incorrect. The frequency of those scoring above the four-sigma level can't be translated into a mean for the population involved; this ignores the self-selection factor.

Publication in *Omni*, with a circulation of at least many hundreds of thousands, *did* reach a population much larger than the aggregate membership of the three-sigma societies, with an average I.Q. well above that of the general population.

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 I.Q. scores which are not in harmony with the real world 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 way 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 the LAIT.

It seems that I am not the only object of Paul's intemperate accusations and baseless speculations regarding the motives of those who get in his way. Dr. Hoeflin and I have discussed the issues involved in high-range psychometrics at length, in the pages of the high-I.Q. society journals and privately, and have discovered that, while we have some differences regarding norming methods, we are largely in agreement--and there's no doubt that our tests correlate reasonably well with one another (typically around .7).

Around the time that Ron wrote the words quoted above, he edited *Vidya*, the journal of the Triple Nine Society, under an arrangement whereby he was paid a fixed amount per copy produced and pocketed the excess over his costs. His livelihood at that time was as dependent on high-I.Q. societies making use of my tests for admission as it is now.

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.

It's interesting that, although Paul is always demanding disclosure of everything, he never names his sources.

In fact, I have provided names-removed data sets to a number of *bona fide* researchers, including Grady Towers, Fred Britton, and Alan Aax; none of them sees catastrophic flaws where Paul would have us believe they are.

It's true that many people have had to wait a long time for their test results. I can only cite circumstances beyond my control and the limitations of my time, financial resources, and energy in explanation of the delays.

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.

I demur. It is undoubtedly true that only a minority of those who have scored 164 or above on the *LAIT* have obtained four-sigma scores on other tests, due to regression toward the mean and to the fact that many people who took the *LAIT* were not members of any high-I.Q. society and had not previously been tested.

Now, since Mr. Langdon assumedly has the data in his files to "show me up," and prove (or disprove) the accuracy of his claim, 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 [now Editor of *Vidya*], 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 [sic] 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."

I'm not very good at shutting up. I am willing to provide a names-removed *LAIT* data set to Bob Kopp or any other serious researcher. Paul Maxim doesn't qualify. He has demonstrated his ignorance of the principles of statistical inference and distorts everything to support his vendetta against me and others whom he considers to be responsible for frustrating his ambitions.

It is interesting to note that Paul has not hesitated to use material from the norming report on the *LAIT* in his crusade against the ISPE, to which a considerable amount of space was devoted in *Noesis* #116.

Noesis #116 also contained a letter from Paul Maxim to Jeff Ward in which he repeated his allegations regarding the false attribution to me of an I.Q. score of 196 on the *Stanford-Binet* in the *Guinness Book of World's Records*. Paul wrote:

At the time that Chris Harding erroneously attributed to Kevin Langdon a Stanford-Binet IQ of 196 (which was used as the basis for Mr. Langdon's admission to Mega), Mr. Langdon was *aware of the error*, but he nonetheless accepted membership on this improper basis.

I have repeatedly denied that I scored 196 on the *Stanford-Binet*, most notably in a letter to Chris Harding dated January 11, 1982, reprinted in *Megarian* #32 (Vol. II, #12), June/July 1985, which also makes clear the actual basis for my admission to the 606 Society, Mega's predecessor. That letter is reprinted in this issue of *Noesis*.

When Chris Harding founded the 606 Society, he invited people to join based on some very fanciful credentials, including scores on a number of tests I had never heard of. As there were, effectively, no standards and I have a professional interest in the doings of the various high-I.Q. societies, I simply accepted the membership offered. Furthermore, it is a very dubious proposition that *any* test discriminates accurately at the 99.9999th percentile. We do the best we can with the psychometric instruments available. The official Mega qualifying scores established by vote of the membership are 43 on the *Mega Test* and 175 on the *LAIT*, but this area needs review. We have never established a qualifying score on the *Titan Test* and there are several new tests which will need to be evaluated once they are normed.

