

NOESIS

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Editorial

I've received a gratifying quantity, quality, and variety of material for this issue. I hope that your submissions will continue and that we can make this journal the vehicle for elevated and spirited intellectual dialogue it has the potential to be.

Robert Dick's "Thoughts That May Be Bases for Discussion" states the theme of this issue well. The material presented here includes a number of provocations and points of departure for exchange. Further contributions are solicited.

The latest version of Robert's "Constitution" is presented in a monospaced font, as the spacing is clearly intentional.

Three sections from Ron Hoeflin's book in progress (which is nearing completion), *The Structure of Philosophy: A Cybernetic Interpretation* (tentative title), are included in this issue of *Noesis*. Two more will be included in *Noesis* #137.

Ron Yannone has submitted a selection of Stephen Barr puzzles, which are reprinted in this issue of *Noesis* by permission of the publisher.

My responses to material in this issue will appear in the January issue.

I want to add something to my remarks about editorial standards in the last issue. Because members of these societies consistently show little interest in certain categories of submissions, the bar will be raised for these categories. Submissions in the following categories had better be damn good (i.e., thought-provoking) or they won't get published: poetry, fiction, humor, politics, religion, and revisionist science.

Noesis #136, December 1997

Noesis is the journal of the Mega Society, an organization whose members are selected by means of high-range intelligence tests. Jeff Ward, 13155 Wimberly Square #284, San Diego, CA 92128, is Administrator of the Mega Society. Inquiries regarding membership should be directed to him.

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Mathematical Aesthetics--A Case Study

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I sometimes wonder just what it is about some proofs that delights me, while others only convince. Sometimes I think I know, or at least I can rationalize my feelings. In the case I'll describe below, I have some idea. In this case, I wonder whether anybody agrees with me.

A standard piece of the mathematician's toolkit is proof by contradiction: a beautifully simple idea, frequently found difficult by students. I want to establish the truth of some proposition, P , so I assume it false, and deduce another proposition, Q , known to be false. If all I have used to deduce Q is P together with results known to be true, then the assumption that P is false is my only source of falsehood: the only alternative is that P be true. All very common sensical, though open to debate at greater levels of sophistication in mathematical logic. But let's not concern ourselves with that issue.

The first proof by contradiction we tend to inflict on our students is a proof that $\sqrt{2}$ is irrational. Throughout the remainder of this, I will denote the square root of 2 by $\sqrt{2}$. In fact, one particular proof is almost universally taught as the vehicle for this concept, and it's the one that goes like this...

Proof 1:

Suppose, on the contrary, that $\sqrt{2}$ is rational: then it can be expressed as m/n where m and n are integers with no common factor.

Squaring this, we find that $m^2/n^2 = 2$, so that $m^2 = 2n^2$, and thus m^2 is even. Since the product of two odd numbers is odd, for m^2 to be even, m must itself be even. So $m = 2k$, for some k .

But now we have $2n^2 = 4k^2$, so $n^2 = 2k^2$, and n^2 is therefore even. By the same argument as before, n is even.

Aha! m and n are both even, which means that they have a common factor of 2. This provides the contradiction I require, so I can deduce that $\sqrt{2}$ is actually irrational.

But there are other approaches. How about

Proof 2:

Again, we suppose that $\sqrt{2}$ is rational, so is given by m/n . (No assumption about common factors is needed this time.) I know, by the fundamental theorem of arithmetic, that each of m and n can be expressed uniquely as a product of powers of primes. Now, if I square an integer, I double the power of each prime, so I know that there must be an even power of 2 occurring in each of m and n . (It may be 0.) But $m^2 = 2n^2$, so the power of 2 in m^2 is greater by 1 than that in n^2 . Thus the power of 2 in m^2 is odd. I now have that the power must be both even and odd, which again provides me with a contradiction.

And, finally,

Proof 3:

Suppose that $\sqrt{2}$ is rational, and let k be the smallest positive integer which, when multiplied by $\sqrt{2}$, yields an integer. Consider the product $k(\sqrt{2} - \text{int}(\sqrt{2}))$. (Recall that $\text{int}(x)$ is the greatest integer no greater than x .) Since $\sqrt{2}$ is not an integer, $\sqrt{2} - \text{int}(\sqrt{2})$ is strictly between 0 and 1, and so $k(\sqrt{2} - \text{int}(\sqrt{2}))$ is between 0 and k . Furthermore, $k\sqrt{2}$ and $k\text{int}(\sqrt{2})$ are both integers, so $k(\sqrt{2} - \text{int}(\sqrt{2}))$ is an integer: multiplying it by $\sqrt{2}$ clearly gives another integer, which provides a contradiction to the definition of k . Thus $\sqrt{2}$ cannot be rational.

Now, these three proofs give rise to very different feelings in me.

