

Noesis
The Journal of the Mega Society
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Editorial

This first issue under my editorship is filled primarily with my own material because there is a great deal of society business at hand and I have received only one submission from another member to date. These are my views. I welcome your views.

Please send material (e-mail, ASCII format preferred; camera-ready OK). I'd like to see articles, short essays, commentary, samples of things members are writing in the course of their own work, anything which is the product of disciplined thought.

Editorial standards: no unproven accusations, no ad hominem arguments, no dot-matrix print, reasonably good taste, reasonably interesting content, opinions supported by evidence. The Editor will sometimes request that one or more points in a submission be clarified or expanded. Please don't be offended by this; it means I think your work is good. I'll try to anticipate anything that may be unclear to readers of *Noesis* and make repairs prior to publication. If the repairs are to content rather than English mechanics, you'll have the opportunity to make the changes yourself.

Some members of the Mega Society prefer to examine everything in detail, others would rather cut to the chase. For the former, this issue includes my detailed commentary on recent events and recent issues of *Noesis* (sorry for some repetition in answering various points). For the latter, I offer the following remarks:

Chris Langan: Who appointed you God? Get a life.

Paul Maxim: Excuse me, Chicken Little, you're not a member of Mega. Where do you get off telling us how we should run our club?

Mr. Maxim is a highly intelligent person (though he has not provided evidence of meeting Mega's admission standard), but he lacks the contact with reality and the moral compass of the average moron. If he wanted to become a member of the Prometheus and Mega societies, why didn't he take the tests accepted by these societies? His attempt to destroy the societies' basis instead, regardless of the cost to others, is evidence of his lack of conscience and his unsuitability for membership in this society.

Regarding the California Medical Board: The Mega and Prometheus societies' basis of existence is under attack. Let's concentrate on finding out where it's legal to do what we want to do and do it there, rather than letting one or two state governments dictate to our worldwide organization.

Regarding the recent election and the proposals put forward by Chris Langan in "Noesis East": We have clearly not yet reached consensus regarding our form of governance, and hasty elections which do not provide the opportunity for all members to express their views are not helping the situation. I invite each member of Mega to express his or her views on the matters before us. When we've heard from the members, we can proceed to voting on these matters in an informed and deliberate way. Fellow members, please speak up. Don't be stampeded into ill-considered major changes to the structure of the Mega Society.

Mega currently has 26 members. A roster and a separate list of subscribers will be published in the next issue of *Noesis*.

An OPEN LETTER to PAUL MAXIM Chris Cole

I have been made aware that you have stated in writing that I am guilty of criminal activity. I hereby demand that you cease and desist making all such claims, that you write letters of retraction of all such claims and distribute them to all parties to whom you have communicated these claims or who are likely to have heard of such claims, and that you send copies to me of all these retractions. I must receive these copies on or before December 15, 1997. My address is:

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An OPEN LETTER to CHRIS LANGAN Chris Cole

You have recently published and distributed two issues of a journal claiming to be *Noesis, The Journal of the Mega Society*. Since such an organization already exists, already publishes a journal with that name, has recently held democratic elections, and since you are fully aware of these facts, your publication of these two issues is fraudulent. We hereby demand that you cease and desist from publishing any journal claiming to be the journal of the Mega Society or with a title in any way similar to *Noesis*.

OK, Chris, that's it for the formal stuff. Let's talk man-to-man for a moment. What the hell are you thinking? Now that Paul Maxim has stepped over the line (see the above letter), I've done a little research on him. He has a long history as a disruptive crank. Have you actually read his stuff? His work on Mallarmé makes *The Bible Code* look sensible. He's a complete crackpot. He has made libelous statements. Do you really want to be paired up with him?

At one time I viewed the Mega Society as potentially a force for good in the world. After twelve years of operation, I have become humbler. But I still see the Society as a kind of grand experiment. Can people of good will and a certain level of ability, who have evolved (sometimes in complete isolation) elaborate but radically different world views, come together and forge some kind of consensus? If not, how sad. If so, how exciting.

I have viewed our interchanges as a part of this experiment. I really think we are getting somewhere. Do you think I never was bothered by Bayesian Regression? As a young man, I was profoundly disturbed by it. Others have been disturbed too. But over time you can make sense of it, and it all fits into a larger worldview. In fact, after a while you forget why you were disturbed by it. I think I already told the story of when I asked Feynman about it. He said, "yeah, I had a way of thinking about that... I forget what it was." It is similar to quantum mechanics or relativity. You start out being very confused, and somehow you become a little more enlightened.

However, I can't continue our dialog as long as you continue down the path you're on. You may think, "so what, I'm not getting anywhere as it is." But then why even bother communicating with us? Clearly, you want some feedback. But to get that feedback, you have to be a member of the group. And remember, the group has never rejected you. We may have argued with you, but we did not reject you. What did you expect? You've always been prone to chest beating, but we've been able to look past that and try to get a dialog going. But on your current path, you've gone beyond chest beating and are becoming destructive. Please come back.

Comments on Noesis 127 thru 133

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Richard May has failed to note that while the gods used to eat humans, for about two millennia now humans have been eating God, in communion. I guess turn-about is fair play.

Paul Maxim, in issue 128 center, commits an outrage. He forecasts long-term interest rates without, so far as I know, being a certified financial planner. Clearly, he should be prosecuted for financial advice fraud. I for one do not want him taking X-rays of me, and he better not plead that it's a free country.

Chris Langan is still getting mileage out of Newcomb's paradox. I don't see any paradox. The supposed superbeing could just be a mentalist like the Amazing Kreskin. He could easily pick up what I planned to do with the boxes even before it was time to hide or not hide the money. Basically only the skills of a very good poker player are called for.

The 10-marbles problem as stated has no answer. The probability that all 10 marbles are white does not exist! The proper response to this problem is mutiny, as this problem has negative worth.

Chris's hymn of praise to Paul Maxim tells me that Chris lacks good sense.

Ronald Penner has some charming thoughts on intuition and math, but unfortunately his intuition is wrong. Consider the case of two cubes. When interpenetrating there is a central (convex) intersection and a number of protuberances. Each protuberance contains at least one vertex. The number of subvolumes is therefore at most $1 + 8 + 8 = 17$, not 23 as Ron conjectures. I see no need to study the rest of the reasoning.

My hat is off to whomever (if anyone) volunteers to be editor. Please could we get the journal out in smaller more frequent batches?

[Chris Cole and I will try to do that. --KL]

Comments on Recent Issues of Noesis

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In *Noesis* #126, Chris Langan presented an interesting analysis of Marilyn vos Savant's "two boys" problem in terms of probability theory. Chris went on to consider Ron Hoeflin's "ten marbles" problem, which is related to Marilyn's problem, as Chris pointed out. I carried out the constructive procedure that he suggested (a computer is unnecessary for this purpose). Unfortunately, there is an error in Chris' remarks about this problem. I will say no more about this, even under torture, to avoid compromising Ron's test.

Chris then went on to rant about Chris Cole's failure to recognize his [Chris Langan's] solution of Newcomb's Paradox, a subject regarding which Chris has long complained of lack of response and misunderstanding from readers of this journal. Rick Rosner offered praise for Chris' "VR" argument, which I also found clear and precise, though it is not the only way of looking at Newcomb's Paradox. There would not have been a paradox in the first place if the formulation which sets up the problem had provided that the genie had the power to pass through time in some other way than those of us whose fate it is to float with the current of the river of life. (Free will, if it exists, can be thought of as the power to move from side to side and top to bottom within an instantaneous slice of the river.) "All-powerful," in ordinary language, does not imply that; it refers only to all powers understood as actually existing.

The story is about an over-aged student of a seminary who, at a final examination, does not understand the idea of God's omnipotence.

"Well, give me an example of something that the Lord cannot do," said the examining bishop.

"It won't take long to do that, your Eminence," answered the seminarist. "Everyone knows that even the Lord himself cannot beat the ace of trumps with the ordinary deuce."

--In Search of the Miraculous, by P.D. Ouspensky, p. 95

God cannot square the circle using only straightedge and compass and He can't make two plus two equal ninety-seven. Current physical theory doesn't give us an unambiguous picture of the nature of time, but there's not a scrap of evidence for the existence of causality propagated in any other way than downstream from cause to effect (at least, not beyond the quantum scale, where things get very weird). It is therefore a rather large leap to assume that this "possibility" should be included.

In Ron Hoeflin's reply to Chris Langan's remarks in #121, he wrote:

So my suggestion to him, if he really wants to be appreciated by me, is to put forth all of his basic concepts and axioms in clearly enumerated lists which I can ponder piecemeal and then put together into an organized whole in terms of my own mode of thought--namely, in terms of the phases of a purposive act.