Finally, I obtained (from another intermediary) a copy of the formula Mr. Langdon uses to convert "scaled scores" on the *LAIT* to IQ ratings, which he contends are comparable to the Stanford-Binet scale. This formula is as follows:

$$IQ = ((\text{Scaled Score} - 466.990) / 222.501) * 13.84 + 142.34$$

I am told that it was published in Mr. Langdon's "LAIT Norming Report No. 2." Please note that, if the "scaled score" is zero--that is, if the testee fails to answer any questions correctly--the resultant IQ value is 113.3, about equal to that of a "grade B" college student. Now, I fail to understand this strange type of psychometrics, and suspect that such a thing could never occur on any of the "standard" or "conventional" IQ tests--the ones Mr. Langdon has been attempting to discredit and outlaw for the past decade. Mr. Langdon has frequently attempted to argue that "self-selection" automatically boosts the IQ's of those individuals who take (or have taken) his tests, but I don't see how "self-selection" can turn an idiot into a genius, or why the *LAIT* should be accepted as an accurate instrument for mental measurement, if it can produce such grotesque results as that shown above. [The formula above has been typographically altered, but is otherwise exactly as Mr. Maxim displayed it.]

The formula reproduced above is roughly correct; the actual formula used in computing *LAIT* I.Q.'s is $I.Q. = 113.783 + .062202 * \text{Scaled}$. A scaled score of zero is not the same thing as getting no items correct, due to the correction for guessing.

If a genius with a "true" I.Q. of 200 takes a test with a ceiling of 140, he will score at or near 140; this does not mean that his I.Q. is actually 140. Similarly, if an idiot with an I.Q. of 30 takes the *LAIT*, he will score at or near 114; this does not mean his I.Q. is actually 114. Every test has a limited range. The *LAIT* is designed to discriminate within the far right tail of the normal curve.

I have not attempted to "discredit and outlaw" standard I.Q. tests; I simply regard them as inappropriate selection instruments at the four-sigma level and above. As a member of the Triple Nine Society Psychometrics Committee, I participated in decisions regarding cutoff scores for admission to TNS on a number of these tests.

Paul is correct that self-selection cannot turn an idiot into a genius, but he's unclear on the concept of self-selection; it refers to the greater likelihood of the genius, who can do very well on a test, sending in his answer sheet for scoring.

P.O. Box 795
Berkeley, CA 94701

January 11, 1982

Dear Chris,

Thank you for the copies of the Circle newsletter, the membership card, and the 606 roster questionnaire.

In looking at the latest issue of the Circle, I see my name listed as a prospective member on the basis of a score of 196 on the Stanford-Binet. I took the Binet years ago, but was already old enough that the ceiling was in the high 150's, and that's the score I made.

I had assumed that you had been in touch with Ed Cyr when you sent me the invitation to 606 membership. I did make the highest score to date on the Mobius Test, considerably higher than those of a number of 606 members (I only missed one question that I was not able to successfully challenge; Ed agreed that the others I missed were flawed items) and I had assumed that you were attempting to convert that performance on Ed's as yet unnormed test into a numerical rating for purposes of 606 membership.

It also occurred to me that you might have been simply guesstimating my true intellectual level.

In any case, I must correct the impression that I have a Binet score which I do not have in fact. I would love to be a part of 606 and I believe I can contribute something of value to the organization, but honesty impels me to set the record straight.

I hope that you will communicate this also to the editors of the Guinness Book of World Records.

On the assumption that you might find my performance on the Mobius Test qualifying for 606, I have completed the roster questionnaire and enclose it with this letter.

Recently I have seen mention in several places of a possible reconciliation between the ISPE and 999, now that Steve Whiting has passed away. I was sorry to hear of Steve's death, as, despite my disagreement with his autocratic organizational methods, I felt that he was a fine gentleman with a real dedication to serving a worthy ideal as he understood it.

I would be very pleased to see a united ISPE-999 society, but I realize that there are certain obstacles in the way of this coming to pass. One of them is possible opposition from such old time ISPE leaders as Ferris Alger and Laura van Arragon. You would be in a better position than I to judge this. The other difficulty I foresee has to do with differences in organizational philosophy. The leadership of 999 feels very strongly that all members should have an equal voice in governance of the society and that the officers should not have too much power; can the ISPE leadership accept this?