The first one, which I have been inflicting on students for years, works. But that's about the best you can say for it. It's a kind of proof by persistence in the face of common sense, with sidetracks on the way, and it's a pain in the rear end to try to make it work for numbers other than 2. There's a pedagogical issue here too, in that most students can't adapt it to prove that $\sqrt{3}$ is irrational (and of those who can, quite a few can also use it on $\sqrt{4}$ --but I'm not really concerned with that at the moment).

The second is, in some sense, better. You can see more directly the nature of the contradiction, and it's easier to generalize to other cases. But you need to know the fundamental theorem of arithmetic to use it. It's more like proof by superior firepower.

The third made my hairline rise when I saw it. I was surprised and delighted, and felt compelled to rush around showing it to everybody I could corner. It requires no number theoretic knowledge, generalizes immediately to other cases, and gives me a warm glow inside. I don't know if I'd ever have thought of it, but I doubt it. It's proof by black magic. With the other two, I can see where they come from, but they're just dull. This last one seems to like a good joke that conveys important information at the same time.

So, am I alone in my reactions? Or do you guys react the same way?

Thoughts That May Be Bases for Discussion

Robert Dick
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Now that *Noesis* may be published every month or so instead of every three months or so, I would like to contribute more to this journal. There are obviously a number of extremely intellectually able people in Mega, and with Kevin's policy of cutting out the--dare I say it--garbage, I have high hopes of getting valuable responses if I write valuable articles. The thing I fear most is that the topics I value most may turn out to be totally uninteresting to many of the people whose intellects I value.

With these thoughts in mind I will list my views on a number of topics. If I get any indications of interest I will expand on the interesting topics at a later time.

I. My Constitution

This little item is my crowning glory. It is written in terms that are "easy to say," in words that a little child might use. Were I to justify my life--does it live up to my IQ scores--I would point to the joy list. It is the fruit of verbal ability I have never seen adequately tested on IQ tests. It is simple and profound at the same time.

II. Chaostan

The term "Chaostan" is the copyrighted concept of one Richard Maybury. See <http://www.chaostan.com/>. In much of central Asia the suffix -stan means the land of. Maybury's key insight is that in the lands once occupied by the Mongol Empire, plus the lands now occupied by Islam, the only practical political alternatives are tyranny and chaos. Tyranny in the form of the Soviet Union having collapsed, the next fate is chaos. The prototype for what will happen is Yugoslavia.

You see, democracy is not the answer to tyranny. There is no inherent reason why a numerical majority will not be cruel, rapacious, and tyrannical. Maybury posits these two rules as the basis for a free and just politics:

- 1) Do everything you have agreed to do.
- 2) Do not encroach on other persons and their property.

These rules are the basis of the English common law, and it is no accident, says Maybury, that the countries with English common law heritages are the richest and most civilized. But in Chaostan people have no grasp of these rules.

Once this model--dare I say paradigm--is grasped several policy recommendations follow:

A) Stay OUT of the hundreds and thousands of ethnic quarrels in Chaostan. Just about any US government intervention anywhere in the region will only increase entropy and make us enemies.

B) Be a shining city on a hill, not a Machiavellian superpower.

In particular, Maybury believes the opening campaign of World War III has already been fought in Kuwait. He thinks we should pull out of the Persian Gulf and let Persia--Iran--dominate the Gulf, which it will do eventually whether we like it or not.

III. Meltdown 2000

Steve Puetz (pronounced pits) is the writer of a financial newsletter and a recent book on why he thinks the world economy faces total collapse in the not very distant future. The basic problem is the inevitable government abuse of the power to print paper money, then force people to accept it for payments of debts.

Gold and silver have since time immemorial been real money, but today governments treat them as commodities. Government central banks have for decades been inflating the fiat credit balloon, giving the appearance of a healthy prosperity. Now people are so used to easy money that any attempt to take some air back out of the balloon, resulting in recession, is considered intolerable. A little more air now, a little more then--see how happy it makes everybody. But someday soon: BANG.

The world financial system is based on the US dollar. Instead of holding gold most central banks hold dollars. While they were buying those dollars the US was happy. Should they ever unload those dollars as a bank under attack would in the past have unloaded gold, watch out. The US government is bankrupt in that its obligations already far exceed its resources. The Emperor has no clothes, but he doesn't realize it yet.

Policy recommendation: Buy gold and silver while they are still cheap. Deleverage. That is, get out of debt, above all, get out of debts incurred to make investments. Such debts are a great thing in a raging bull market, but one quick swipe of the bear's paw and your net worth will go negative. Real estate and mortgages fall into this category too.

IV. Religion

I know Kevin has suggested in the past that my views on this topic do not interest him. Therefore I will refrain from sketching them here. If anyone wants to hear from me on this topic let me know.

V. A Near-Sheol Experience

On Oct 28, 1997 I had an operation to biopsy and possibly remove a "pancreatic mass." It was malignant. It was removed. I was in the hospital two weeks. It's the sickest I have ever been in my life--so far. I am still getting used to my new status as a cancer patient.

