

Noesis

The Journal of the Mega Society

Issue #191 January 2011

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About the Mega Society

The Mega Society was founded by Dr. Ronald K. Hoeflin in 1982. The 606 Society (6 in 10⁶), founded by Christopher Harding, was incorporated into the new society and those with IQ scores on the Langdon Adult Intelligence Test (LAIT) of 173 or more were also invited to join. (The LAIT qualifying score was subsequently raised to 175; official scoring of the LAIT terminated at the end of 1993, after the test was compromised). A number of different tests were accepted by 606 and during the first few years of Mega's existence. Later, the LAIT and Dr. Hoeflin's Mega Test became the sole official entrance tests, by vote of the membership. Later, Dr. Hoeflin's Titan Test was added. (The Mega was also compromised, so scores after 1994 are currently not accepted; the Mega and Titan cutoff is now 43—but either the LAIT cutoff or the cutoff on Dr. Hoeflin's tests will need to be changed, as they are not equivalent.)

Mega publishes this irregularly-timed journal. The society also has a (low-traffic) members-only e-mail list. Mega members, please contact the Editor to be added to the list.

For more background on Mega, please refer to Darryl Miyaguchi's "A Short (and Bloody) History of the High-IQ Societies"--

<http://www.eskimo.com/~miyaguch/history.html>

--the Editor's High-IQ Societies page--

<http://www.polymath-systems.com/intel/hiqsocs/index.html>

--and the official Mega Society page,

<http://www.megasociety.org/>

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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 at the address above or:

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Editorial

Kevin Langdon

At what has become our usual long interval here is another issue of *Noesis*, with a variety of interesting articles. I had intended to publish a second issue in 2010 but there were articles submitted at the last minute and technical problems that pushed this issue over into 2011.

To start off, we have Brian Schwartz' description of a trip to the Four Corners region where Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah meet, with evocative descriptions of the world of the Navajo and the Hopi in the American Southwest.

Next, David Minster explores the questions raised by the growing symbiosis between human beings and computers.

Tal Brooke writes about the erosion of Americans' personal privacy in the name of security, and the public's failure to realize that this is a serious threat to our freedom.

Howard Schwartz discusses the usefulness of conceptual thought and how it can get out of control and hinder one's ability to accurately model real-world phenomena.

Richard Badke presents a number of intriguing speculations about the mentality of prehistoric humans, based on some shrewd guesses about the artifacts they left behind.

Jeff Ward has written an interesting report on his trip to the Italian island territory of Lampedusa.

Next is one of a series of the Editor's biographical sketches, "Boy Scout Camp."

Charles Schwartz has contributed a very interesting article about the genetics of intelligence, and a call for participants in an ongoing study of the highly intelligent.

The issue concludes with two philosophical musings in poetic form by Richard Ruquist and May-Tzu (Richard May).

None of the three Schwartzes whose work is included in the issue is related to any of the others (nor are the three Richards related), to our knowledge (but is there really any such thing as coincidence? ;-)).

Mega Society elections are again overdue. We have three officers: Editor, Internet Officer, and Administrator. Currently these positions are occupied by Kevin Langdon, Chris Cole, and Jeff Ward, respectively. If you are interested in running for any of these offices please contact the Editor.

And, as usual, we need material for publication. Please submit your writings and/or images (in Word or plaintext format). Try to get them in by March 15.

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Four Corners

Brian Schwartz

Night fell somewhere around Amarillo, and the stars blazed down as we crossed the high plains of New Mexico. First light just outside Gallup, and from a hill we saw the endless empty lands and red mesas of the Four Corners spread out below us. The flatlands stretched on and on, a rich blue-green carpet of desert vegetation. A lot of bushy salsola weeds, mixed with who knows what. It's basically desert but there are 500 species of plants out there. I was wide awake now. The arid land hummed with life and energy. It was another world. The Navajo world.

The Navajo trickled in from northern Canada about 1000 years ago but now the Four Corners is the center of their world, and for them the world ends if they leave the area bounded by their four sacred mountains. It's a tightly ordered world. Everything has its assigned place and meaning, and all the shapes correspond. The four mountain directions find their analogy in the walls of the traditional Navajo house, the hogan. The south walls are for making a living; weaving takes place there. The north is for reverence, and it's there that blessing ceremonies are organized. The women stay on the north side; women are sacred, powerful, and it's they who own family property. A man moves in with his wife's family.

As we drove through the rugged roads of the Navajo Nation, I could see houses scattered on the high plateau as if a giant man had thrown handfuls of dice around. Most were trailers or cinderblock low flat houses, but each and every one of them had a hogan attached. They weren't used except for ceremonies but no one wanted to cut themselves off from this link to ancient tradition and harmony of life.

I first ran across the Navajo concepts of harmony about 5 years ago while researching Navajo weavings. I'd read a lot of the dry history of classic weaving's three phases, and a lot of the bloody history of how the Navajo were dispersed and chased and killed and herded onto some barren land far to the east before, years later in 1868, being allowed to return. But it was only when I stumbled on the delightful novels written by Tony Hillerman that I was first introduced to the Navaho concept of *hozho*. One source nicely (and hopefully accurately) defines it as "harmony, beauty, balance, tranquility, equilibrium, rightness, centred, present moment centred awareness, truth, clarity of action, thought and thinking." I immediately put a postscript on my Navajo rug essay and here's part of it: "The Navajo believe in the interconnectedness of the natural world. If a butterfly flapping its wings in China causes a storm in New Mexico, they wouldn't be surprised at all. They have a word for it. *Hozho*. It connotes harmony and balance. It also connotes beauty. The beauty of their weavings is an attempt to express and honor the beauty, the *hozho*, of the natural world."