-244-

Kevin Langdon

Easter 1996, 13 Spear Street, Somerville, NJ 08876 rdick@haven.ios.com

ROBERT DICK RESPONDS TO KEVIN LANGDON

To the Editor of Noesis:

In Noesis num 115, Feb '96, p 13 Kevin Langdon writes "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."

I beg to differ with that assessment. On Easter is as good a time as any to clarify my relationship with the Christian right. More on that later.

Yes, to some extent I am anti-SOME-intellectuals. I commend to Kevin the book "The Treason of the Intellectuals" by the French author Raymond Aron, who has the distinction of being one of the few anti-Communist French intellectuals, at least before "The GULAG archeipelago" became popular in France. I commend it to Kevin. It must be out of print now, but it must be in some libraries. I wouldn't be surprised if it is missing from the Berkeley library. Berkeley California and Ithaca New York are the two most left-wing cities in the country.

Kevin's sentence quoted above implies that most intellectuals and most scientists agree with each other. That is not true of intellectuals and in a sense it is not true of scientists. There is an awful lot of left-wing junk science around which masquerades as real science. The worst junk science used to be about nuclear weapons. Now it is about ecology. I would not give two cents for the junk science in an "Earth Week" column in a Berkeley newspaper.

For example, a journal devoted an issue to pesticides. A real scientist wrote an article for it with the following obvious assertion: When people breed vegetables to be pest-resistant, what they are really doing is making those vegetables secrete natural pesticides, i.e. poisons. Needless to say, the journal refused to print his article, because it went against the prevailing pseudo-science orthodoxy.

For example, in 1969 Cornell and other universities had a group known as "Concerned Asian Scholars." This group made the claim that the American participation in the Vietnam War was destroying Asian culture. This assertion was obscene, for the simple reason that Communists destroy Asian and other cultures wherever they go, not just incidentally, but as a matter of principle.

For example, the US tried a very minimal, very token, effort at civil defense. There was an effort to draw up an evacuation plan for Rome New York because of the SAC base there. A group called "The Union of Concerned Scientists" brought in two MIT physicists to argue that any civil defense is futile. Of course they did not state their argument so straightforwardly. At a public hearing, these scientists argued that an air burst would kill by radiation and a ground burst would kill by fallout. Of course they did not point out that both types of attack were highly unlikely to occur together. These men were clearly disingenuous. So don't tell me about the nobility of science.

Incidentally, I read somewhere that some scientist said that yes, some parts of the earth are warming, but other parts are cooling. And

oh yes, Kevin says he is barely part of the middle class, but he likes wastelands. Who is he kidding? I find it extremely doubtful that taking the entire population of the earth Kevin is below the 90th or even 95th percentile in wealth. And, oh yes, people like Kevin who believe in "overpopulation" always think the excess population is SOMEBODY ELSE. Not a very noble thought.

I might as well point out something I agree with. Big populations, especially concentrated populations, if they are considerably bigger and more concentrated than ever before, generally result in new diseases becoming prevalent. This, for example, is the triple whammy that hit the American Indians:

1. The Europeans and Africans carried diseases the Indians had no immunity to--and these diseases resulted from large populations. I.e. the small Indian population did not reciprocate.
2. The Europeans had large populations to overwhelm the Indians.
3. The Europeans had advanced technology.

Another point: Destroying rainforest will probably liberate new diseases from their natural reservoirs to prey upon humanity. I do not see this point made much.

Now about my religious faith and my politics. I am distinctly conservative politically and distinctly liberal religiously. I am closer to the Jewish right than to the Christian right. In particular, I suspect I am one of very very few, the Unitarian right. I believe God is One, not three-in-one. I agree with Hyam Maccoby that Christianity is based on Paul's views, not Jesus', and has a component of "the Sado-Masochistic worship of death." I think this is why two Catholic officials falsified the dating of the Shroud of Turin: because the image on the "Shroud" shows it contained a LIVING man! But I digress.

I do not become a Jew for two reasons: First, my wife would not convert. Second, Jews do not appreciate Jesus enough, even though modern Jews claim Jesus as one of their own.