My oncologist tells me that with radiation therapy and chemotherapy my chances of beating the cancer are good.

VI. Legal Persecution

As economist Thomas Sowell has pointed out, the minimum wage law is the most antiblack legislation on the books. It works against newcomers and underskilled persons generally, and against marginally employable blacks in particular.

In the 1900s and 1910s there were a number of race riots in which white men dragged black men off of streetcars and killed them. Why? Because black men got less pay for the same work than did white men. The minimum wage laws now do the work of these vile white men, so that they are in effect legalized lynchings. Licensing laws serve a similar function.

VII. War

The subject of war has fascinated me for most of my life. I take not just a technical interest but a literary--even religious--interest. War is a negative-sum game. The best war is almost always no war. And yet, the best way to preserve the peace is to be prepared for war. Would someone care to make the case for pacifism? I can't. And yet somehow I worry that my interest in war is morbid. But then an MD's interest in disease could also be considered morbid.

MY CONSTITUTION

Robert James Dick Senior
As of April 1997

Joy

They who
live small
honor father
feel sorry
get new joy
forgive
renew the world
try hard to do right
grow new strength
give help
get new help
aim for one
see the One newly
give joy
are like a new
child of the One
get hurt yet do right
Joy
honor father.

The United States of America

...provide for the common defence,
promote the general Welfare, and
secure the Blessings of Liberty
to ourselves and our Posterity...

Marriage

Honor and cherish
unto all tomorrows.

Essays from "The Structure of Philosophy: A Cybernetic Interpretation"

Ronald K. Hoeflin

Philosophy As Cybernetic

The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy (pp. 173-174) has an article titled "Cybernetics" by Frederick Adams in which Adams points out that the word "cybernetics" was "coined by Norbert Weiner in 1947 from Greek *kubernetes*, 'helmsman'." "Feedback and feedforward" are said to be "the basic ingredients of cybernetic processes," which process "information." Another important distinction is that between "open-loop" and "closed-loop" systems, feedback being restricted to the closed loops.

From the standpoint of our theory an open loop would typically start at D, proceed through A and G, and end at Q (although some philosophical systems, as we shall see, start and end at other places). A closed loop, by comparison, would typically start at D, proceed through A, G and Q, and end back at D again.

A third important distinction mentioned by Adams is that between positive and negative feedback. Positive feedback accentuates disequilibrium, typically terminating in disruption of the system, as in the high-pitched whine in a microphone's feedback or the overdosing of a habitual drug addict. Negative feedback tends to dampen or suppress disequilibrium, as in the human body's regulation of its own temperature to keep it at or near 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. As an illustration of negative feedback, Adams offers the example of a "thermostatically controlled heating system":

The actual room temperature (system output) carries information to the thermostat that can be compared (via goal-state comparator) to the desired temperature for the room (input) as embodied in the set-point on the thermostat; a correction can then be made to minimize the difference (error)—the furnace turns on or off.

The concepts Adams puts in parentheses can be correlated with Pepper's basic components of a purposive act as follows:

Phase	Aspect of thermostatic feedback system
QD	Goal-state comparator
DA	Input (= desired temperature for the room)
AG	Minimizing error (= minimizing the difference between desired and actual room temperature)
GQ	System output (= information about actual room temperature carried to the thermostat)

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The goal-state comparator compares the room temperature to the desired temperature. It can be classed in QD if we construe the actual room temperature as an observed quiescent state, Q, and the desired room temperature as a drive, D, to achieve or maintain some specific temperature.

The input can be classed in DA because it is said to be "the desired temperature for the room," which is a drive, D, "as embodied in the set-point on the thermostat," which is a specification of the temperature aimed for or anticipated, A.

Minimizing error involves turning the furnace on or off in order to bring the actual temperature more in line with the desired temperature. We can classify this factor in AG if we think of A as the "set-point on the thermostat" specifying the aimed for or anticipated temperature, while G is the temperature of the room, which Q specifies as a temperature reading (information). Turning the furnace on or off is like adjusting the direction and tension on a bow and arrow in order to send the arrow to the anticipated, A, target, G.

As an illustration of how cybernetics correlates with a typical philosophical structure, consider the following classification of Aristotle's four causes:

Phase	Aristotelian cause
D	Final
A	Efficient
G	Material
Q	Formal

Final cause, like a drive, D, specifies the purpose, goal, or end aimed for, as for instance the hunger drive aims for food, the consumption of which will induce a quiescence of the drive. Efficient cause is the means or mechanism that is anticipated, A, to resolve the drive. Material cause is the set of dangerous shoals or goal objects which a helmsman must navigate to attain his ultimate quiescence. And formal cause is the savoring of the quiescence, Q, of one's efforts, as in the *taste* of honey, of meat, or of water.