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And we drove, and the land went on and on, harsh desert land yet teeming with life, and the few scattered houses, and I felt as if, just as the ancient Hebraic religions make sense if you trek through the harsh Judean hills, *hozho*, if it feels right anywhere, feels right here.

I was too dazzled to take any photos in the Navajo Nation but later on I took this photo just after we'd left it, and it gives you some idea of the terrain:



Their traditions steeped in ecology, the Navajo unwittingly and ironically violated them. They ruined the land. Wood-gathering stripped the terrain. Later, around 1600, they got sheep from the Spanish. Herds of sheep ate the grass down to the roots, turned the lush grasslands into desert. Just beyond the sleepy capital of the Navajo Nation, Window Rock, where we ate a McDonald's breakfast served by a kindly Navajo lady and watched stray dogs fight in the parking lot, we passed through hills planted with evergreens in a recent attempt to restore the land. Beyond that, we saw desert flatland and scattered hogans as we approached the rugged hills beyond.

The hills closed in around us. Jagged cliffs and monstrous mesas hemmed us in. We came to a place named Steamboat (strange name here) and found a tiny store with a laundromat attached. If you have no electricity or running water, a laundromat is a fine

and precious thing, and this one was packed. Then we were through the hills and entered Hopi land. The Hopis, pueblo people, have been in the area forever. Northern Arizona is dotted with long-abandoned ruins built by the mysterious Anasazi people, who disappeared during a drought around the time of Genghis Khan. Not quite disappeared; some of them drifted into the Four Corners and became known as Hopi. During the 1600s, to escape the Spanish conquistadors, they moved their villages to the tops of rugged mesas, sometimes running 50 miles every day to till the fertile fields in the green valley of Moenkopi. Here's a look at that valley; you can see why it's worth a long walk in the desert.



The Hopis have a cosmology like the Navajos, also tied to the land, but it's much more complex and little known to outsiders. Their world is one of peace and harmony, and their calendar is punctuated by a complex round of ceremonies. The gods (or so they say) join them during planting and harvest, and dancing and masked processions celebrate their arrival. Even today, when it's far easier to live on the flatlands, the cliff-top villages (and the ceremonies) thrive. The Hopi eschatology is much like the Book of Revelation. We are living in an era called the Fourth World, and that is coming to an end, but the Fifth World can begin only if those sacred villages are occupied by Hopi.

Tourists visit the Hopi lands, and bring needed cash, but they bring disruption too so nothing is done to welcome them. The turnoff for the fabled villages of First Mesa is barely marked at all. I was looking for it and I spotted it and off we went. UP we went, as the narrow bumpy road suddenly climbed in switchback curves, rock wall on one side and a 1000-foot drop on the other. The dizzying roller-coaster ride disoriented me. I hadn't felt that way since hitchhiking the narrow skyways of Tibet. Then with little warning we were on top, thousands of feet above the land that stretched out on either side. Crazy low-slung houses were jumbled up together like one sprawling monstrous organic being. (And in fact most of those houses are connected by interior doors just like the ancient Anasazi pueblos.) Some were cinderblock, some mud adobe walls, all brightly painted. I was still disoriented from the ride and this place seemed so alien. It was far more like a village on the Tibetan plateau than the normal world of malls and McDonald's I'd left a few hours ago. It was far older than that world, in some ways far richer, and very very strange.

Up one street, no wider than an alley, and down another and then we went to the valley below. Soon the road climbed again, giving us an eagle's view of the land we'd crossed.



Not far beyond that was Oraibi, which is on Third Mesa but which doesn't have the climb since the cliff is only on one side. Oraibi, perhaps the most sacred of Hopi villages, is also the oldest, and dates back, incredibly, to around 1100 A.D. The same sort of pueblo buildings, but somewhat less crowded, and I walked along the dusty alleys for a while. The streets were deserted. I think I saw the entrance to a kiva, those secret underground chambers where the most intimate communion with the Hopi spirit world takes place. I wouldn't have been surprised to meet a spirit walking in First Mesa or Oraibi, not surprised at all. Then we left. You're not allowed to take photos at First Mesa or Oraibi but just at the edge of town was a long-abandoned house built in the old pueblo style and, telling myself that we were doubtless outside the village, I took a photo. It shows the exhilarating, mind-bending view that surrounds you 24/7 if you live on those mesas.



Not far beyond Oraibi was Moenkopi, and just beyond that Hopi lands ended. We were back in Navajo territory now, but after a few miles we left the Navajo Nation and turned onto Route 89 to Salt Lake City. Dazzling landscapes awaited us. The bizarre, towering wind-sculpted mesas as we passed along the southern fringe of Grand Staircase Escalante, wildest of the national parks, full of bear and elk, and then beyond Kanab the road turned north and a long green valley began. A few farms here and there, and old towns. This area had been settled by Mormons long ago. Farther north through Utah: jagged grey barren hills punctuated by verdant strips of valley land. It looks SO much like Afghanistan, I said, and indeed it did. But the feeling of strange and alien exhilaration was gone. We had left Indian land. We were back in the U.S.A.

Here is part of a Hopi dance, recorded at a Hopi village near Third Mesa and Oraibi:

<http://music.myspace.com/Modules/MusicV2/Pages/PopUpPlayer.aspx?songid=46522001&artid=21777231>

Here is a portion of a Navajo religious ceremony, recreated about 50 years ago by a group of Navajo singers:

<http://music.myspace.com/Modules/MusicV2/Pages/PopUpPlayer.aspx?songid=49183799&artid=22204378>

Listen to the voice of the Navajo Nation broadcasting from Window Rock:

http://den-a.plr.liquidcompass.net/standard_plr/audio_player.php?id=KTNNAM&playerType=wmp

Listen to the voice of the Hopi people:

<http://www.kuyi.net/listen-online>

Want to follow in my footsteps (or car tracks)? Here's how!