I am like Thomas Jefferson, another Unitarian, who wrote in the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident..." Note: Self-evident--they shine forth to those who can see. We hold--We do not leave these truths to prevail by themselves. We hold them, i.e. we assert them.

If Chris Langan can find any compatibility between my concept of reality and his I would appreciate hearing about it. To me reality is things as they appear to God. For Him and Him only appearance and reality are one. Without God, I believe, there is no absolute reality. And God is impassioned. Things that appear repulsive to God are truly bad. Things that give joy to God are truly good.

I won't repeat it here, but what I call "The Joy List," my version of the Beatitudes according to Matthew, is, I believe, the foundation of a good life. And finally, I believe God is pro-life and pro-man, and hates the killing of the innocent unborn, even to reduce overpopulation.

Very truly, Bob Dick

Bob Dick

MALLARMÉ'S CRYPTOPUZZLE ON GUSTAV MAHLER

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1. Puzzle-Phrase: Malheur ridiculement à qui tombe sous le coup,
2. Identification: Paragraph 5, No. 1, from Le Mystère dans les Lettres (1896)
3. Characteristics: 8 words, 38 letters, 7 spaces, 1 majuscule; numeric value is 460.
4. Translation: "Woe ridiculously to who(ever) falls beneath the stroke,"
5. Hidden Subject: a) Gustav Mahler; b) Premiere performance of Mahler's First Symphony.
6. First clue: MAHLER, as pronounced in French, is homophonous with Malheur ("woe, misfortune, affliction"). This pun dogged Mahler most of his career.
7. Other homophones: Malheur means "bad hour," while mâle heurt means "vigorous, virile shock." Since Mallarmé apparently composed this puzzle in the early 1890's, its disguised historical allusion could be to the premiere performance of Mahler's First Symphony, which took place in Budapest on 20 November 1889, and lasted about an hour. Reviews of the Symphony were mixed, but listeners were most distressed by its vigorous finale, which opened with a jolting attacca. At this point in time, the Symphony had five movements, including a fairly brief Andante (called "Blumine") that was later removed by Mahler. Examining the puzzle-phrase, we notice that letters 17 through 24 (-ent a qui t-) can be anagrammed into "a quintet."
8. The Play on A. The Symphony opens with a lengthy (almost interminable) pedal point on A, which was noted in its press reviews; similarly, Mallarmé plays extensively on letter à, the puzzle's key letter, as denoted by homophone à qui ("A key"); this will be linked with a variety of structural analogs (logograms) on the concept of "middle a," the orchestral tuning note.
9. Analytic procedure. The first step is to remove the phrase's seven interword spaces, which is analogically equivalent to "stopping the holes" on a seven-holed wind instrument. When the characters are positionally notated, we obtain the following:

Malheur	ridiculement	à	qui	tombe	sous	le	coup,	<u>Fig. I</u>
1	10	20	30	39				

Here, it can be seen that the character à falls exactly in the middle of the configuration, 20 positions from either end, and is further surmounted by the phrase's only accent mark ('), called "grave" in French. This can be likened pictographically to a piano pedal, which when depressed, sustains a note; hence what we are looking at is Mallarmé's representation for the "pedal point on a." Furthermore, its central position in the phrase seems intended to additionally suggest "middle a," the musical tuning note, which is always sounded for the orchestra by the oboe. Moving one step further, we note that this "key a" is located 20 positions from either end of the phrase, and that "20" in English means "a score," although it does not convey this signification in French.

The next step is to note that ridicu- (in French) is homophonous with "reedy cue which could allude either to: a) Mahler's baton, or b) his entrance cue to the woodwinds (he was noted for the crispness of his orchestral signals), or c) the tuning note (middle a) sounded on the oboe, which has a "reedy" tone. We know that every performance opens with a downbeat, which is here suggested by tombe.. le coup ("falls...the stroke"), and also pictogrammatically by the grave accent (`) over middle a.