Stephen Pepper himself substituted the expression "selective system" for "purposive act" in his 1967 book *Concept and Quality* when he wished to talk about systems more general than a single person such an institution (school, army, bank, etc.). I believe that he had in mind by a "selective system" is fairly similar to what Norbert Wiener had in mind by a "cybernetic system." Pepper used the phrase "selective system" as early as his 1958 book, *The Sources of Value*. But Norbert Wiener's word "cybernetics" was coined ten years earlier (1948, according to the *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary*, tenth ed., but 1947, according to the *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*), and it has, unlike Pepper's phrase, gained wide currency. So I have chosen to use the more popular and familiar term "cybernetic" to characterize the basic pattern in terms of which I analyze a host of philosophical structures.

Godel's Theorems

In the article "Godel's Incompleteness Theorems" by Michael Detlefsen in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* Godel's theorems of 1931 are described as "probably the most celebrated results in the whole of logic."

These theorems show that for various important formal systems or logical languages such as that of Whitehead and Russell's *Principia Mathematica* "there is a sentence formulable in its language that it cannot prove, but that it would be desirable for it to prove" (p. 298). Detlefsen says that Godel's results are "based on three main ideas," but since the second of these is divided into two parts, I shall treat these "three main ideas" as four. "The first is that of a *Godel numbering*, i.e., an assignment of natural numbers to each of the various objects (i.e., the terms, formulas, axioms, proofs, etc.) belonging to" the represented theory. "The second is that of a *representational scheme*." This includes (i) the use of the Godel numbering to develop number-theoretic codifications of various of the metamathematical properties pertaining to the represented theory, and (ii) the selection of a theory S (hereafter, the 'representing theory') and a family of formulas from that theory ('representing formulas') in terms of which to register as theorems various of the facts concerning the metamathematical properties of the represented theory thus encoded." Finally, "The third main idea . . . is that of a *diagonal* or *fixed point* construction within S for the notion of 'unprovability in T.'" (pp. 298-299)

These four main ideas can be classified as follows:

Phase	Main idea of Godel's theorems
D	(3) formulation of the notion of "unprovability in T"
A	(2) (ii) Formulation of a representing theory, S, and its formulas
G	(2) (i) Formulation of metamathematical properties of the represented theory
Q	(1) Formulation of numbers to represent formulas, etc., of the represented theory

We can construe the issue of "unprovability" as the crucial problem or drive that motivates the formulation of Godel's results.

The representing theory, S, is an instrument for anticipating, A, what to expect of the represented theory, T.

The represented theory, T, can be thought of as the goal object, G, or object of concern for Godel's theorems. The Godel numberings simply provide a more systematic way of representing that object than the more usual symbols.

Finally, the metamathematical properties of the represented theory, T, (such as its consistency, completeness, etc.) can be thought of as quiescent qualities, Q, of T, like the sweetness, Q, of of sugar, G.

Freedom

In the article "Free Will Problem" by Tomis Kapitan in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* ten interpretations of "free" are mentioned; the first two being common to "most" views and the others being favored by one theory or another. They are as follows (emphases are Kapitan's): (1) "absence of determination," (2) "one's own," (3) "*freedom (liberty) of indifference*," divided into two kinds, namely the "contingency of alternative courses of action," and (4) "motivational equilibrium," (5) "*freedom (liberty) of spontaneity*," meaning "doing what you want," (6) exercise of

control, (7) "autonomy" with respect to "character," (8) with respect to a "deeper self," (9) with respect to "higher values," or (10) with respect to "informed reason."

I would classify these ten interpretations of freedom as follows:

Phase	Interpretation of freedom
D	(5) Spontaneity as doing what you want
DA	(4) Indifference as motivational equilibrium
A	(3) Indifference as contingent alternative
AG	(6) Exercise of control
G	(8) Autonomy of a deeper self
GQ	(7) Autonomy of character
Q	(9) Autonomy of higher values
QD	(1) Absence of determinism
DG	(2) One's own
AQ	(10) Autonomy of informed reason

Spontaneity as doing what you want can be classed in D since a desire or want indicates a drive. To want something is to have a drive to have it.

Indifference as motivational equilibrium is explained by Kapitan only as "a condition some find essential to the idea that a free choice must be rational." We might classify it in DA if we think of motivation as a drive factor, D, and rationality as the ability to formulate adequate anticipations, A.

Indifference as involving contingent alternatives can be classed in A because our alternative anticipations must each be genuinely available options.

Exercise of control can be classed in AG, where A is the anticipatory act and G is the goal object being influenced or controlled, as when with a hammer, A, one hits a nail, G.

Autonomy of a deeper self can be classed in G if we think of this self as some sort of objective entity or goal object, such as the subconscious personality, which is discovered with effort (as in psychoanalysis).

Autonomy of character can be classed in GQ, where G is the underlying personality and Q are its manifested traits or characteristics.

Autonomy of higher values can be classed in Q if we think of such values as whatever we consider yields ultimate quiescent experiences.