Go to Gallup, New Mexico, which is on Interstate 40. Take route 491 about 4 miles north and turn left onto route 264. This is the long road that goes through Navajo and Hopi lands. When you get to Tuba City, take route 160 west a few miles to route 89. Then turn north to Utah or south to Flagstaff, which is on I-40.

There is a small restaurant at the Hopi Cultural Center halfway between First Mesa and Oraibi which serves a few traditional Hopi dishes along with standard American fare; all the dishes have been given imaginative Hopi names (and English descriptions).

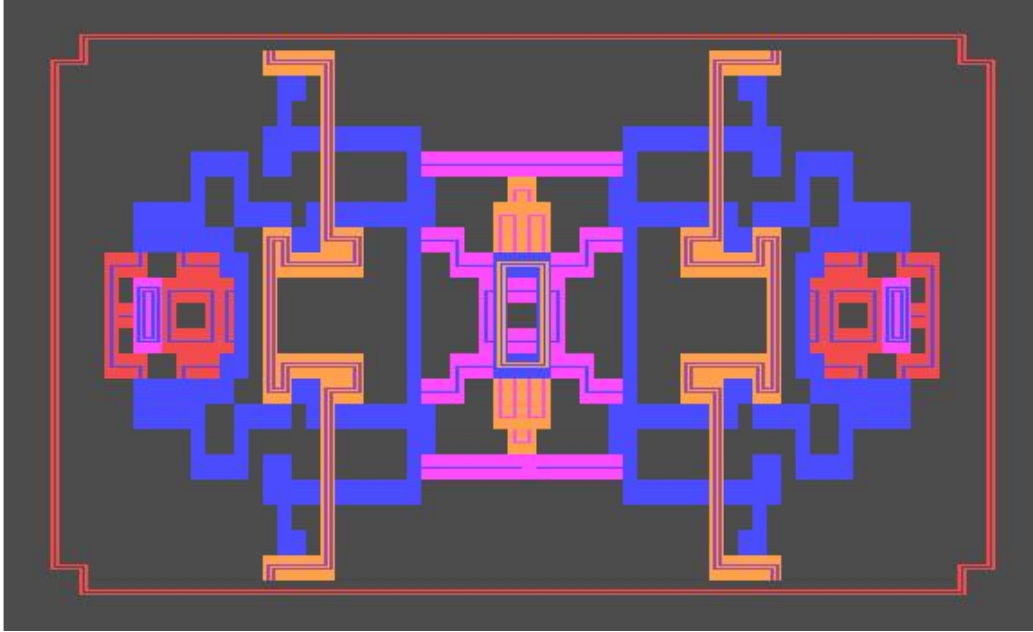
<http://www.hopiculturalcenter.com>

You might find "Navajo Tacos" at some restaurants in the area. They use Navajo fry bread (invented by Navajo during the years before 1868 when they were captives in an Eastern reservation and had nothing else) and jazz it up with taco-style toppings. It's unclear who first thought of the toppings. Some sources say it was a White chef in Arizona, others that it was the Navajos themselves.

Brian responded to the Editor's request for some personal information to accompany his article:

Born in NYC, age 0, on my birthday. College in Oxford at age 16. Law School in New Haven, Conn. 6 years travel in Africa and Asia. Haven't done much lately. Still, I'm the only Tulsa member of the little-known Omega Society.

A writer writes alone. His words tumble forth from a magical inner void that is mysterious even to himself, and that no one else can enter. And yet, the most important thing to me the writer is YOU. Without you to hear them, my words are worth less than silence.



Am I a Computer Programmed to Simulate a Man or a Man Programmed to Simulate a Computer?

David Minster
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Human beings are, by their very nature, imitative. We mimic, adopt and (sometimes) adapt behaviour patterns that we observe in others. This process can happen in various ways—i.e., the pure methods:

Consciously — We mimic what we deem to be positive or negative behavioral patterns or values that we see and admire in others so that we might be more like them, or we synthesize new ways so that we may be more like us.

Subconsciously — Herd behavior, the easy way out, kinda like seppuku* of the soul. Herd markings may vary.

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* **Editor's Note:** From the Wikipedia article on seppuku:

Seppuku (“stomach-cutting”) is a form of Japanese ritual suicide by disembowelment. The Wikipedia article indicates that *seppuku* is also known by the more familiar term *hara-kiri*. What I had not known is that the self-inflicted disembowelment is followed by a decapitating sword blow by one assisting the person performing seppuku. (You’d think a real samurai could cut his own damn head off. ;-)

Then, what actually happens:

Consciously/Subconsciously — The default state for most people, some of us also weed out undesirable traits if we are so inclined, prune them to make them more agreeable to us or others depending on our goals (if any) or add syntheses to achieve other ends or entrance to new games.