It would seem better to try to put the pieces of Chris' puzzle together the way that *Chris* assembles them before attempting to make something else out of them.

Chris Cole offered some "Thoughts" in the final two pages of *Noesis* #126. He expressed a preference for simpler over more complex governance systems for small organizations like Mega, and I agree with him about that. However, the old, complex Bylaws have two advantages: they're designed to provide guidelines for several types of situations which can be anticipated and which have led to trouble in the past, in Mega or in similar organizations, and they're what the members have agreed to. If there is to be a change in the Bylaws, it needs to be brought about through a vote of the membership according to the existing rules--including adequate time for debate and the requirement for a two-thirds vote for changes to the Bylaws. Of course, the members of the former Titan/ Hoeflin/Noetic/1-in-10⁶ society also have a right to a veto until we arrive at a consensus.

Chris wrote: "The old Mega Society (whether intentional or not) had the same entrance requirements as the current one, namely, a score at the one-in-a-million level on suitably normed high-range tests." That was the *intent*, though it isn't possible to discriminate accurately at the one-in-a-million level using *any* existing test, in my opinion; the present state of the art in high-range psychometrics *does* permit discrimination a few points below this level. The existing admission criteria go beyond generalities, specifying the two tests accepted for admission and the score accepted on each.

Ron Yannone's "Thoughts for Meditation," in *Noesis* #127, recording his thoughts while reading the *Guinness Book of World Records*, is a great humor piece, sort of like swearing an oath on a telephone book. This impression was only strengthened by the following piece, also by Mr. Yannone, entitled "Home for the Holidays," recounting his pilgrimages to such holy shrines as the Red Lion Inn and including tables listing the contents of his mother's and brother's wallets and suitcases.

Noesis #128 subjected us to more New Age nonsense, this time from Celia Manolesco, and an assortment of writings by Paul Maxim. You can expect to see a lot less of this goofball stuff under my editorship.

In an open letter to Chris Cole and Rick Rosner, Mr. Maxim wrote:

In the third paragraph on page 29 [of *Noesis* #121] in Jeff Ward's letter, he wrote as follows: "Regarding the enclosed two requests for admission, my feeling is 'no' for — and 'yes' for PAUL MAXIM." At this point, you blacked out not only my name, but the entire following line, which must have aroused some curiosity on the part of the readership. Enough material came through, however, to indicate that the "no" individual submitted a score on a Langdon test. In the final line of his letter, Jeff Ward wrote as follows: "On the other hand, Maxim's score does appear to be in the Mega range on a valid, objective test."

I am now questioning whether the Editor or Publisher, or both of them acting conjointly, have the right to censor and suppress the remarks of the Society's Executive Officer on an important issue, and whether this does not represent an unreasonable infringement by them on the Executive Officer's prerogatives?

Mr. Maxim seems to be calling for the general release of confidential documents containing scores submitted by applicants for membership. This is not the first time Mr. Maxim has demanded that others' privacy rights be compromised. He demanded that the names of all voters in an election in the Triple Nine Society be disclosed so it could be determined if TNS was wasting money by mailing copies of its Executive Committee Memo to nonvoters. He also demanded that the names of everyone who qualified for TNS with *LAIT* scores within a few points above 150 be disclosed--because he contends that the norming of the *LAIT* is inaccurate and that these people, therefore, should be forced to requalify for membership. It should be

clear that we can expect more of this Nazi stuff from Mr. Maxim in the future, that he is seriously attempting to destroy the high-range I.Q. testing which the Mega Society relies on for selecting members, and that he is therefore the last person on earth we should admit to membership in this society.

The wording of Jeff Ward's letter may lead to some doubt about what standards have actually been applied in admitting members. I have been informed by Chris Cole that no one has been admitted to Mega since the merger on any other basis than *LAIT* 175, *Mega* 43, or *Titan* 43. The only pertinent question is whether the applicant has submitted a score which accords with the qualifying scores established by a vote of the members of Mega (although a *qualifying score* on the *Titan Test* was not set by the recent membership vote, the *Titan Test* is comparable to the *Mega* and appears to be a little harder, so using 43 shouldn't get us into any more trouble than we're in already).

In this same letter, Mr. Maxim expressed the opinion that the 4.75-sigma level is reached on the *Mega Test* at raw score 46. My own analysis of Ron's *Mega Test* data and one of Ron's norming studies (as Mr. Maxim noted) also place the one-per-million level at 46. (This is not to say that the *Mega Test* can *discriminate reliably* at this level; it's too close to the test ceiling.)

Mr. Maxim's argument that members have been admitted with scores below the 4.75-sigma level, though, is irrelevant to his own application for admission. It may not make sense to lock the barn door after the horse is stolen, but anyone who doesn't take precautions after *some of the horses* have been stolen is a damn fool. A society which has made admission mistakes in the past can tighten up its policies and wait for attrition to bring the actual composition of its membership into accord with its theoretical standard, but those whose good-faith applications have been accepted by the duly elected officers of Mega, acting in accordance with the society's established admission policies, cannot later have their memberships revoked--not ethically and not legally, either. (Note that Mr. Maxim was "admitted" to Mega by a non-officer acting unilaterally in violation of the admission policy established by vote of the membership--and thus Mr. Maxim is not a member of Mega at all.)

Mr. Maxim asked a question in this letter that is very revealing with regard to his thought processes: "If a test is not legal, how can it be valid?" Legislation to the contrary notwithstanding, pi remains 3.14159..., and not 3, in every state of the Union. The earth travels around the sun no matter what the Pope thinks. And the validity of a psychometric instrument is a scientific question, not a legal one.

In a letter to Rick Rosner, also printed in #128, Mr. Maxim wrote:

You may perhaps be aware, by now, that this situation is being monitored by the National Council Against Health Fraud (NCAHF), which published a notice in its newsletter for July-August 1997, concerning the actions of the California Medical Board against Kevin Langdon. If you have not yet seen a copy of this, please let me know, and I will forward one for your review.

I have not seen this newsletter and request a copy from Mr. Maxim. The NCAHF is a private advocacy group which publishes a newsletter and seeks to influence public policy. What they think has nothing to do with either the scientific quality or the legality of high-range I.Q. testing. It says volumes about this group that they did not see fit to check this story with me, nor even to provide me with a copy.

Mr. Maxim continued:

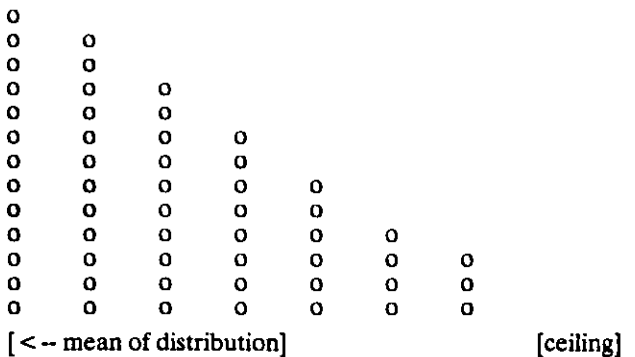
I have also learned that the NCAHF wants further action taken against Mr. Langdon, so as to prevent him from conducting his illegal testing activities anywhere in the U.S.--not just in California.

... just like Mr. Maxim. In fact, Mr. Maxim intends to file a complaint with the WCAHF to prevent me from engaging in the practice of psychometric statistics anywhere in the world, the SSCAHF to eradicate this evil practice in the solar system, the GCAHF, and the UCAHF.

In addition, I was advised that the actions of certain membership officers (who refused to accept lawful credentials from standard tests, but instead steered applicants to the illegal practitioners) may constitute racketeering. In other words, even though these officers were not engaged directly in IQ testing, they nonetheless acted as accomplices in an illegal scheme, which was carried on via the interstate mails.

This is a crock of shit, intended to scare everybody into rejecting the tests that Paul Maxim can't pass. The California statute cited by Mr. Maxim and the California Medical Board speaks only of "services rendered for a fee," the constitutionality of the California statute is doubtful, I.Q. testing by mail is legal in most states and many foreign countries, and there is no "steering" of applicants beyond providing them with information about the tests accepted by Mega and the other high-I.Q. societies, and no profit to be accrued therefrom by these membership officers--or for me, either, in the case of the *LAIT*, which is no longer scored and from which I earn nothing when it is used for admission to one or another high-I.Q. society.