Absence of determinism can be classed in QD, where Q is the quiescent experience that is having an impact on the self and D is the self or drive-bearer that it has an impact on.

Freedom as being "one's own" might be classed in DG, where D is the act of will and G is the physical entity which it belongs to, the self as a physical goal object or body. Tom's own hunger is a drive that belongs to the physical entity called Tom.

Finally, autonomy as informed reason can be classed in AQ if we think of reason as the ability to formulate apt strategies or anticipations, A, and being informed as the quiescent results, Q, that we derive from such reasoned anticipations.

Levels of Integration

Kevin Langdon

This short essay from my "analytical tracking" phenomenological writings, written in 1980 and slightly revised for publication in this issue of Noesis, resembles both Ron Hoeflin's essays and Chris Langan's writings in certain respects.

Mind can be quite chaotic or it can attain to one or another level of integration. From a certain point of view, eight levels can be discerned:

The Maelstrom (-)
Contact (+)
Contextual Definition (-)
Contextual Articulation (+)
Philosophical Inquiry (-)
Analytical Tracking (+)
Emotional Modulation (-)
Metaphysical Articulation (+)

The minus and plus signs indicate that these levels are alternately passive and active states. For each pair of states, the lower, passive level defines a context and poses a question which sets the stage for the emergence of the active level.

The Maelstrom is the level of chaotic dreams, of schizophrenia, of a diseased organism that is not in contact with its environment. On this level there is no clear significance, no understanding of even the most elementary meaning.

Contact is the level of animal alertness. A creature occupies a place in its world and responds to stimuli appropriate to that place. This level is the foundation of conscious experience of life. It is the felt need for this that motivates all sensation-seeking and activity for the sake of its kinetic quality. When this is missing, higher levels have a flat, unreal quality.

Contextual Definition is the level of differentiation of a specific area of interest with concomitant focus of attention.

Contextual Articulation is mastery of a field of activity, the ability to actualize a completed and harmonious product. It is the first level where a creative element is involved.

Philosophical Inquiry is the level of differentiation of the whole of things as a field of study. It appears in a pure form in young children and, at times, in ordinary people in the course of the day-to-day business of living, when a question about the meaning of life and its place in the universe appears. What is called philosophy rarely partakes of this quality to any significant extent, being reduced to Contextual Definition and Contextual Articulation and thus not connected with its subject matter.

Analytical Tracking is the level on which the whole of one's experience is taken as the ground of study; active attention to the information contained in ordinary psychological states and processes reveals hidden levels of meaning. Without this, higher levels lack solidity.

Emotional Modulation is the level of experience of values as inhering in the objects of attention. This experience is passive but through it the intelligence of the organism begins to become organized and play an active part in the process of living.

Metaphysical Articulation is direct, practical, and unconditioned understanding of the laws underlying phenomena, transcending subject/object dualism.

Some Simple Stephen Barr Puzzles

Ron Yannone

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Steve Barr authored the book "Mathematical Brain Benders: 2nd Miscellany of Puzzles" that had some nice and relaxing problems. I thought the members would like them. If you desire any answers, feel free to e-mail me.

Q1 - This is a question not of theory, but about practice: A single sheet of *The New York Times*, opened out flat, measures approximately 22 by 30 in., if folded in half it will be 15 by 22 in. (like one printed page). Will its proportions be as 15 to 22, or 22 to 30 when folded in half a total of ten times?

Q2 - If we are told that certain letters in the words "Standard Oath" represent something to do with a number series, what should the next letters be?

Q3 - Guess within thirty percent how many kings have been crowned in England since the Norman Conquest.

Q4 - When the professor started spooning sugar into his coffee, Mrs. M. Said, "The spoon's wet - it won't let go of all the sugar." "I know," he said, "but I stir with it, also." "Then you get more than you bargained for, because it sticks to the bottom of the spoon, also. That is, unless you want a little more than a spoonful." "No, I like an exact measurement, but with the number I take, it comes out just right." How many did he take?

Q5 - A man was sending a lot of letters by airmail. He had an accurate scale for weighing, but he always took the letters to be weighed at the post office. Why?

Q6 - Optical illusion is not new in the arts; any realistic picture in perspective is an optical illusion. Parenthetically, such pictures are abstractions - of a three-dimensional reality - whereas so-called abstractions, not being of anything, would be more correctly termed concretes, or Aldens, since they speak for themselves. A perspective representation is the projection by lines converging to a point of a three-dimensional object onto a plane. It differs from orthogonal projection in that the latter uses parallel lines. In both cases a cone, shown at an angle, gives an image which is an ellipse with two lines. The illusion succeeds; we see a cone.

Our problem here is to carry the process one stage further: To make a three-dimensional model (of cardboard) which, when viewed at the correct angle, and with one eye, will give the illusion of having a different form, in this case a cube, seen from the corner. The required model will thus be the projection in perspective of a cube onto a *different* three-dimensional form, but the *simplest*. (Describe the projection in detail).