When all these pieces are fitted into place, what we obtain is a fairly plausible picture of the opening of Mahler's work. We know that A is an inaugural letter -- i.e., it marks a beginning. Hence, the suggested sequence of operations appears to be as follows: First, the "reedy cue" sounds middle a for the orchestra to tune to; then the performers open their "scores," denoted by the location of "middle a" in position 20 (a score). Next, Mahler raises his baton and gives the downbeat (another "reedy cue"), inducing his performers to begin the pedal point on a which opens the Symphony's Allegro movement.

By the time this puzzle was created (sometime between 1890 and 1895), "20-20" had come into vogue as a designation for normal eyesight; hence, the positioning of a central a 20 characters from either end of the phrase serves both to bring this letter into focus, and to test our visual acuity. In addition, since Mahler wore corrective lenses for his myopia, the "20-20 focus" suggests the first type of assistance with which we must provide him.

More particularly, since his symphonic premiere took place on November 20, at 20 hours (8 p.m.), we are provided with an indication of the precise time at which the "pedal point on A" was played for its first audiences. Next, when we multiply 20 by 20, we arrive at 400, the numeric value of tav (ט), the final letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and a component of Mahler's name. This is a very special letter, since like omega in Greek it represents a symbol of last things, and is additionally used as a salvational symbol in Ezekiel, Chap. 9; Mahler is therefore one of the elect, since he bears the tav, in accord with the esoteric doctrine, "for my name is in him" (Exodus 23:21). Also, in Mallarmé's time, "the 400" was the designation applied to the social elite in New York society.

Regarded pictogrammatically, the tav signifies the conductor's podium, and hence provides Mahler with a place to stand. Its Roman equivalent is "t," which appears in pos. 19 of the puzzle-phrase; hence, to advance from this t to central a, the puzzle's key letter, all one has to do is goose tav (Gustav). This movement (from t/tav to a/aleph) is equivalent to beginning a new cycle in the Hebrew alphabet, and so ties in with current critical opinion that Mahler's music represented both an end and a beginning.

The Name of the Game. At this point, it may be seen that identifying Mahler and his First Symphony as the puzzle's chief "hidden subjects" was not really the solution, but rather the starting point in a lengthy series of correspondences and associations, in which we are called upon to match logological and phonological details of the puzzle-phrase with salient facts pertaining to Mahler, to music, and to his Symphony's premiere. Apparently, the overall objective is to recreate (using analogy rather than description) a specific event which took place at a designated moment in time. So far, we have "provided" Mahler with many of the things he needed to conduct a successful performance (i.e., his downbeat, his tuning note, etc.), but there is much more to be done.

For example, when the phrase's "key letter" (middle a) is converted to a majuscule (A), it becomes a multivalent symbol which pertains to Mahler and music in a variety of highly specific ways. To begin with, it pictogrammatically represents the metronome, which provides Mahler with his tempo indication as its accent-lever wiggles back and forth from grave to acute. This term can also be read allusively as "metro-gnome," thus providing a plausible reference to Mahler, who was quite short, and of course made his living in an urban milieu. The metronome was allegedly invented by Maelzel, whose name may be anagrammed into le mazel ("luck") like tav in Gustav, this suggests Mahler's Jewish origin.

Next, the À may be visualized as a painter's ladder, with the accent mark suggesting a brushstroke. In his First Symphony, Mahler indulged himself in more "scene painting" than in most of his later works, where he downplayed programmatic representation. But more specifically, "Mahler" (or maler) means "painter" in German. The ladder is also a universally recognized symbol of aspiration or ascent, and so signifies Mahler's ambition, which eventually carried him to the highest ranks in the musical world (and one of its highest salaries as well).

The À-symbol additionally pertains to Mahler's leisure activities, which included mountain-climbing, and in this context it depicts an alp, surmounted by snowcap and snowplume. One notes, at this point, that many of the words typically used to describe Mahler (such as ambition, ascent, artistic, assimilative, authoritarian, assertive, administrative, amorous, aesthetic, autocratical, etc.) begin with A, as does the name of the woman he married in 1902 (Alma); hence, this "A" appears to represent the key letter of Mahler's life and career.