In a letter in *Noesis* #129, Ron Hoeflin observed what he characterized as a discrepancy in my position on straight-line vs. curvilinear fitting of I.Q.'s to raw scores. Ron pointed out that, while insisting on straight-line fitting, I was willing to allow one point on the *LAIT* and the *Mega* as a "ceiling bumping effect." This is something a little different. A diagram will illustrate this better than a text description:



I regard it as insupportable to claim to be able to make a finer discrimination between raw score points very close to the ceiling of a test, where there is much less data, than at mid-range. Our activities are coming under public scrutiny and it is incumbent upon us to draw conclusions with the parsimony expected of those engaged in serious scientific work.

On the other hand, the *LAIT* and the *Mega Test* (and other tests from the same sources) are all we have; the ceilings of the standard tests are significantly lower. The number of persons included under a one-point ceiling-bumping allowance does no more than smooth the extreme right tail of the graph above to provide us with a small pool of probably-qualified candidates--but this is all that can be said about someone who scores 46 on the *Mega Test*, 99.9999th-percentile by the reckoning of all parties who have expressed opinions on this matter; there isn't enough top to discriminate accurately this near the test ceiling.

In his article, "Some Q & A on the Resolution of Newcomb's Paradox"--which, along with Chris' "Some Q & A on the 10-Marbles Problem," filled most of *Noesis* #130--Chris Langan wrote:

It has been realized by a long line of great minds, from ancient Ionian philosophers to scientists from Lavoisier to Freud to Chomsky, that cognition is a form of language. This is true not only in terms of content--rational cognition is generally reducible to a sequence of conventionally linguistic expressions--but in terms of form, as becomes evident when we represent thought as a mathematical sequence of neural state-transitions.

The cognition based on the manipulation of mental categories is only one type of cognition. Apprehension of form is independent of formulation, though this independence is obscured in people of the contemporary world culture, whose associations are conditioned by cultural suggestion. This more fundamental perception is still present, to varying degrees, in highly creative people, and is the source of their flexibility of attention.

In a letter to Chris Cole in *Noesis* #131, Chris Langan wrote:

You made the following two statements: "It is enough for me to know that the authors of the tests (taken by Paul Maxim) do not claim that they can be used to distinguish at the one-in-a-million level. I think we should believe them." In the interest of fairness, let me add the following equally valid statements. "It is enough for me to know that the authors of the tests (taken by Paul Maxim) do not claim that they cannot be used to distinguish at the one-in-a-million level. I think we should believe them." See? Now things are back in balance.

This line of argument is invalid for two reasons:

1. The burden of proof is on those claiming that a test is capable of discriminating at a certain level.
2. It isn't true that the authors of the standard tests do not claim that their tests are unsuitable for discriminating within the extreme right tail of the normal distribution; they are at pains to warn users against several types of inappropriate uses of the tests, including extrapolation beyond the range for which the tests are intended.

In a letter to me in #131, Chris wrote:

First, you say that your tests measure (extremely high levels of) "attention in reasoning." But you can't measure "attention in reasoning" beyond a certain point unless you can convince the test subject that he can rationally let you monopolize his attention for a very long period of time. That's something that you can do only by creating a high gain/cost ratio for time spent solving your problems.

Yes, this is something I thought about from the very beginning of my work in intelligence test design. Solving the problems one can understand--particularly those

just barely solvable given one's level of ability--on a test of this type must provide an aesthetic satisfaction which motivates the testee to invest further time in working on the test problems. I receive many letters thanking me for the pleasure testees have experienced in solving the problems--or cursing me for getting them hooked on my tests, at the cost of many hours of productivity.

But since there are many urgent problems with much higher apparent gain/cost ratios than those in your tests, and since *intelligence* is the very faculty that reveals this to the test-taker, doing too well on high-end IQ tests is actually a sign of negative intelligence, and there exists a negative correlation between intelligence and your particular brand of "attention in reasoning." How do you address this problem? That is, how can you claim to measure extremely high levels of "g" without making sure that your problems will be assigned a sufficiently high value by the limiting factor of intelligence that I've previously described as "h" (problem weighting and prioritization ability)?

Not every brilliant person has the time or inclination to take a test, but I see no sign of a negative correlation between scores on my tests and *intelligence*, which I see as a considerably broader concept, including not only reasoning ability but also the intelligence of the body and feelings. The correlation between this broader ability and psychometric *g* is certainly positive, up to the test ceiling.

What Chris calls "h" is simply reasoning ability applied to scheduling, controlling, and organizing one's life. (Anyone who's honest with himself will observe that "h" is severely attenuated a lot of the time.) There is a further ability, which we may call "i," that involves feeling all the parts of oneself simultaneously, with cognizance of one's own existence as something apart from the subject matter of "g" and "h"; but "i" is missing even more often than "h."

Communication is a two-way process, and if--even after I've given an ebonics-level explanation of how the CTMU resolves an interesting and intractable philosophical paradox--you still don't want to sustain your half of the process, then what the hell can I say? Are you *really* interested in philosophy, or is it just the rhetorical component that you like?

CTMU ain't nothin' but jive, if you ax me. You know what I'm sayin'?

You state that "we certainly live in a world in which logic can be used to solve certain classes of practical problems, but that doesn't imply that the world is isomorphic to a set of logical categories." Better watch out. You've just come dangerously close to denying that the world conforms to the **mathematical category of logic itself**, and that would be the end of your philosophical reputation!

It depends on what you mean by logic. The world includes more than what is included in mathematical logic as taught in universities; it cannot, in principle, be understood with the intellect alone. This is a vast subject which I have written about elsewhere. Suffice it to say here that I have reason, based on personal experience, not to believe that reductionist philosophical theories offer a true description of reality.

The connection between reality and logic (as considered apart from any incidental set of "logical categories") is actually of implicative strength, and the CTMU is based on it. In fact, every part of reality is isomorphic to some part of logic. Otherwise, you not only wouldn't be able to perceive reality logically, you *wouldn't even be able to sense it*. That's because logic defines not only how your brain works, but how reality communicates with it.

Again, it depends on *which logic*. There is a logic to the way an ant sees the world, but he doesn't construct syllogisms, lacking the hardware to do so.

Think about this. If you deny it, then there exist modes of communication which do not conform to 2-valued logic on any level. In this event, you can't use 2-valued logic to distinguish what is being communicated from what is not, or even the receptive sense impulse from its absence.

This doesn't follow. Two-valued logic has its place, but nature makes use of analog systems as well as digital ones and there are things which transcend logic entirely; these things can only be known in extremely rarefied states of consciousness.

But if no part of you knows what is being "communicated" to it, then no communication is transpiring! And if no communication is transpiring on any level, then we have no basis to lump the non-communicants into a common reality. Reality would then fall apart, leaving you in the part that actually does connect with you by past or future chains of 2-valued logical, cause-and-effect communication.

Two rocks 100 feet apart aren't communicating a whole lot, but they're part of the same reality.

If you can understand *at least that much*, I'll believe that there's hope for you yet.

And exactly what will that do for me?

Let's face it--for networking purposes, the Mega Society is about as useful as paps on a boar, and I poured *way too much* into this sinkhole before learning that nothing good would ever come back out.

Obviously, Chris still hasn't learned.

I'd love to get involved in Mega Society politics as you suggest, but until I'm convinced that at least one or two other members can recognize a valid solution to a major problem when they see it, I'd kind of feel like I was *lowering myself*.

And, by attempting to place himself above the democratic process and dictate to the Mega Society, Chris has done just that.

In a letter to Ron Hoeflin in this same issue, Chris wrote:

I'll begin by assuring you that I'm the last person in the world who would ever have belittled your psychometric or metaphysical research, had you not previously seemed to dismiss my own.

What difference does that make? Another man's ideas are either true or not; what he thinks of *my* ideas is irrelevant to the truth or falsity of his.

In "Regarding Paul Maxim" (also in *Noesis* #131), Chris Langan wrote, "Well, I just read a lot of real nasty stuff about Paul Maxim again. And do you know what? I see hardly any nasty material from Paul himself?" That's because Chris has not been reading Mr. Maxim's letters to the Editor of *Vidya* and various members of the Triple Nine Society, the California Medical Board, the NCAHF, etc.

Mr. Maxim has been conducting a tireless campaign of false accusations and character assassination against me and my testing business for the past two years and has caused me a great deal of trouble--because I failed to support his demands for admission to the Prometheus and Mega societies on the basis of questionable childhood scores on tests the societies don't accept.

I am by no means the only victim of Mr. Maxim's vendetta. Ron Hoeflin has been warned by the California Medical Board not to distribute his tests in California or score them for California residents, and at least some people in all the higher-I.Q. societies have been made very nervous about possible illegality.