From *Mathematical Brain Benders: Second Miscellany of Puzzles*, by Stephen Barr (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1982). Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

Members and Subscribers List

December 1997

The following listing of members and others receiving *Noesis* does not include addresses. The officers of Mega felt that it would not be wise to provide Chris Langan with a ready means of contacting those who may not wish to receive his version of *Noesis*. For those who *do* want to receive Chris' unofficial newsletter, his address is P.O. Box 131, Speonk, NY 11972.

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Karyn Huntting	Jim Thompson

Letter to the Editor

Chris Harding
P.O. Box 5271
Central Qld Mail Centre 4702
Australia

Dear Kevin Langdon:

You asked for comment.

I believe the cut-off level should remain at the 99.9999 %ile.

The Society is one of Dr. Hoeflin's achievements and has nothing to do with me either.

If there is a test problem with available tops then this can be solved simply by administering one of the two currently used tests and then retesting all applicants meeting a set point where few will be missed by a more advanced test. If the error of measurement is $1/3$ sigma retesting all those $2/3$ sigma below the ceilings of the existing test will lose only 25% of those who would qualify on the higher test. If you move the cut-off to 1 sigma below the ceiling you will lose 10% of them. If you move it to $1-1/3$ sigma below the cut-off you lose 2%. So my suggestion is that this figure be the accepted one since it is unlikely even the superior test will reach such a comparable level, i.e., it is never going to be likely that it is 98% accurate in picking the correct candidate.

The final test need only to be a quite short one--say 20 to 30 items. The difficulty would be set so that 50% of items scored correct would reach the 99.9999 %ile. The difficulty level can be placed above the level of the final people--thus almost all candidates would go bust doing it.

A further requirement would be that the multiple choices given would leave them all with the impression they'd won through. This would prevent answers being given out and/or test copies floating around. For this to be possible all the answers given would need to appear very plausible.

Another way of doing this is to increase the sheer number of choices given to tessees--say to 20 choices.

Dr. Hoeflin, you, and I have by now enough experience with test construction to put a final test together that will meet all the above requirements.

I have been toying with the idea of a mindstretching test that will call upon the span of the person's ability to keep the concept constant that can have its items generated by a computer, e.g., writing a computer program than can generate larger and larger sets of involved rules thus allowing almost any number of such items to be spawned, the only effort being in the initial construction of the program--but that is a single concept.

You may choose to reject such a notional idea.

Humanity in the collective produces only the odd great man or two in any century. We must see ourselves in light of this. Your work in test construction has been championed by two of psychology's luminaries and doing a straw poll of our Mega membership would, I'm sure, produce a few more comparables and many big achievers in genral. So we are already out of proportion to our numbers.

Comments on East Coast "Noesis" #136

Kevin Langdon

"If you think I give myself credit for some pretty advanced insight, you're probably right." --Chris Langan

Chris Langan has presented us with 27 pages of his usual megalomaniacal ranting and one page from Darryl Miyaguchi in his latest production.

I appreciate finally seeing what the NCAHF wrote about me in their newsletter. I expect that my attorney will also be interested.

According to a complainant, Mr. Langdon's principal objective in carrying on this illegal program was to inflate the I.Q. of his testees.

The NCAHF has an obligation to check its facts before broadcasting such wild allegations based on speculation about my motives. They didn't even contact me and they didn't send me a copy of their newsletter.

I refuted Paul Maxim's assertions regarding the accuracy of my norming of the *LAIT* in *Noesis* ##122 and 125. As Mr. Maxim has not bothered to study elementary statistics, this was not difficult. And there's no doubt who's trying to inflate the I.Q. of his testees.

This was done to qualify them for enrollment in "high IQ societies" which he controlled and from which he derived prestige and dues income.

Isn't it amazing? Here I've been controlling you hypnotically and you didn't even know it.

That last bit about "dues income" goes beyond what even Mr. Maxim claims.

Chris exhibited a letter of July 29 from Lorna Clark, a "Consumer Services Analyst" with the California Medical Board, to Jacqueline White (TNS once and, some say, present Membership Officer), in which Ms. Clark took it upon herself to advise Mrs. White, "The Board encourages you not to seek further services from Mr. Langdon thereby aiding and abetting the unlicensed practice of psychology."

As I have pointed out before, "seeking further services" from me is not the same thing as *using my tests for admission purposes*, which does not involve any action on my part and from which I derive no revenue. And the California statute specifically applies only to services for which a fee is charged. This didn't stop Chris from commenting:

In other words, the Board of Psychology of the Medical Board of California has unequivocally classified the acceptance (or solicitation, or recommendation) of Langdon test scores as **criminal activity in its own right**. Since Ron Hoeflin is in the same boat as Kevin, this goes for his tests as well.

The perceptive reader will have noticed a gap in Chris' reasoning here.