The new disturbing trend of behaviour modification

As computers and other techno gadgets become more ubiquitous in our lives we tend to adapt ourselves to them. We need train ourselves and our behaviour in ways that are more understandable to these gadgets so that we may interact with them seamlessly. Some people immerse themselves, or even grow up fully immersed in, online worlds, games and other distractions that buffer them almost completely from offline reality. Now don't get me wrong here, I am more for technology than against. Software and hardware have evolved to the point where they are improving our lives and realities. For example, I would contend that we have made more scientific progress in the last ten years through improved technology and computers than we have over the last ten thousand. When it comes to art or music we can now alter or create new realities in ways that were undreamed of ever before, an exciting prospect. We have access to unimaginable streams of data through search engines like Google, we can explore the furthest or tiniest reaches of the universe with a mouse click or two. We can communicate with others anywhere else in the world and exchange ideas, criticize, teach or learn instantly from others we probably would never had access to before the Internet age, allowing us to grow in ways that were unimaginable ten years ago (and probably still are now) bearing in mind that not all growth is good or bad.

Technology controls us by profiling us through our behavior patterns as we use the various interconnected media, allowing the financial, religious, political or power hungry to gain better control of us through real-time observations so they are constantly in tune with what's going on, enhancing their abilities to make changes to the way we do things if need be. Or you get people like Magnus Carlsen, the chess whiz who grew up playing chess only against computers, honing his innate abilities to the point where, when he did finally play against other humans, he became the youngest grandmaster in the world at age 13, and in November 2009 he became the number one chess player in the world at age 18 (he says that he doesn't know if he actually owns a chess set or not).

The point is:

Today's technology is changing our behavior by enhancing our abilities in a multitude of ways; we are adapting to the machines that now control our lives, and in the case of the chess wiz even imitating them

David Minster lives in Johannesburg South Africa, and is known to have, and associate with, intelligent friends.

A Precedent of One: Trading Freedoms for Nothing

Tal Brooke

In October 2005, George W. Bush—who had called the Constitution “a damned piece of paper”—announced he was considering plans for federal military personnel to enforce quarantines in the event of a bird-flu outbreak. Flu becomes the basis to declare a national emergency. This would require waiving the *1878 Posse Comitatus Act, which prohibits federal military personnel from performing law enforcement duties within the United States.*

Describing Bush, the dictator-in-waiting, one critic said: “The authority to decide what constitutes a national emergency apparently rests solely with this impaired man who needs antidepressants to control his moods and temper. Our cherished Constitution now dangles by a thread from the unstable hand of a man professionally diagnosed as a paranoid megalomaniac.” See:

<http://www.rense.com/general69/police.htm>

Oliver Stone’s 2008 movie *W*, about Bush, portrays a man of limited intelligence and questionable character who was in no way qualified to occupy the White House. His family connections took him a long, long way. Others apparently wanted him there to fulfill a certain role, perhaps turning dials and pushing buttons. He left the nation in much worse condition than when he entered office. His costly wars, visions of an Imperial Executive, shredding of the Constitution, and massive debt load left a deeply wounded nation in his wake.

General Tommy Franks assured us in 2003, during the Bush era, that after a major “casualty-producing event” anywhere in the Western world, the American people would “question our own Constitution” and likely consent to a militarization of the United States for security purposes. See:

http://www.sptimes.com/2003/12/07/Columns/From_Tommy_Franks_a_.shtml

Bush was no doubt pleased.

But no totalitarian ruling structure would be complete without an identification system that allows access to extensive information on every citizen listed in a national database. Thus another agenda is to force upon us national ID cards and, eventually, under-the-skin identification implants with a satellite tracking system able to keep each of us under round-the-clock surveillance.

The **REAL ID Act**, enacted in May 2005, establishes a massive, centrally coordinated federal ID database. It also opens the way for ID technology applied to citizens from cards to biochips.

U.S. intelligence agencies have been working with private corporations to develop subdermal radio-frequency devices that can be injected under the skin of humans for identification purposes. Digital Angel Corp. has been top of the list.

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Peter Zhou, chief scientist for development of Digital Angel, declared that the subdermal identification/communication implants will make humans “a hybrid of electronic intelligence and our own soul.” See:

<http://www.apfn.net/messageboard/03-04-04/discussion.cgi.38.html>

The *Military Commissions Act of 2006* defines what is called an “*enemy combatant*.” We suddenly have a new term. It allows the government to treat today’s subjects worse than King George III treated colonialists under British rule in 1776! Anyone who actually *is* declared an “*enemy combatant*” has no way to appeal or fight such a designation. Of course this process starts out with frightening examples of foreign terrorists the public wants put away. Then the gates can open wider and include American citizens who never read the fine print.

Amendments to the 2010 *National Defense Authorization Act*, which has already been passed by the House, would empower the Attorney General to define gun owners, anti-abortion activists and tax protesters as domestic terrorists or enemy combatants.

Bush left quite an apparatus intact for his successor. Obama has grabbed the controls like a video game and enjoyed being in the power seat.. Spinning words about “change” to placate a public disillusioned with Bush, he is doing the same thing. There are very powerful people in the shadows pleased that he is unwittingly doing their bidding.

A Precedent of One

As a kid I remember running unopposed through airport gates to board airplanes. There weren’t security checkpoints then, and it made travel fun and gave the whole experience a feeling of dignity.

My last image at San Francisco International Terminal in May of 2010 was seeing people standing with their hands up in the classic surrender gesture inside this big machine, a full-body scanner, with nothing private left. Their most intimate scans could be seen by the security workers on hand, genital shots and more—an ugly picture of what has befallen American freedoms.

The million-dollar body-scanners were waiting for a misguided African youth they’ve called the “underwear bomber.” His single violation justified these Orwellian machines entering airports. A precedent of one. Now travel is more degrading.. I opted for the pat-down..

People can be stripped of their rights from a single infraction almost anywhere. I call it “**a precedent of one.**” The single precedent of one pair of tennis shoes allegedly used for terror has stopped millions of people overnight from going through security wearing shoes. They must take off their shoes, put them in bins, and walk barefoot by security. More degradation.