Chris wrote:

Let's not forget that this whole controversy began when Paul was rudely and without explanation turned down for Mega membership because somebody didn't like the tests he took. It seems that a few key members believe that only Ron's and Kevin's tests have high enough ceilings to serve as means of qualification. But that assertion requires proof . . . proof that no one has ever provided. [ellipsis Langan's]

Evidence regarding my norming and Ron's was supplied to the members of Mega, who voted to accept our tests for admission. If other tests are to be accepted, similar evidence must be provided by those who wish to propose the acceptance of these tests and a membership vote must be held on them.

In #132, Chris Harding complained that I am accusing him of having been involved in the actions of the secret ISPE "ethics committee" which expelled me and the other founders of TNS. I have never accused Chris of being a member of this committee. I do feel that he could have done a lot more, as founder, in speaking out against the various injustices perpetrated by the ISPE leadership--and it would still help if he would speak up when the leaders get out of line. (Did you know that the ISPE has twenty officers, but no Ombudsman?) I only *asked Chris to state whether or not he had been a member of the committee* and to tell us what he knew about the committee's membership (apparently they kept Chris in the dark, too).

I appreciate Chris' remarks in this letter about the absurdity of Paul Maxim's complaint against me for "practicing psychology without a license." I hope not to have to move my testing business offshore, but, as Chris pointed out, this solution is always available if things become too difficult in California.

Chris Cole's "High Range Tests," in *Noesis* #133, clearly explained why the new high-range intelligence tests are the only appropriate instruments for attempting to select members of high-I.Q. societies with cutoffs above four sigma. He also provided a powerful argument (many too many very high scores) against accepting childhood scores such as those which Mr. Maxim thinks entitle him to a place in the Mega Society. There are additional arguments against the childhood tests, including low correlations with adult scores (not too serious a problem when the child is as old as ten), low g loading, and poor statistical methodology.

Chris wrote:

Thus, we do not need to be explicitly told by the designers of the Pintner test, or any other standard intelligence test, that they are not valid in the Mega range. If they were valid in the Mega range, then they would be useless in the normal (100) range. It is simply impossible to design a test that is valid in both ranges. This has nothing to do with the number of people that took the Pintner test, how big the norming sample was, what the intended age of the testees was, etc. To claim otherwise is bad science.

Chris' point is well taken. A test that is optimized to discriminate near the mean cannot contain enough very hard items to discriminate at very high levels.

I was interested to read the latest version of Darryl Miyaguchi's "A Short (and Bloody) History of the High-I.Q. Societies" in *Noesis* #134. This is a valuable document which supplies useful context to those who are not familiar with other societies or who have only recently become members.

I have already provided perspectives on a number of the societies to Darryl and most of the information provided now is accurate regarding those matters of which I have personal knowledge, so I have only a few additional remarks to offer.

Under the MM Society, it should be made clear that this was during the early years and not under Dr. Kaufmann.

One reason that there is some uncertainty regarding the chronology of the names of the society that was variously called Titan, Noetic, Hoeflin Research Group, etc., is that Ron Hoeflin couldn't quite make up his mind about the name and changed it so often that it seemed to be the Society-of-the-Month Club:

Mega
One-in-a-Million
Noetic
Titan
Hoeflin Research Group

Darryl wrote:

And, the society says, the Mega membership voted to accept 43 on the Mega and 173 on the LAIT as the society's sole admission criteria.

What the membership voted for was 175 on the LAIT, but a few members with scores of 173 were admitted by the Membership Officer before the vote was taken.

It now appears that scores of 43 on the *Mega* and 175 on the LAIT are not equivalent (see "On Mega Qualifying Scores," page 26).

Darryl's "change history" entry for 7/16/97 reads "Give less credit to Harding and Langdon in the founding of the Mega Society." The "credit" I am given in the current version, for making a list of the highest LAIT scorers available to Ron Hoeflin, is quite sufficient.

Sayings of Paul Minim

I certainly wouldn't want to be where I'm not wanted.

A lot of people are smarter than me.

I'm not sure about a lot of this stuff. I keep getting things mixed up.

I don't mind if people don't recognize that I'm a genius.

Other people have rights, too.

Comments on "Noesis East"

Kevin Langdon

"I don't believe in snobbery." --Chris Langan

I was surprised to see Chris Langan's "Noesis #134" and even more surprised by Chris' attempt to change things around without consulting the membership. What kind of fools does he take us for?

On page one, Chris wrote, "This change was necessitated by the journal's apparent extinction after no issues were produced for over seven months." This would have been a pretty good argument had we not each received a bundle containing seven issues of *Noesis*, produced by Chris Cole, recently.

At this juncture, there is little possibility of a return to the *status quo*. This is because I was forced to make a very large monetary outlay to rescue *Noesis* from oblivion. The first time, it cost me about \$200. This time, it was closer to \$2,000. Writing off a sum of this magnitude is not an option for me or for you, especially when we figure in the disproportionate amount of time and energy I've spent as the journal's most prolific contributor of quality material. Let him who has given more cast the first stone.

Don't tell me what my options are, Chris; I can figure that out quite adequately myself--and I'm not about to finance your new toy. Furthermore, I don't buy the notion that your contributions are worth more than those of the other active participants here, much less that that entitles you to special rights, beyond those of other members of Mega.

Chris presented a series of six points, under the title "The Current State of the Mega Society."

1. The Mega Society's longstanding admissions policy, which mandates acceptance of new members on the basis of mega-level scores on untimed, unsupervised tests, is dead in the state of California. Because the organization that killed it, the NCAHF (National Council Against Health Fraud), is effectively an arm of the AMA (American Medical Association) wielding national influence, we can expect to see this action repeated in other states whose laws on psychological testing resemble California's.

The California Medical Board, acting on a complaint by Paul Maxim, began an investigation into my testing operation (the Medical Board handles enforcement for the Board of Psychology). I agreed to suspend this operation pending evaluation of my legal options. The Medical Board has not informed the Triple Nine Society (of which I am the nominal head, so I would know) of such an investigation into its admission standards. I gather that the Mega Society has also not been contacted. Thus it is pure supposition that our society could be forced to change its admission policy, even in the state of California, and it would not be difficult to move our admissions function beyond the reach of the California authorities if they should decide to try to assert themselves in this area. Any attempt to coerce a membership society with regard to the criteria it chooses to use for admitting members would be a blatant violation of its members' first-amendment right of free association. Mr. Maxim complained to the California Medical Board long before he discovered the NCAHF, which is in any case merely an advocacy group and not a government agency.

2. The NCAHF has taken the position that disseminating or even recommending such tests amounts to **criminally aiding and abetting their authors**. This means that members of the Mega Society **risk criminal prosecution** if they take, disseminate, or even recommend Mega-style tests (depending on location). Technically, the Mega Society cannot even claim to define itself in terms of "IQ" or "intelligence" in states like California as long as it continues to accept scores on such tests as admission criteria. In short, the Mega Society can no longer claim to be what it has always claimed to be.

I have seen no evidence of such a position being taken by the NCAHF, but if it were to take such a position it wouldn't mean anything, as the NCAHF has no power over the Mega Society. If a state or other jurisdiction were to prosecute those who "take, disseminate, or recommend" high-range self-administered I.Q. tests, this would be a very serious violation of these people's free speech rights under the first amendment. It would be easy to move the society's operations out of any state that tried to do this.

3. As a direct result of the actions of the California Medical Board, the ever-present gap between the Mega and the psychometric establishment has now become a chasm. The Mega Society must carefully modify its position and policies regarding IQ testing if it is to have any hope of narrowing this gulf, which effectively renders it meaningless.

It's true that the Mega Society and similar societies have historically been isolated from the psychometric mainstream. This is beginning to change, as academic psychometricians have begun to take notice of what we're doing (a Web search reveals material on tests by Hoefflin, Harding, and me in various academic test collections and reviews). Drs. Raymond Cattell and Arthur Jensen, who are familiar with my work, regard it as an important contribution to the study of intelligence.

4. The membership of the Mega Society has been steadily declining, largely thanks to long and irregular gaps in the publication of *Noesis*.

Until the recent long gap in publication, *Noesis* was being published every two or three months, which is not ideal but tolerable. A far more serious problem is the *quality of material published*, which has been very low, due in part to the former Editor's refusal to reject anything, even poorly-written and illogical crap from non-members. Paul Maxim's attacks and (necessary) defenses against his irresponsible charges have further degraded the quality of the journal.

5. Through the editorials of its journal's former staff, the Mega Society appears to have adopted a variety of contrary and irrational positions on problems which have been correctly and painstakingly solved by rank-and-file members. This can have no other long-term effect than to make the Mega Society look both ineffectual and ridiculous.

So? The Mega Society *is* ineffectual and ridiculous, as Rick Rosner was fond of reminding us.