The Hungarian Capital. When we wig-wagged the accent-lever over the metronome symbol, it swung from grave to acute (´), thus creating the character Á. This never appears in French (since a cannot take an acute accent), but it is commonplace in Hungarian, and so (in the context of the puzzle) it signifies "the Hungarian capital" -- that is, Budapest, site of Mahler's symphonic premiere. This pun works in both English and French, but the pun on 20 = "a score" works in English only, since 20 in French is une vingtaine, and "a score" is une partition. Hence, we are provided with a specific illustration of why Mallarmé was forced to use English (and other languages) to make his cryptosystem succeed.

The Self-Modifying Instruction. One of the cleverest and most original features of Mallarmé's puzzle-phrases is their capacity for self-modification, based on implicit "instructions" contained within them, which are codified by means of homophones and other devices. A key "gimmick" he used here was to pronounce certain words with an extra -e syllable, as though they were being read "pro-so-dically" (that is, in poetry). The technical term for this is "epenthesis," and an example of its use in English might be to pronounce "athlete" as "ath·a·lete." In the Mahler puzzle, the word so treated is tombe ("falls"), which becomes tomb·e (pronounced TOMBuh); here the epenthetic syllable, called schwa, signifies "e" in French, and "a" in English. Hence, the puzzle-phrase may now be read as an instruction, which tells us: ...aqui, tomb·uh sous le coup ("here, place e/a below coup," or ...below the stroke, "whatever that may mean").

Now, when we attempt to carry out this presumed instruction, by appending an "a" or "e" to the end of coup, we notice that, in either case, we are able to create a legitimate French word related to verb couper = "to cut," since coupe means "cuts, cup, cutting," while coupa is its simple past tense. Moreover, this successful "supposition" of a letter "below le coup" lengthens the phrase to 39 letters, which enhances the centrality of "middle a," since it is now 20 letters (not characters) from either end. As a musical analog, this appended e simulates the closing movement of Mahler's work (that is, its finale), which in turn suggests that the phrase's trailing comma represents its Coda ("tailpiece"). Also, since Mahler occasionally added an e-flat clarinet to his orchestration of certain Beethoven works, we have in effect replicated his innovation, by adding a "flat" (that is, unaccented) e to the end of the puzzle-phrase. By equalizing both "legs" of the phrase, this added letter also corrects any eccentricity related to its "central a," the letter that most closely symbolizes Mahler, who was notoriously eccentric, and who also walked with a slight limp, due to a nervous twitch in one leg.

The Musico-Medical Analog. In the late 1880's, Mahler's chief medical problem was his hemorrhoid condition, which (like the accent mark over the "metronome" letter) ranged from "grave" to "acute," forcing him to undergo surgery in July 1889. This is the "ridiculous malady" to which Mallarmé's phrase, as a whole, refers, and the hemorrhoid itself is represented pictogrammatically by the phrase's closing comma, which "falls below le coup." Therefore, when we inserted (or "supposed") an a at the end of the phrase, we pushed back this comma, thus simulating the insertion of a rectal suppository, which is usually made of alum, an astringent.

However, in Mahler's case, a topical remedy proved insufficient, and this is why insertion of the a or e produced two versions of verb couper: in other words, a suggestion is being made that, in order to simulate Mahler's surgery, we must in some way "operate" on the phrase itself, by cutting it at a key point. Through inspection, the correct operation was determined to be the removal of Mal ("sickness") from the left end of the phrase, leaving the "doctored" phrase in the following final form:

...heur ridiculement à qui tombe sous le coup^a, Fig.II

This seems mildly amusing, as a piece of wordplay, but its real significance lies in the numerical relationship it establishes within the phrase, which can be elicited by summing the values of all 36 letters, using the formula: $a = 1, b = 2, \text{etc.}$ Thus, with an "a" ending, the value of the revised phrase totals 435, and with an "e" ending, 439. The significance of these numbers, in a musicological context, cannot be mistaken, since 435 represents the "standard" frequency of middle a at 15 degrees C., and 439 is its corresponding value at 20°, equivalent to a more comfortable concert hall temperature of 68 degrees F. What sets this frequency apart from all others is the fact that it was written into law following a Paris musicological convention of 1859, and thus became known as the Diapason Normal Ordonnance.