The Unabomber, Ted Kaczynski, was an early example of a “precedent of one.” From the time Kaczynski was caught, hundreds of millions of Americans forfeited the right to drop their stamped packages in mailboxes. Just one example and millions are affected. People now have to stand in long lines at post offices to deliver their packages in person, wards of the State treated like children.

The Fourth Amendment

One key Constitutional amendment that has been trodden underfoot is the 4th Amendment. This amendment is supposed to protect our privacy and freedom by protecting us from unreasonable search and seizure.

In Colonial America it was common for British soldiers, tax collectors, and other representatives of the Crown to obtain a “writ of assistance” giving them the authority to enter any home, business, or ship at any time of the day or night in search of contraband goods or to interrogate the residents and owners over payment of taxes or for most any other reason.

Writs of assistance were very vague search warrants and it was a simple procedure to obtain them. They could be had for any reason or no reason from the Colonial governor or from judges—all of whom held their positions at the whim of the King of England.. It was the Colonists’ humiliating experience with unreasonable searches and seizures that planted the seeds that grew into the 4th Amendment which reads:

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

The *USA Patriot Act* provided the most devastating end run around the 4th Amendment. In the name of safety we have ceded our right not to be searched at airports . . . almost without a whimper. First we accepted removing our shoes and opening our bags. Then we gave up our lotions, sanitizers, and water bottles. Then we accepted being frisked, poked, and prodded. Then we accepted having our bodies irradiated and naked pictures being taken and ogled at and saved in the system, in effect allowing government to assume we are all criminals with plans to blow up an airplane—all in the interest of “safety.”¹

Now technology and government have taken the next logical step beyond airport scanners. If people will passively line up for a total scan, why not have this technology mobile?

The Z Backscatter Van TI (ZBV) allows law enforcement to look inside vehicles, buildings, and homes just like the airport backscatter scanners allow agents from the Transportation and Security Administration to peer beneath your clothes. These vans and a more powerful, truck-sized version called the Mobile Search HE (high energy), are now on the roads in America. They don’t have or need search warrants.

It is open season on citizens. No longer are you secure in your, “persons, houses, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures.” Government agents can peer into your private life and you will never know it until they show up on your doorstep flashing a warrant based on something they saw through the walls. It’s time for Americans to take notice.

Tal Brooke has authored nine books of which two have been bestsellers, including Avatar of Night, his 400-page book about his quest in India. His work has been recognized in Marquis Who’s Who in the World and Who’s Who in America, Contemporary Authors (Vol. 93-96), and The International Who’s Who of Authors.

¹ Bob Livingston October Letter 2010

On the Overextension of Ideas

Howard Schwartz
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Author's Note

This piece is an expanded version of an introduction to a larger humorous paper called "The Psychotherapy of Auto Repair." The latter was a recreation of a session between a therapist and a person whose car would not start.

The larger paper was published years ago in a journal called *Ethnographic Studies*, from Manchester University. It was part of a special double issue devoted to my work. To my surprise, they have put this issue online, added and revised my papers.

You can see the paper in question here:

<http://www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/disciplines/sociology/about/events/ethnography/journal/issue7/>

Introduction – the Pros and Cons of Conceptual Thought

It is a common enough experience. You are talking to an otherwise sensible friend or colleague concerning subjects of mutual interest. After a few dozen characterizations that sound false, implausible, or just plain ludicrous, you realize your friend is talking to (at) you from within some "system." He may be a fundamentalist Christian, a health food advocate, a Marxist, a psychotherapist. You attempt to have him listen to "reason" or consider the evidence, but you fail. The argument goes on and the two of you find yourselves at an impasse.

If you are a cultural relativist, you might deal with an encounter like this by mumbling something about "multiple realities," "belief systems," or "competing paradigms."

If you are a believer in reality, your problem is deeper. You might have hoped that systems of belief provided human beings with some degree of evolutionary advantage. If so, there should be something about humans' raw, pre-linguistic contact with reality, something perhaps built into our species—that placed some kind of reasonable limits on what homo sapiens could believe. But alas, there seems to be no set of beliefs so bizarre and contrary to brute reality that some individual or group has not managed to believe them.

The sheer lack of agreement of millions of people, over history, presumably confronting the "same" real world provides a major challenge to sociobiology: Systems

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of belief are made possible by language. And language is often touted as the premier, unique achievement of our species¹ [1]. Yet how much evolutionary survival value can language-mediated knowledge have if it allows us to be so often wrong about so many things. [2]

Actually, there are those that think language-mediated thinking is one of the mistakes of evolution.

Ellis laments how badly most of us do it. Except under special (social) circumstances, what is endemic to most human beings, in his view, is a propensity to think loosely and irrationally. Indeed, Ellis devised an entire form of psychotherapy to treat ailing individuals whose inherent irrational tendencies get out of hand. [3]

Sociology's Talcott Parsons was equally pessimistic about the possibility of clear thinking among individuals. He believed it was the special, social organization of the sciences that made scientists, as a group, more likely than the rest of us to get things right in the long run [4]. What makes them special? They insist that any ideas of anyone among them, be exposed, continually, to reevaluation, verification, and critique.