The opinions of what Chris calls the "staff" of *Noesis* (Rick Rosner and Chris Cole) have been presented along with Chris' opinions on various matters. Members have had the opportunity to decide for themselves whose arguments are the more cogent. What's wrong with that?

6. After the secret resignation of its former editor, the former publisher of *Noesis*—the same former publisher who is almost singlehandedly responsible for conditions 1-5—has now forged a cadre including himself, long-ago admissions officer Jeff Ward, and unknown others for the purpose of declaring an illegal "self-

election" which they expect to win on a knee-jerk basis. Incredibly, the terms of this election directly violate the Mega Society Constitution whose ratification has been put up for a vote in the very same election. In order to avoid further illegality, that election is hereby suspended.

Although Chris Langan does not have the power to suspend an election, he is correct that the election was improper on several grounds: 1. It did not allow enough time for voting; 2. Members were given no opportunity to comment on the proposals on the ballot or to submit alternative proposals; 3. Only some pending proposals were included; 4. It failed to recognize the existing Mega Society Bylaws and to abide by their provisions. Fortunately, no serious harm has been done through these errors.

The most improper action taken by Chris Langan in "Noesis #134" was his unilateral attempt to admit Paul Maxim to Mega. Chris wrote:

To make a short story shorter, Paul won and Kevin lost. The State of California landed on Kevin like a ton of manure. Putting the issue of right and wrong temporarily aside, this would seem to indicate that at least in some places, Paul's "simple syllogism" may be a matter not of opinion, but of hard legal fact. Therefore, in order to avoid subjecting the Mega Society to the risk of complete legal annihilation as Paul tries to force it to admit him, I, Chris Langan, as acting editor of *Noesis*, hereby admit Paul Maxim into the Mega Society as a full member on the basis of valid IQ credentials presented to me. In this I am joined by Jeff Ward and Rick Rosner, who have both stated in writing that they believe Paul to have met Mega Society entrance standards. No matter who edits *Noesis* --Rick Rosner or Chris Langan--that's a "majority of officers." Case closed.

Although Chris is right about the odor of the official actions of the California Medical Board's enforcement division, this isn't the whole story, even with regard to the law in California; I will provide an update on this in a future issue of *Noesis*. But responding to Paul Maxim's hostile rhetoric and actions with a cowardly policy of appeasement ignores the lessons of history. Admitting Mr. Maxim after he has bullied and threatened Mega officers and launched a crusade which threatens the very existence of the Mega Society and other similar organizations would be a despicable act and an encouragement for every other punk who seeks to gain his objectives through a campaign of terrorism.

The bottom line is that Chris Langan has no authority to admit members to the Mega Society, nor do the officers of Mega have the authority to admit members on any other basis than the qualifying scores established by vote of the membership. Paul Maxim is not a member of Mega.

In a letter to Jeff Ward on page 16 of "Noesis #134," Chris wrote:

As a contributor to *Noesis*--let alone the premier member-contributor I've become over the years--I have certain inalienable rights not subject to the fickle democratic process.

This is the problem. Chris is not willing to abide by the rules established by the majority.

Under "Chris Cole's Leadership Ability," Chris Langan wrote:

We all know about the acrimony between Paul Maxim on one side and Kevin Langdon and Chris Cole on the other. Its source was a violent and inexplicable opposition by Chris and Kevin to Paul's candidacy for Mega membership. As we all know, it became quite distasteful and took up a great deal of space in *Noesis*.

My opposition to Paul Maxim's admission to Mega is hardly inexplicable; I've explained it in detail. Mr. Maxim wrote to me asking my opinion of the *CTMM* as an admission instrument for Prometheus. I replied that the *CTMM* is a poor test with inadequate ceiling for this purpose. Later, Paul applied for admission to the Prometheus and Mega Societies on the basis of three childhood scores, including scores on the *CTMM* and the *Pintner*. I advised the officers of these societies that, as both societies' qualifying scores, established for Mega by vote of the membership and for Prometheus by its Membership Committee, included only the *LAIT* and the *Mega*, Mr. Maxim should not be admitted. Following this, Mr. Maxim embarked on a campaign of vilification against me and my tests and has attempted to stir up trouble for me in all the higher-I.Q. societies and with the California authorities. *Pardon me* for taking up space in *Noesis* defending myself from the attacks of this vicious lunatic. This should become much less necessary, because you won't be hearing much from Mr. Maxim during my term as Editor.

Chris continued:

One of the main functions of an editor or publisher is to try to prevent such feuds from reaching the flashpoint. When I, as editor-in-exile and the journal's chief contributor, saw that something disastrous might happen but that nothing was being done to stop it, I "took Paul's case" on behalf of the Society.

Don't do us any favors.

Had I been listened to, the disaster--national political pressure to permanently outlaw Mega-style tests--would not have occurred. But as usual, my pleas went unpublished during the critical period, and Paul eventually felt that he had no recourse but to go public with Mega's scientifically-unjustified devaluation of his IQ credentials (note that Paul specifically targeted only his avowed nemesis Kevin Langdon, whose extreme position regarding Paul's credentials had been rashly and unilaterally adopted by Chris Cole as official Mega Society policy).

What Paul "went public" with was, first, criticism of high-range, self-administered tests and the *LAIT* in particular. When his failure to understand psychometric statistics was demonstrated beyond a reasonable doubt, he complained to the California Medical Board, not about the scientific quality of the tests but about my lack of the sort of credentials which are, unfortunately, widely in use as a substitute for judging people by their ability, which is politically incorrect.

My "extreme position" is that we should evaluate the tests we use on the quality of their statistical methodology and that we should use the admission criteria enacted by the membership until such time as the members choose to change them.

In "On Chris Cole's Understanding of Psychometrics," in "Noesis #134," Chris Langan wrote:

Chris goes on to accuse me of misunderstanding the meaning of "range" in IQ testing, saying that tests which contain ordinary problems cannot be used to test for high levels of intelligence. As we of the Mega Society are well aware, the latter assertion is to some extent true for the measurement of intellectual power. But "IQ," especially when tested in young children, can also be run up on the basis of intellectual *velocity* and *precocity*, both of which can to some extent be quantified using ordinary problems. Since no one has yet succeeded in isolating the components of intelligence, and because Mega claims to discriminate at the mega level by IQ, Chris' position in effect equates IQ to power alone, eliminating all other factors from consideration on a peremptory basis. In the eyes of the

psychometric establishment, this is again a most novel and controversial position!

Here's what Dr. Arthur Jensen had to say about this subject in *Bias in Mental Testing* (pp. 135-36):

The effect of the time limit on test scores should be known for every timed test. However, this information is commonly lacking in test manuals. Investigations have shown that, when the items are evenly graded in difficulty and have plenty of "top" (i.e., very difficult items), and the test is not too long for the time available (i.e., the fast students can finish although they reach their difficulty ceiling before the end of the test), giving subjects additional time beyond the prescribed time limit adds very little to the score and has little effect on the rank order of subjects' scores. Studies of the Otis IQ test illustrate this nicely (Cronbach, 1960, p. 222). The Otis Verbal IQ test has a time limit of 30 minutes. When subjects are allowed an extra 15 minutes (i.e., 50 percent more time), they increase their total score an average of 1.5 percent. This Otis Non-Verbal IQ test allows 20 minutes; when subjects are given an extra 30 minutes (i.e., 150 percent more time), they increase their scores an average of 1.7 percent. The Henmon-Nelson IQ test has a time limit of 30 minutes; giving subjects an extra 20 minutes (i.e., 67 percent more time) increases their scores an average of 6.3 percent.

If the increase in score leaves unaltered the subject's rank order, the speed factor is of little importance. That is, the time or speed factor does not contaminate the scores with some ability or trait extraneous to what the test attempts to measure, in this case, intelligence. Usually the correlation between strictly timed and leniently timed administration is as high as the reliability of the test. When the correlation between the two timed conditions falls significantly below the reliability, the recommended time limit should be viewed with suspicion. It means that the speed factor is given too much weight in the test scores, when what we really want to measure is mental power rather than some kind of "personal tempo" factor. The personal tempo factor actually has little if any correlation with intelligence. E.L. Thorndike (1927, pp. 400-401) tried to determine the correlation between speed and altitude. To measure speed he used a large number of quite easy items and recorded the time that subjects required to complete a given number of such easy items without error. To measure altitude he gave subjects a succession of items steeply graded in difficulty; the altitude score was the difficulty level beyond which the subject failed 50 percent or more of the items. The correlations between the measure of speed (the reciprocal of time) and of altitude averaged about .40 in several groups (about .46 when corrected for attenuation).