Chris went on to repeat his lame suggestion that we relabel what we test for as "IEQ" to keep the authorities off our back. "Get yer sneak oil here!"

That won't work. The authorities aren't that stupid. But they're not, in fact, in the business of regulating organizations that don't practice I.Q. testing themselves. Also, we are free to operate in many places other than California and New York. And legal restrictions on the practice of high-range testing, which is required in order for extremely gifted people to find one another, are patently unconstitutional.

In addition to questions of appropriate strategy for dealing with possible legal difficulties, there's another point to consider. Nobody has shown much interest in Chris Harding's "A.Q." ("Ability Quotient") Daniel Goleman's "E.Q." (Goleman's "E.Q. Test" is on the World Wide Web at <http://www.utne.com/cgi-bin/eq>), or Chris Langan's "I.E.Q.," but there's plenty of interest in plain old I.Q. Promoting ourselves as a "high-I.E.Q. society" would not be likely to attract members.

Chris Langan complained that the unofficial Mega Society Web sites don't present his version of how things are in the society. But what is going on here is sort of like a marching band with a tuba player who marches off in one direction with his little dog (unfortunately not toilet-trained) while everyone else goes in another (because the tuba player never listens to any of the other instruments and marches with his eyes closed). Naturally, an impartial observer asked "Where's the band?" will not point to the wayward tuba player.

Commenting on Darryl Miyaguchi's Web site, Chris wrote:

Another piece of misinformation is the following, which is supposed to be from [Scot] Morris' introduction to *Omni Magazine's* 1985 publication of the Mega Test.

Of the (Mega) Test's 48 questions, 10 correct corresponds to an I.Q. of 133, the cutoff for membership in Mensa (...), and 43 right, or an estimated I.Q. of 177 is the cutoff for the Mega Society.

The number "43" in the above sentence should be "42." One might suspect a mere typo were it not for the following additional assertions:

About 3 people have scored 47, but only on a second attempt. This includes Eric Hart. 'Eric Hart' turned out to be a pseudonym for an individual who scored 42 on his first attempt of the Mega Test.

This is both incorrect and unfair. Eric Hart's score of 47--and rumor has it that he deliberately blew one of the easiest questions on the test in order to avoid unfair harassment regarding "previous attempts"--must be treated as a first attempt. This is because Eric, like all of the readers of *Omni Magazine* in 1985, was led to, and this lie affected how Eric (and possibly others) handled the Mega Test at that time.

One might suspect a mere factual correction were it not for the fact that "*Eric Hart*" is a pseudonym of Chris Langan. I have this on good authority but anyone who doubts it has only to read on:

Given the available information, Hart's handling of the Mega Test was maximally intelligent, and the resulting score cannot be attributed to any initial failure, as Darryl seems to insinuate.

There's only room for one "maximally intelligent" person in Chris' scheme of things. All of a sudden a one-point difference hedges Chris' bet: he's one-in-a-million

either way (and "scores above 42 have little reliability in any event"). But both the Mega society and the "MONTH" society had been accepting 43 on the *Mega* since before the merger. (That's not the one-in-a-million level, either, in my opinion, but it's closer.)

Chris maintains that the *Mega Test* has been compromised through circulation of answers, and there apparently has been some discussion of test answers on the Internet; opinions vary on how serious this is. But Chris went on to say that "the Mega Society had unofficially decided to retire the test." Mega admission standards cannot be altered "unofficially"; they represent a membership consensus regarding the tests we accept and our qualifying score on each.

In "On the Recent Counterelection and the Legality of Our New Admissions Policy," Chris Langan wrote:

The results of the Mega Society counterelection are in, and it's official. The ECF positions marked "B" on the ballot were chosen right down the line on questions 1-5. Accordingly, the Mega Society now accepts both IQ and IEQ test scores as proof of qualification. Moreover, since there were no other nominees for editor, it looks like I'll have to continue performing those duties, at least for the time being.

While there were few votes in this election, that was expected. The members of our group do not, as a rule, like to participate in elections, preferring to remain on the sidelines and adopt detached postures regarding the issues that confront us. That's fine, as long as it does not allow any destructive parasitic clique to commandeer our administrative machinery by "electing" itself over the heads of the vast majority of members. Preventing the latter contingency is what the remedial counterelection was about, and the number of voters is thus irrelevant.

Why is it irrelevant? **Because one cannot "vote" to disobey the laws of society at large,** and the minute that one does so, one's vote becomes invalid.

There were seven votes in the election conducted by Chris Cole, just over a quarter of the membership, according to the results published in *Noesis* #134. Why didn't Chris Langan report the number of votes he received in his "election"? Oh, I forgot--it's *irrelevant*.

The legal situation is certainly nowhere near as dire as Chris represents it to be. We are under no obligation to alter our admission standards to suit the state of California--and the state's interest in the Mega Society is hypothetical in any case.