Even if we manage to get things conceptually right, Kelleman warns that we do far too much thinking for our own (physical) good. The organisms he studied spent most of their lives somatically—just doing what they do. They used problem solving tools like thinking only occasionally, when natural, instinctual, coping strategies were insufficient. Humans think to solve practical problems too. But we've gone on to develop literature, jokes, radio talk shows, recreational conversation, psychotherapy, and an endless variety of other symbol-manipulating activities. At this point, thinking, talking, and listening have become the constant companions of most urbanized adults. We cannot stop doing these things, even if we want to; and a tool that could have sharpened our awareness of life now prevents us from innocently living it, and from experiencing very much of it directly. [5]

The Problem of Extension

Ever since Freud and the “reality principle,” psychotherapists like Kelleman and Ellis have had the unenviable task of trying to distinguish normal from pathological thinking. Clinical practice all but requires one to judge patients' assertions, not only as false, but as diagnostic of one illness or another. What sounds “wrong” about the talk of many patients is not so much general beliefs that are false, but concepts that are consistently misapplied. Therapists often speak of patients taking things that may be possible as probably true. A hysteric might be afraid that all sorts of foods and materials are poisons, toxins, or hazards of some sort. A paranoid schizophrenic might hear everyone around him talking about him, personally. Heads of state on television sound as if they are chastising him publicly. Someone on the street says, “It didn't turn out very well,” which obviously means “He didn't turn out very well.”

In the hands of these people, a few ideas like “poisonous,” “personal,” “about me” seem to have lost all semantic sense of their own limits and limitations. [6] It is as if these concepts escaped the bounds of the realms they were originally designed to describe. Now, they characterize things and situations they have no business being applied to. Eventually they become basic templates for interpreting almost every situation the patent confronts. [7]

How “Overextended” Ideas Are Recognized

We could say these ideas have been overextended—except that “overextended” is a prejudicial term, inevitably the judgment call of an outsider. [8] Yet this is exactly how overextension is recognized: One person sees himself as talking literally, while someone outside his thought system, lay or professional, hears the same words as fanciful, metaphorical, or just plain wrong. [9]

Sometimes you may have a hard time articulating exactly what is “wrong” about the talk you are hearing. Partly, this can happen because, technically, the activity of conversing does not require very much accurate, mutual understanding. People can keep talking to each other quite well, without noticing or addressing the fact that they are frequently misunderstanding and being misunderstood. [10] More importantly, this can happen because, as Russell points out, names, concepts, and descriptions can function as beliefs and hypotheses—hiding in a different type of syntactic package:

See that man over there who is staring at you?
Yes.
Well he isn't.
What?
He's not over there and he's not a man; he's a woman. [11]

Individuals tend to veer this far away from common language use only after a protracted life history of actions and experiences. [12] Such people may get labeled paranoid or as crackpot scientists. Yet, the “big ideas” of others can win credence, and they can go on to become a B.F. Skinner, Marx, or Charles Darwin. We would like to believe that truth and reality have a lot to do with the fate of these individuals. But much depends on how the historical chips fall and the politics of acceptance.

The Psychology of Concept Extension

Why would a person persistently expand his ideas like this? For that answer, the author prefers the pioneering work of Silvan Tomkins who studied the evolution of what he calls scripts. [13] These are collections of interrelated ideas and emotions that define the dramatic structure of everyday situations. [14] Tomkins views emotions as possibly ancient, catalytic mechanisms, existing prior to and independent of truth. One of their major functions is to amplify the size, strength, or valance (i.e., positive or negative) of meaningful events in our lives. What we called the extension of concepts he calls, the magnification of scripts—dynamic sequences where coping strategies, emotional responses, and situated concepts interact so as to mutually escalate each other. [15] In

these sequences, specific emotions both positive and negative, act as signals to a person's mind, to think of a problem or event as, somehow, cognitively "bigger." [16]

Given this kind of magnification, one can start with a person who is genuinely discriminated against at work [17], and end up later with someone in possession of a "monopolistic humiliation theory." Eventually, all events in his life come to fit into two categories: his humiliation and everything else.

Concept Extension and the Professions

In this regard, overextension is by no means limited to the semantics of the mentally ill. It is enthusiastically embraced by both the populace at large and all sorts of professionals. The Marxist finds the work of the ruling class and the class struggle behind the most personal and seemingly individual events. The psychotherapist is confident that the President of the United States invaded Iraq because of childhood experiences, personal motives, and "secondary gain." The behaviorist finds stimulus-and-response sufficient to understand almost all human activity—God, music, poetry, play, and the deepest subjective feelings:

Why are you two getting married?

Uh—because we love each other.

No you're not, you're doing it because of stimulus-and response. [18]

The Professionalization of Human Problems

There is a simple way to understand the temptation to overextend ideas in what Goffman calls the "people work" professions. [19] More and more ordinary human troubles—both individual and collective—have transitioned from being handled by friends, neighbors, and relatives to becoming a specialty, handled by professionals. This created both a market for studying problems and a need for credentialed experts that could solve them.

In this regard "studies have shown" has become a major resource for legitimating, authoritative knowledge for governments, courts, educational institutions, the police, advertisers, and other institutions that need to justify a course of action. Consequently, social scientists find more and more clients who wish to commission studies on every conceivable human topic. But how does one go about studying "every conceivable topic"? Naturally, social scientists and their clients want this done "scientifically." And the terms 'scientific', 'legitimate', and 'mathematical' have almost become synonymous.

But the physical sciences normally use *different* forms of mathematics to study different kinds of phenomena. Thus, calculus works brilliantly, and was in large part designed, for studying the motion of objects. [20] But it does not work, and is not used, to describe the bonding of chemical compounds. Indeed, it is not used in other kinds of physics, in classical geometry, biology, neuroscience, etc.