This correlation suggests that the time that subjects require for the easy items that they all can do is not measuring the same thing as the number of steeply graded items that persons can get right without time limit. In other words, it indicates the presence of a speed factor that is independent of a power or altitude factor as a source of variance in test scores. The correlation of about .40 does not necessarily mean that the speed factor is correlated at all with the altitude factor, because the items used to measure speed still had some low level of difficulty so that these items were not a pure measure of the speed factor. We know that the average time required per item is correlated with the item's difficulty.

One can measure a speed factor in almost pure form only by divesting the timed task as completely as possible of any cognitive difficulty whatever. The *Making X's Test* is such a device. Subjects are asked to make X's in rows of "boxes," 300 "boxes" in all, with a time limit of 3 minutes. The subject's score is the number of X's he makes in this time. There are highly reliable individual differences. It was found in large samples of children 9 to 12 years of age that scores on this speed test had low but significant correlations (averaging about .20) with a general intelligence factor determined from timed tests (Jensen, 1971a). The factor common to both the speed test (*Making X's*) and the timed intelligence tests may be motivation, as it is generally believed that motivation affects speed but not power. Speeded tests composed of many easy items have been shown to reflect motivation much more than untimed or liberally timed "power" tests. As Guilford (1954, p. 369) notes in reviewing this evidence, "Thus,

speed conditions where items are not very easy open the door to many uncontrolled determiners of individual differences in scores."

In what is probably the best experimental study of the matter, the correlation between subjects' speed scores and power scores, when difficulty level and response accuracy were controlled, is close to zero for all kinds of test items.

Chris Langan wrote:

Let's look at it another way. Paul Maxim's main qualifying test, the Pintner intermediate, was used up to the 12th grade level. Thus, its problems must be at least hard enough to distinguish between above-average and below-average 16-to-20-year-olds. For a 10-year-old, they're harder still. So a 10-year old who can solve them easily must be very intelligent. Paul Maxim was 10 when he took the test. So Paul has demonstrated mega-level intelligence in at least one critical IQ parameter, and this is all that we can reasonably ask of an applicant in the absence of a strong theory of intelligence.

Nobody has suggested that Paul Maxim is not "very intelligent." The available evidence suggests only that he lacks decency and common sense. But there is a difference between "very intelligent" and "qualified at the 99.9999th-percentile," a point completely ignored in the paragraph above.

Chris Langan's "Noesis #135" made his previous high-I.Q. snotrag look good.

While there were a number of irregularities in the election, Chris' claim that it is invalid because a nonmember was not allowed to vote in it is bizarre and his announcement that he is holding his own election, under weird rules made up by him, shows the tenuousness of his grasp on reality.

Chris complained that it wasn't recognized that he had volunteered to be Editor, referring us to p. 17 of his "Noesis 134," but what is written in Chris' "Letter from Langan to Ward" on pages 16-17 is not an application to be considered for the job by the membership, but a demand that his squatting on the Editor's seat be recognized as official.

Chris wrote:

Accordingly, by the precedent established in the previous "election," the Mega Society is hereby notified of another election from which those who staged the former election are expressly excluded (just as they excluded Paul Maxim). As in the former election, approximately three (3) weeks will be allowed for voting. Please send your votes to:

Chris Langan, P.O. Box 131, Speonk, NY 11972
on or before November 7, 1997.

Each eligible member may vote by submitting a numbered ballot matching the sample ballot on page 24. (If you voted in the previous election—and I have a pretty good idea who did—or if I can identify you as a Cole-Ward-Langdon partisan, then don't bother. . . .)

Chris' voter eligibility rules are a corollary of one of the fundamental propositions of the CTMU:

[Wrong] + [Wrong] = [Right]

In addition to the fact that Chris' "election" was engineered by one member, with a number of unusual voting rules made up by him without consultation with anyone (except, perhaps, Paul Maxim) and with no authority in the Mega Society Bylaws or precedents, and that a nonmember was allowed to vote while several members of Mega were not, there were several other irregularities. Arguments couched in highly prejudicial language were included in the setting forth of the matters to be voted on and even on the ballot, no one was given an opportunity to submit arguments on the various proposals put forward by Chris Langan, and the short deadline effectively disenfranchised some foreign members.

I was sorry to read, under "Recent Mega Society News," that Ron Hoeflin has also been contacted by the California Medical Board. Their willingness to reach beyond their own borders to make demands on those offering goods and services solely through the U.S. mail is just the latest example of government regulation gone mad--and yet at the same time, our governments are *underregulating* the hell out of polluters, makers of dangerous products, and scam artists.

Unfortunately, this is not the end of the bad news. There is a bill pending in the New York state legislature that would restrict the practice of testing to licensed psychologists. It's very similar to the California statute but is not restricted to services rendered for a fee. The text of this bill appears on page 28.

Chris pointed with alarm to the trend toward enactment of such laws, but the people of certain states have a strong antipathy to government regulation and can be expected to resist pressure from the psychological establishment to create new levels of government bureaucracy and government intrusion into citizens' lives. It would also be possible to move test distribution and scoring outside the United States.

I don't know about Ron or other test authors, but I am committed to continuing my work, although at this point where and under what conditions is not clear.

The generalization of the interest of the state of California from those offering tests by mail to the high-I.Q. societies is conjectural. None of the societies has received a notice alleging violation of the law. And no attempt to coerce a membership organization with regard to how it selects members is consistent with the first amendment's guarantee of freedom of assembly.

The suggestion, put forward by Chris Langan and a number of other members of the higher-I.Q. societies, that the California Medical Board is likely to be satisfied with some kind of disclaimer or relabelling of the tests or scores on them, is naive. It would be far easier to do business elsewhere than to split hairs with the California authorities if they should take an interest in regulating our activities.

Under "Levels of Rationality: Metagames and Mega," a subsection of his remarks about "the Wallet Paradox," Chris wrote:

Deep Blue computes the rationality of its moves by simulating explosively-branching "metadecisions" in which all of its opponent's most promising responses are computed, its own subsequent responses are computed, and so on up to a depth of a dozen or so moves. From such metadecisions emerge all of the players' possible strategies and counterstrategies up to that depth.

A good human player looks ahead and analyzes various alternative lines of play, then groups them, in looking further ahead, into a more manageable number of

cases that differ nontrivially. This kind of reasoning process, distinguishing what are the important features of an object, has turned out to be very hard to simulate. Deep Blue compensates for this by examining astronomical numbers of cases, making use of a set of scoring rules but little that could fairly be described as real judgement.

Chris wrote:

Nevertheless, there are some major practical contexts to which the theory applies. Consider the Wallet Paradox itself. Like the Tragedy of the Commons, it centers on a "micro-economy" in which total wealth is limited; in light of this limitation, the theory of metagames generates higher-level information that reveals that the decision to play leads to a "false optimism." Such paradoxes describe other kinds of economy as well, including the global free market economy of the modern world. Even now, individuals, nations and international consortia are playing all kinds of "wallet games" with far-reaching implications for present and future generations of humanity. Unfortunately, the players often neither know nor care what long-term paradoxes might lurk within their strategies, ticking away like time bombs set to go off on the poor unborn souls who get stuck with the monetary and environmental tab.

I agree that many "wallet games" are played by people and institutions that should know better. It comes from the same one-sided optimism that causes people to draw to an inside straight. This ties in well with Chris' point that paradoxes emerge from a failure in breadth of reference frame.

Chris' arguments against members' right to decide matters at issue by voting on them make no sense; who is to decide if not the membership?

Those who plant their common banners on the highest ground have the highest standards of rationality to uphold.

Chris' "banner" is "planted" in the clouds. He has constructed an imaginary order that he calls "the Mega Society" which has no rational foundation and no relation to what's actually going on.

Chris advanced two "reasons" that the Mega Society should accept Paul Maxim as a member.

The first reason was basically that Mega has no choice but to conform to the hypothesized requirements of the California Medical Board, which correspond to the way psychometrics has traditionally been done. Chris conveniently ignored the facts that we have not been contacted by the state of California and that we can easily relocate our operations if necessary.

The second reason was that "Paul Maxim has well-documented mega-level IQ scores on standardized IQ tests." This leaves out the facts that many childhood I.Q. tests yield too many very high scores, that none of these tests discriminates at the 99.9999th percentile, and that they are only moderately correlated with adult tests.

Chris' "Noesis #135" contained a letter from Donald Scott asking Chris' advice on educating himself in logic, thinking, and general knowledge, and Chris' reply.

I agree with Chris' remarks on the importance of a solid grounding in mathematics and of a much broader education than is usual in modern society. His first

page and a half of recommendations is very useful, but he doesn't know much about where to find what is relevant for an understanding of psychology and metaphysics.