And, once again, Chris shows his contempt for the will of the membership of the Mega Society.

In his "Open Reply to Darryl Miyaguchi," Chris put forward a bizarre claim to the editorship of *Noesis* based on an arrangement between Chris and Ron Hoeflin *before the merger of the two societies*. As the members were not consulted, Chris' claim is obviously not binding on the society.

As he has done several times before, Chris felt called upon to remind us of some of the rawest material published by Rick Rosner in *Noesis*. I am reminded of a well-known Zen story.

A senior Zen monk and a novice were traveling from one monastery to another. To continue on their way they had to cross a river with no bridge. On the riverbank, they found a frail old woman who also needed to cross the river but was too weak to ford the swiftly-running river. Seeing her plight, the senior monk picked her up and carried her across the river. After they had gone on for a mile or two, the younger monk could not contain himself, and asked, "The rules of our order forbid us to touch a woman. Why did you carry that woman across the river?" The older monk replied, "I put her down on the river bank; you are still carrying her."

Chris wrote:

If the superhigh-IQ societies are ever to achieve the recognition they crave, they will need the support of the psychometric community, and denying admission to people with mega-level scores on standardized tests is certainly not the way to get it.

The people with the strongest craving for recognition are Chris Langan and Paul Maxim. The psychometric community takes a very dim view of attempting to extract more information from a data set than is warranted by the data. No responsible psychometrician would consider it proper for us to accept childhood scores like Mr. Maxim's as signifying one-in-a-million-level intelligence.

In "On the West Coast Edition of 'Noesis 135'," Chris wrote:

Kevin Langdon's part of the WCF newsletter [sic] is an intriguing mixture of counterfactuality, snappy political jingoism, and glaring self-contradiction. In it, he diagnoses me with a God complex, orders me to "get a life," reduces the CTMU to "wrong + wrong = right," and pronounces all of my writings "crap" while shamelessly plugging his own . . . and all this from a person who has been accusing Paul Maxim of unwarranted *ad hominem* attacks!

Sensitive, aren't we? Chris doesn't seem to recognize hyperbole when he sees it. I find some of Chris' writings interesting, but it doesn't help the credibility of his CTMU that he has refused to provide an intelligible introduction to it, starting from first principles, after promising that such an introduction would be forthcoming. With Chris' writing about the CTMU, one always gets the feeling that one has come in in the middle of something.

I have not spoken of Chris' personal characteristics other than the poor judgment and extreme egotism which are apparent from his writings and which color his thinking about other people and Mega Society business. This is not at all the same thing as an *ad hominem* argument.

I find that Chris frequently loses contact with reality. He is locally rational and globally irrational. If I were a Licensed Psychologist I would point out that this is a key aspect of the diagnostic signature of schizophrenia, but I'm not so I won't.

In his "Open Reply to Chris Cole's 'Open Letter to Chris Langan'," Chris wrote:

In fact, I myself thought that Paul had gone off the deep end when he accused Kevin of operating a "cult." But then I reexamined the issue, and noticed that Kevin does indeed use certain tactics favored by cult leaders . . . for example,

systematically attempting to strip his followers of human dignity and self-confidence by making calculatedly demeaning statements like "The Mega Society is ineffectual and ridiculous, as Rick Rosner was so fond of reminding us."

This is what I was talking about when I told Chris to get a life. It's the society, not its members, that's ineffectual and often ridiculous.

Mega members are not my "followers" and I strip no one of human dignity; I strip imposters of their masks.

Incidentally, you're well aware that the personally-appointed editor of your newsletter, Kevin Langdon, has never solved any significant problem which did not bear directly on the profit margin of his IQ testing business.

What "profit margin"? My testing business generally runs a "loss margin."

At the end of an article titled "On the Editorials of Kevin Langdon," which needs little in the way of reply, Chris wrote:

As we have all repeatedly witnessed, Kevin always wants to put the burden of proof on the other person. That way, when the other person comes through--and I offer myself as a frequent example--Kevin can claim that the proof is "incomprehensible," and so on *ad nauseum* [sic].

I'm not the only one to find Chris' "proofs" incomprehensible--but that may just be because *all our I.Q.'s are more than 30 points below Chris'*.

In his "Open Reply to Kevin Langdon," Chris wrote:

Paul Maxim a "vicious lunatic"? Gee, I hope that nobody was planning to sue anyone for *libel* around here. They and their friends might get sued back.

Truth is a sufficient defense to libel.

And Chris should be careful about threats to sue one person on account of another's actions. This would not help his case if any of this were to wind up in court.

I never even asked anybody to "pay for my new toy" (the desktop computer system I'm using to publish *Noesis*, which I felt duty-bound to acquire after *Noesis* did its vanishing act for 2/3 of a year).

But in his publication mislabeled "Noesis #134," Chris wrote:

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.

Chris keeps throwing stones straight up into the air; then he's surprised when they come down on his head.