Yet in contrast, the social sciences for some time now have used the same kind of mathematics to study everything in sight—actually a specific kind of statistics [21]: Simply consider anything you need to study as a “variable”; then explore the (statistical) associations between these variables. If one tortures the language enough almost anything can be characterized as some kind of variable (e.g., “middle siblings’ degree of agreement with the President’s tax cut”) Voila! One has a way to produce a “scientific” study of virtually any social, economic, political, or psychological phenomenon. The same techniques can be used to “measure” (assign numbers to) diverse topics, independent of their different structures and without having to know or learn anything special about each topic. [22]

On the practical side, many people workers found they needed to extend their expertise to issues their profession was not originally designed to deal with. For example, psychiatry and, later, clinical psychology had its beginnings in the treatment of pseudo-physical illnesses such as hysteria, and auditory/visual hallucinations. These specialties treated “illnesses” of the mind. But gradually therapists found themselves called upon to “treat” such issues as violence, loneliness, sexual dissatisfaction, over/under eating, child rearing, low self-esteem, addictions—and an increasing array of other normal “problems in living.” [23] Consequently, like their counterparts in research, they came up with strategies and ideas that equipped them to produce expert, therapeutic talk about just about any human problem. For instance, therapists developed an expanded notion of personal motive (instead of truth) to evaluate clients’ statements, right on the spot, in the office, without having to gather evidence. Similar expansions occurred with ideas like secondary gain, defense mechanism, enabling behavior, and denial.

Summary

Actually, there has been a tremendous amount of recent, good work on concept use in fields such as cognitive and diachronic linguistics. These fields have studied how ideas are born, expand, contract, shift, mutate, bifurcate in different populations, and so on.

What we offered here was a special case. While we dare not speak objectively of an idea being “overextended,” we can sensibly point to cases where an individual or group over uses an idea, from the point of view of various others. These processes deserve attention because they are major ways in which individuals and groups diverge from their parent speech community and enter a conceptual world that is not reciprocally accessible to their fellow human beings.

Endnotes

[1] Chomsky, N. *Cartesian Linguistics*. New York: Harper & Row, 1966. Chomsky’s view of linguistic universals and deep structure being innate to humanity is stated here and elaborated in later books and articles.

[2] “Wrong,” of course, presupposes a perspective in which there is an objective reality that one can be wrong about.

[3] Ellis, A. *Humanistic Psychotherapy: The rational-emotive approach*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973.

[4] Many of Parson's views on science are described in the Introduction to his seminal work: Parsons, Talcott. *The Structure of Social Action*. New York: The Free Press, 1937. For a description of "scientific rationality," refer to "The Professions and Social Structure" in Parsons, T., *Essays in Sociological Theory*. Glencoe IL; Free Press, 1954, ch. 2. As late as 1971 Parsons reiterated his confidence in the scientific professions, in a personal communication to the author at Harvard University.

[5] Kelleman, Stanley. Unpublished lecture, University of California at Berkeley, 1983. Also see, Kelleman, Stanley. *The Human Ground: Sexuality, Self and Survival*. Berkeley, CA: The Center Press, 1971. Kelleman is an internationally recognized somatic researcher and therapist.

[6] These are real examples from the author's research.

[7] Goffman had much to say about how the mentally ill "mix and match" behaviors and social situations, so as to bring behaviors to situations where they did not belong. Refer to Goffman, Erving. "The Insanity of Place." *Psychiatry*, Vol. XXXII, 1969, pp. 357-388.

[8] For an axiomatically defined idea, mathematicians speak of the "extension" of the idea as the set of all and only those objects that satisfy its axioms.

[9] Lakoff believes that all conceptual understanding is metaphorical, and he has spawned a considerable body of work based on that premise. For example, refer to Lakoff, George and Johnson, Mark. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980. Yet the rest of us in the midst of life regard some talk as literal and other talk as metaphor. For a stab at what makes a description, on the face of it, sound literal see Sacks, Harvey, "On the Analyzability of Stories by Children," in Roy Turner (ed.). *Ethnomethodology*. Hammondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1974.

[10] For some technical reasons why misunderstandings do not, generally, make it more difficult to converse and do not become visible during conversation, see Schwartz, Howard, "Understanding Misunderstanding," *Analytic Sociology*, Vol. 2, 1978.

[11] Made-up example to illustrate implicit hypotheses hidden in names and descriptive phrases. For a more literal exposition, see the famous essay: Russell, Bertrand, 1905, "On Denoting." Reprinted in R. C. Marsh, ed. *Logic and Knowledge*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1956.

[12] For an analysis of some of the social prerequisites and language techniques for extending concepts, see Schwartz, Howard "General Features," in Schenkkein (ed.). *Topics in Ethnomethodology*. Berlin: Shurkamp Publishers (published in English and German), 1976.

[13] Tomkins, Silvan. *Affect, Imagery, and Consciousness*, Vol. I, II, III. New York: Springer, 1979.

[14] Tomkins uses the terms *script* and *dramatic* in a similar way to Goffman's analogies to the theater. However, the actor/author of the script is not presenting himself or pretending; he lives the drama depicted by the script.

[15] Tomkins viewed the fate of a script as severely dependent on the sequence of events/ experiences that occurred in connection with it. Some might expand, others might stabilize or shrink, and so on.

[16] In unpublished research on emotion, the author's ethnographic data appear to reveal a converse principle: To evoke emotions, complex details must be mapped into relatively simple cognitive structures. For example, the mother of a student was given a complex, lengthy explanation of why the student wanted to become a sociologist. The mother then replied, "You mean—you are not going to medical school now?" Instantly, the student experienced depression.

[17] Edwin Lemert showed that the road to paranoia frequently starts with real discrimination and snowballs from there. E. Lemert, "Paranoia and the Dynamics of Exclusion." *Sociometry* XXV, 1962, 2-20.