In this area, I recommend the following books:

Views from the Real World (pupils' reconstructions of meetings with Gurdjieff)

The Flame of Attention, by Jiddu Krishnamurti

Analytical Tracking, Part One, by Kevin Langdon

The Society of Mind, by Marvin Minsky

A Sense of the Cosmos, by Jacob Needleman

In Search of the Miraculous, by P.D. Ouspensky

What the Buddha Taught, by Walpola Rahula

Odd John, by Olaf Stapledon

Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism, by Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche

Monkey (Chinese folk novel), translated by Arthur Waley

These are all accessible modern works. *Analytical Tracking, Part One* (29p.) is available for \$10 postpaid from Polymath Systems, P.O. Box 795, Berkeley, CA 94701. The other books on the list are available in bookstores.

Imagine my surprise when Chris' "On the Counterfeiting of Journals" turned out not to be a how-to article!

Chris took exception to parts of Darryl Miyaguchi's "A Short (and Bloody) History of the High-I.Q. Societies" dealing with the Mega Society.

Chris wrote:

Only two parts of Darryl's article, a tedious litany of hi-Q club dead ends and dirty dealings akin to those we've just witnessed in California, demand our attention. One is the part where he says that the Mega Society "voted" to use only two tests for admission, the Mega Test and the LAIT, with scores of 43 and 175 respectively. No such election was held in any presently legitimate sense (if Mr. Miyaguchi has information to the contrary, then he is invited to divulge it).

The results of the membership vote establishing 175 as Mega's qualifying score on the LAIT were announced in *Megarian* #38, September 1985.

The other is the part where he claims that Paul Maxim was "refused admission" to the Mega Society on the basis of his IQ scores on standardized tests.

Chris said this himself on page 14 of "Noesis #135."

For the sake of any real members that this may have missed--and I really don't think that any of us are that stupid or ill-informed--Paul Maxim is a full member of the Mega Society in good standing and will remain so.

Chris does not have the authority to admit members to the Mega Society. His unauthorized action is contrary to the Bylaws and the qualifying scores adopted by the membership--and Paul Maxim is *not* a member of the Mega Society.

One more thing. On page 10 of the counterfeit California "Noesis," Darryl talks about one of the founders of Mensa, Dr. Lancelot Ware. A patriarch of hi-Q culture, Ware is reportedly quite disappointed by the fact that hi-Q people seem

to do nothing but solve random puzzles, which he calls a form of "mental masturbation." This great man, to whom the high-IQ community owes so much, is clearly in a state of depression over the inability of hi-Q types to focus on problems important to the world. Now, if he feels that way about *Mensa*, how must he feel about the Mega Society, which claims problem-solving ability second to none? Wouldn't it be nice if Mega could refrain from the irrational suppression of its own members' work long enough to give him a parting gift?

Problem-solving ability and wasting one's mental powers on inconsequential pastimes are two different things. Mega members mostly don't achieve their potential--so what else is new? The great majority of people don't.

I know Dr. Ware. He probably doesn't lose any sleep over the Mega Society, but I doubt very much that he would support Chris Langan in his divisive actions.

And there are others whom I'd much rather give a "parting gift."

By the way, for the time being, the real Noesis is free for all members of the Mega Society.

And if that doesn't work Chris will pay you to read his crap!

Chris' "ballot" goes out of its way to offend prospective voters. First certain members are declared ineligible to vote (which alone guarantees that this "election" will not be recognized as valid by the overwhelming majority of members), then a loyalty oath is required from the remainder and abstentions are forbidden. Next he asks the voter to choose between six pairs of alternative propositions, with both sides worded by him, in a pattern something like this:

A) West Coast Faction: Mega should lie, cheat, steal, and eat babies, despite the fact that no one but a complete idiot would do this.

B) East Coast Faction: Mega should tell the truth (as the great Chris Langan sees it), play fair (by the great Chris Langan's rules), not steal the great Chris Langan's thunder, and only eat some babies.

Chris then unilaterally abolishes the secret ballot. The basic idea is a good one. Those who are willing to stand up and be counted should be the ones who get to decide things. But that's just my opinion. It's incredibly arrogant for Chris to simply impose such a major change without consulting anyone else.

At the bottom of the ballot, Chris editorializes:

Remember, if a Mega member wants to cheat on his taxes, fine. That's between him and the IRS. If he gets nailed, the Mega Society keeps on ticking. But in this case, the violators would take the Society down with them. Meanwhile, they offer us nothing in return for sharing their risk. No compromise, no rational discussion, no nothing . . . just another frozen crate of mindless self-interest, dropped on our heads from a lofty height. [Ellipsis Langan's]

Chris' two issues of "Noesis" are hardly exemplars of compromise or rational discussion. Do it his way and that's that.

Because of this, I'll be surprised if Chris receives many votes in his "election."

Comments on Paul Cooijmans' "Test for Genius"

Kevin Langdon

Noesis #132 contained Paul Cooijmans' Test for Genius and a report on the norming of this test. Paul also submitted this material to the Triple Nine Society Psychometrics Committee, of which I am a member. The following remarks are reprinted from the TNS Psychometrics Committee Newsletter, with some minor correction of errors and a short addendum.

I question the face validity of this test. Neither analogies nor number series provide good measures of g , as both are contaminated, to a significant degree, with other factors.

Verbal analogies are notoriously idiosyncratic; this item type comes closest to justifying the view that I.Q. tests only test whether one thinks like the test-maker (or at least whether one shares a conceptual background with him). Perhaps not coincidentally, this is also the most common item type on poor-quality tests. Paul's analogies clearly depend heavily on acquired knowledge; some of them make use of obscure vocabulary. Items 12, 13, and 19 have been permanently compromised by the presence of answers instead of question marks; this means that the 45-item "long form" of the test can never be normed. The analogy in #19 is incorrect. Many items are simply weird.

Number series are much more easily solved if one has a background in mathematics, particularly in number theory. They're easy to devise but boring to solve, which creates a loading on motivation and persistence (a problem for all these new, high-range tests, particularly for the Hoeflin tests).

The sample size of 38 used in what Paul calls a "norming" is insufficient for anything more than a preliminary norming. A sample of at least 100, and preferably 200, is considered a minimum for an adequate statistical treatment. Although my data seems to stabilize reasonably with a similar sample size, I release only preliminary norming reports until I'm able to report on the testing of a more adequate sample.

If the items were weighted as Paul suggested, it would be important not to use an item which has not been solved by enough people that the frequency of solving can reasonably be said to have been estimated, at least five and preferably ten. Only 21 items qualify by this criterion, but this is probably adequate to do decent statistics on a non-multiple-choice test and as Paul accumulates a larger norming sample, more items will be solved by adequate numbers of tessees.

Paul's selection of previous scores used, as he described it, seems arbitrary and statistically questionable; this renders any norming based on them highly suspect.

Throwing out high scores because they don't seem to correspond to scores of the same tessees on the object test will improve the overall previous score/object-test score correlation, but it's not correct statistical procedure. And Paul should certainly know better than to hitch his norming to his other tests without exhibiting either the tests or norms for them.

Paul wrote, "The letter A tests only cover the IQ range below 3 sigma, the letter B tests cover the range from 3 sigma up, and the letter C tests cover the entire range." What does this mean? Were there just no scores above 3 sigma in category A or were such scores excluded? Were there no low scores on category B tests?

What makes this really hard to follow is that Paul has not bothered to tell us how many scores were used for each test, let alone provide separate correlation figures between the *Test for Genius* and these other tests.

A better estimator of the quality of an item than the mean score of those answering it correctly is the point biserial correlation between scores on the item (0 or 1) and overall scores (or, better, the square of this correlation). Dividing by the number of testees answering the item correctly is reasonable if there is an adequate sample of testees answering the item correctly.

No item analysis is presented. There is no estimate of reliability, nor of correlation with other tests, individually or in the aggregate, or standard error. Paul's account of his statistical procedure leaves many gaps.

My conclusions regarding this test are:

1. The quality of the items is uneven; what appear to be bad items are included in the norming.
2. The sample is inadequate for a proper norming.
3. The statistical treatment is flawed and incomplete.
4. We should not accept this test for admission to TNS at this time.

Addendum

Paul Cooijmans has made an interesting beginning in test design, but he has a long way to go. My own tests have passed through many revisions and much careful testing before reaching their final form, and so have those of Dr. Hoeflin.

Paul also needs to become familiar with the fundamentals of psychometric statistics. Work is needed, in particular, on item analysis, proper selection of data for inclusion in a sample, and computation of key statistical parameters.

Since I wrote the above, I have become more cautious about the potential for item weighting to improve the statistical behavior of test scores.