Hence, it is not too difficult to perceive what the reconstruction of Mallarmé's alphanumeric analog has accomplished: 1) In addition to simulating "middle a" by placing a in the center of the phrase, Mallarmé went beyond this, and was able to replicate its tonal frequency. 2) This frequency was not elicited until we "operated" on the phrase, so as to logologically simulate Mahler's hemorrhoid surgery. In other words, we "tuned" or "tempered" the phrase, just as Mahler's surgeons put his body back "in tune," thereby enabling him to resume his career.

Another piece of logological evidence which tends to confirm this conclusion resides in that part of Malheur which remains after Mal is removed. This spells heur ("hour"), but can also be anagrammed into ruhe ("rest, repose"). In other words, following his hemorrhoid surgery, Mahler was finally able to obtain a good hour's sleep.

An interesting sidelight on the four letters which participate most actively in the Hemorrhoid analog (Mal...a) arises when we note that they can be anagrammed to form the name of the woman Mahler married in 1902 (Alma). This circumstance can in no way have been planned by Mallarmé; it is simply a curiosity arising out of the puzzle-construct.

Another Numerical Process. One of the salient aspects of Mallarmé's puzzle-language is its calculated ambiguity -- that is, its capacity for suggesting, at one and the same time, several different modes of interpretation. What he created, in effect, were labyrinth-puzzles, in which many alternate paths to a solution must be explored. But if this arrangement seems initially confusing, it often turns out that many (if not most) of the suggested alternatives manifest pertinency to the puzzle's main theme, and hence enhance it by their richness and diversity; consequently, it is necessary that all interpretive possibilities be explored, and it is via this procedure that the puzzle's hidden arcana are often uncovered.

As was noted above, one way to interpret the "programmed instruction," tombe sous le coup, was to attach an a or e to the very end of Mallarmé's puzzle-phrase. But another way might be to place the numeric value of tombe (55) beneath that of coup (55), so as to create a fraction whose quotient is one; this is obviously symbolic of the first performance of Mahler's First Symphony. Still another interpretation might be to place the numeric value of e (5) beneath that of coup (55), so as to create a fraction with a quotient of 11. Both of these division operations appear to be signified by an anagram on the letters in contiguous positions 17 through 25 of the puzzle-phrase (-ent a qui to-), which recombine to spell, "a quotient."

The Quotient of Eleven. This is a rather unusual number, which conveys few symbolic associations to the average person, but it figures importantly in the symbology underlying the Mahler puzzle, for a variety of reasons:

1. Wagner composed eleven mature operas, beginning with Rienzi and ending with Parsifal. Wagner was Mahler's idol, and his works comprised a substantial portion of the conductor's repertory.

2. We can write "eleven" allusively as élève n -- that is, "student n," a rather indifferent or ordinary scholar. This describes Mahler's school performance before he entered the Conservatory, and embarked on his life's work.

3. "Eleven" in German is elf, another presumptive allusion to Mahler's diminutive stature.

4. "Eleven" signifies the month of the First Symphony's premiere (November 1889), and so combines with "20-20" to define the date and time of this performance.

5. Another homophone on "eleven" is "e-leaven," which suggests that addition of e serves to raise or lighten the puzzle -- for example, by representing its finale, or suggesting Mahler's use of the e-flat clarinet.

6. Eleven is represented by the "double stroke," (11 or "), which pictographically suggests the double reed mouthpiece of oboe or bassoon, and so ties in with the "reedy cue."

7. As an accent or diacritical mark, this "double stroke" does not appear in French, but occurs regularly in Hungarian (usually over O). Hence, it represents the "Hungarian accent," and so symbolizes the difficulties Mahler encountered in Budapest (1888-1890), while attempting to stage operas with a polyglot cast.

8. As a superscript, the "double stroke" (') signifies the octave above middle c, which has only a single stroke (c').

[Editor's question to Paul Maxim--If you applied your high-powered analytical techniques to poems that have zero probability of hidden messages (poems such as Kilmér's "Trees" or "Roses are red, violets are blue" or "Jack and Jill" or "Here I sit, broken-hearted, paid my nickel and only farted," or "There once was a man from Nantucket,") what sort of stuff would pop out?]