On Mega Admission Standards

Kevin Langdon

One year ago, in *Noesis* #125, I presented a table of comparative statistics on high scorers on the *LAIT* and the *Mega Test*, introduced by this paragraph:

I have examined much of the available data on the tests we accept. Here are statistics on the highest scores on the *LAIT* (from *Sigma Four* #5, January 1980; out of 15,000 testees) and the *Mega Test* (sixth norming report, May 1989; out of 3920). The [seventh] column shows the number of *Mega* testees at each level per 15,000, to facilitate comparison. As about 27,000 people have taken the *LAIT*, I estimate that the current totals are about twice the figures for this early sample.

My original table had only five columns. I have added three more columns to facilitate comparison between the two distributions. Two of the columns added show cumulative totals for the *LAIT* and the *Mega Test*.

The mean score for the *LAIT* sample was 2.84 sigma, approximately one in 495. The mean score for the *Mega* sample was 3.26 sigma, approximately one in 1735. In order to estimate the number of very high scores to be expected in a *Mega* sample of the same size as the *LAIT* sample (15,000) if the tests were of equal difficulty, the cumulative number for each *LAIT* score was adjusted by $1735/495 = 3.5$ (shown in the third added column). Columns 4 and 8 are most directly comparable.

I.Q.	LAIT (N=15,000)			Mega Test (N=3,920)			
	Number	Cum.	X 3.5	Raw	Number	Per 15K	Cum.
176	0	0	0	48	0	0	0
175	2	2	7	47	1	4	4
174	0	2	7	46	1	4	8
173	7	9	32	45	2	8	16
172	15	24	84	44	3	12	28
171	2	26	91	43	6	23	51
170	14	40	140	42	12	46	97
169	28	68	238	41	15	57	154
168	16	84	294	40	7	27	181
167	43	127	445	39	13	50	231
166	53	180	630	38	15	57	288
165	25	205	718	37	18	69	357
164	79	284	994	36	27	103	460

The similarity of the distributions is obvious--and to be expected, given that both samples were predominantly composed of *Omni* readers. The *Mega Test* has a slightly higher ceiling than the *LAIT*. There is a further question regarding the general population percentile corresponding to each score. My norms place the ceiling of the *LAIT* at 176; my study of Ron's data placed the ceiling of the *Mega Test* at 178; Ron contends that the ceiling is as much as ten points higher than this. If Ron is right, it follows that the ceiling of the *LAIT* is much higher than 176.

In my opinion, it's stretching things considerably to claim that these tests are accurate at their ceilings or a couple of points below them. The one-per-million level occurs at 176 on the *LAIT* and 46 on the *Mega*. Even if we allow one point for ceiling bumping, fewer than fifteen people have made scores this high on my tests or Ron's. I suggest that we lower our percentile cutoff to 99.9997, one in 300,000, 4.5 sigma, *Mega/Titan* 43, *LAIT* 172. Other views are invited.

The California Psychology Statute and the California Medical Board

Kevin Langdon

Acting on a complaint by Paul Maxim, the Medical Board of California, Division of Medical Quality, has initiated an investigation into the testing activities of my company, Polymath Systems (the Board has also contacted Dr. Hoeflin). The Board cited sections 2903 and 2970 of the California Business and Professions Code:

2903. Necessity of license; practice of psychology; psychotherapy

No person may engage in the practice of psychology, or represent himself to be a psychologist, without a license granted under this chapter, except as otherwise provided in this chapter. The practice of psychology is defined as rendering or offering to render for a fee to individuals, groups, organizations or the public any psychological service involving the application of psychological principles, methods, and procedures of understanding, predicting, and influencing behavior, such as the principles pertaining to learning, perception, motivation, emotions, and interpersonal relationships; and the methods and procedures of interviewing, counseling, psychotherapy, behavior modification, and hypnosis; and of constructing, administering, and interpreting tests of mental abilities, aptitudes, interests, attitudes, personality characteristics, emotions, and motivations.

The application of such principles and methods includes, but is not restricted to: diagnosis, prevention, treatment, and amelioration of psychological problems and emotional and mental disorders of individuals and groups.

Psychotherapy within the meaning of this chapter means the use of psychological methods in a professional relationship to assist a person or persons to acquire greater human effectiveness or to modify feelings, conditions, attitudes and behavior which are emotionally, intellectually, or socially ineffectual or maladjustive.

As used in this chapter, "fee" means any charge, monetary or otherwise, whether paid directly or paid on a prepaid or capitation basis by a third party, or a charge assessed by a facility, for services rendered.

2970. Violation; offense; punishment

Any person who violates any of the provisions of this chapter shall be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment in the county jail not exceeding six months, or by a fine not exceeding two thousand dollars (\$2,000), or by both.

Of course, the matter of credentials is irrelevant to the quality of my work in the science of psychometrics, which is highly regarded. I responded to the Medical Board by agreeing not to engage in illegal activities, without admitting wrongdoing. I am exploring my legal options at this point, but I will continue my work in psychometrics, either in California or elsewhere.

My fundamental position is that the highly gifted constitute a minority many of whose members have a strong need for contact with one another and that the super-high-I.Q. societies have a first-amendment right to select their own members. From this, it follows that there is a right to construct and administer the instruments required for this purpose (none of the standard tests discriminates reliably at the four-sigma level and above).

Proposed Amendment to New York Statute on the Practice of Psychology

Assembly Bill 7992, May 19, 1997; read once and referred to Committee on Higher Education.

Section 1. Section 7600 of the education law, as added by chapter 987 of the laws of 1971, is amended to read as follows:

SECTION 7600. Introduction. This article applies to THE PROFESSION OF PSYCHOLOGY AND to the use of the title "psychologist." The general provisions for all professions contained in article one hundred thirty of this title apply to this article.

Section 2. Section 7601 of the education law, as added by chapter 987 of the laws of 1971, is amended to read as follows:

SECTION 7601. Use of title "psychologist." Only a person licensed under this article shall be authorized to use the title "psychologist" or to describe his OR HER services by use of the words "psychologist," "psychology," or "psychological" in connection with his OR HER practice.

Section 3. The education law is amended by adding a new section 7601-a to read as follows: **SECTION 7601-A. DEFINITION OF THE PRACTICE OF PSYCHOLOGY.** THE PRACTICE OF THE PROFESSION OF PSYCHOLOGY IS DEFINED AS THE OBSERVATION, DESCRIPTION, EVALUATION, INTERPRETATION, AND MODIFICATION OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR BY THE APPLICATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES, METHODS, AND PROCEDURES, FOR THE PURPOSE OF PREVENTING OR ELIMINATING SYMPTOMATIC, MALADAPTIVE, OR UNDESIRED BEHAVIOR AND OF ENHANCING INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS, WORK AND LIFE ADJUSTMENT, PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, AND MENTAL HEALTH. THE PRACTICE OF PSYCHOLOGY INCLUDES, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO, PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING AND THE EVALUATION OR ASSESSMENT OF PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS SUCH AS INTELLIGENCE, PERSONALITY, ABILITIES, INTERESTS, APTITUDES, AND NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTIONING; COUNSELING, PSYCHOANALYSIS, PSYCHOTHERAPY, HYPNOSIS, BIOFEEDBACK AND BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS AND THERAPY; DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL DISORDER OR DISABILITY, ALCOHOLISM AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE, DISORDERS OF HABIT OR CONDUCT, AS WELL AS THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF PHYSICAL ILLNESS, ACCIDENT, INJURY OR DISABILITY; AND PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL EVALUATION, THERAPY, REMEDIATION AND CONSULTATION. PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES MAY BE RENDERED TO INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, GROUPS, AND THE PUBLIC. THE PRACTICE OF PSYCHOLOGY SHALL BE CONSTRUED WITHIN THE MEANING OF THIS DEFINITION WITHOUT REGARD TO WHETHER PAYMENT IS RECEIVED FOR SERVICES RENDERED.

Section 4. Section 7605 of the education law is amended by adding a new subdivision 5 to read as follows:

5. THE PERFORMANCE BY A PERSON LICENSED PURSUANT TO THIS TITLE, OTHER THAN A PSYCHOLOGIST, OF ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES SIMILAR TO THOSE WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE DEFINITION OF PRACTICES OF PSYCHOLOGY, WHERE SUCH ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES ARE AUTHORIZED WITHIN THE DEFINITION OF THE SCOPE OF PRACTICE OF THEIR PROFESSION AS SET FORTH IN THIS CHAPTER.

Section 5. This act shall take effect January 1, 1998; provided, however, that the commissioner of education and the board of regents are authorized to promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary for the timely implementation of this act.