[18] Made up example.

[19] Goffman identifies unique conflicts and tensions in professions where the objects that are worked on, or worked with are people. At the same time, the clients and employers of these professionals are also people. See Goffman, Irving. *Asylums*. Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1961.

[20] Newton, I. *Principia Mathematica*, Bk. 1 (1689). The translation is by Andrew Motte (1729), as revised by Florian Cajori. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1934.

[21] Most social sciences use statistical procedures based on the "relative frequency" interpretation of probability. Metaphorically, the probability of a certain outcome is thought of as the proportion of times this outcome will occur, in an experiment repeated many times.

[22] While physical scientists are more careful with mathematical notations, this does not immunize them from overextending ideas. Examples include the view of the universe as a mechanism, the view of the brain as a computer, etc. Refer to the popular monograph Kuhn, Thomas. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.

[23] Szasz, Thomas. *The Myth of Mental Illness*. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.

Howard Schwartz responded to the Editor's request for a few sentences about him with quite a bit more:

I got a BA in math at UCLA in about 1965, with a specialty in mathematical logic, which I maintained in graduate school. I switched to sociology and got an M.A. and Ph.D. (1971) in that field, with a specialty in the field of ethnomethodology (the study of common sense folk reasoning). A now-famous branch of ethnomethodology is conversational analysis. I studied with the founders of both, and became an expert in both areas. For this reason, a general interest in linguistics developed.

Worked as a professional intern at Langley Porter Neuropsychiatric Institute at UCSF where I collected data for my dissertation on Common Sense reasoning and Paranoia. Off to Harvard for about 3 years, where I taught statistics, social stratification, phenomenological sociology, sociology of urban design—and left early voluntarily. I was to teach statistics at most of the major UC campuses after that, with appointments at UC Berkeley, Santa Barbara, Irvine, and San Diego.

(Continued on page 25)

Extrapolating the Principles of John Locke’s “Essay on Human Understanding” to Paleolithic Burial Practices, Early Cave Art and Venus Figurines

Richard Badke
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John Locke propounded the idea that humans receive into the mind information about the world around us via our senses, and only then can our mind reflect on this world. He went on to say that this mental image was formed from secondary qualities possessed by the original real-time object such as color, shape or motion. Lastly, that the mental image formed from these secondary qualities is only a ‘mental copy’ and should not be confused with the original, real-time object. In short, John Locke is saying that the mind can only experience the world ‘secondhand’.

Only the body can experience the world directly, but without mind we cannot know that. The mind is the ‘witness’ to what the body experiences. It is the premise of this essay that the principles John Locke propounded were realized within the newly evolved mind of Paleolithic man. Those principles were sufficiently developed to allow Paleolithic man to reflect on his nocturnal dreams. It is these reflections that resulted in the first instances of human burial, portable and cave art, and the creation of ‘Venus’ figurines.

Reflection (thinking) is the manipulation of symbols within the mind. If we can agree that a symbol is a visible sign of something that is not presently visible, then man would have been using symbols many centuries prior to his expression of ‘cave art’. It is absolutely essential for a hunter to ‘read’ symbols. The shape of a certain footprint, remembered from prior experience, was a symbol that an auroch had passed this way. The shape of certain cloud formations may have been remembered as the symbol of an approaching blizzard. These types of symbols caused reflexive action and would not have required much mental manipulation. However, the use of ochre at Lascaux is an example of the use of a symbol which would have required extensive manipulation. For the most part, the symbols man used, up to the advent of portable and cave art and ‘Venus’ figurines, were predominantly of reflexive use.

Primates will use a tool to obtain food or perform some task but will not keep the tool after it has served its purpose. They do not ‘see’ this object as a tool, only something to obtain what they seek with its help. Early man also wanted the tool to obtain food or perform some task, but began to keep the tool for future use. Also, most of the symbols man would have to deal with would have been related to hunting and self-preservation.

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When man realized that he could retain a tool and use it again, his attitude toward objects underwent a profound change. It was probably at this time that man began to shape his tools. Previous to this time, man's tools were primarily 'found' tools. Like a stick picked up off the ground to knock some fruit from a tree, his first stone tools were probably also picked up off the ground. Man was only concerned with the killing power or the ability of a stone to skin an animal. When man realized that he could retain a tool, he looked at it with a new viewpoint. When a hunter flaked his tool he was no doubt aware of the pattern the flaking left. He probably began to notice if the tool was well balanced. When it got dull he could reshape it with a few flakes taken off. Man began to experience the aesthetic aspect of his tool. Shaping the first symmetrical hand axe was perhaps the flowering of man's exosomatic memory. No longer was a cutting tool just a utilitarian object. The object was manipulated in the mind of its creator until it was not only a functional tool but also aesthetically pleasing. He had every intention of keeping this tool. It had become a 'personal' object. When man became aware of the appearance of his tools he also became aware of himself. At this time in man's evolution, his use of exosomatic memory began increasing. Now it was possible for man to make the first 'necklaces', symbolic markings on bone, and perhaps even pottery. I doubt if the first 'necklaces' were personal ornamentation. I believe they were actually 'tally strings', made to record the kills of a hunter. The number of kills would have given prestige to a hunter and perhaps differential treatment from his clansmen.

All of this would seem to indicate that man had reached a stage of evolution that allowed him enough leisure time to reflect on many of the observations he now recalled from memory. This is perhaps the beginning of man's 'introspection'. He would be aware that he dreamed while asleep. This dream awareness marked an enormous paradigm shift.

Now he would observe what happened in those dreams. He may have seen himself hunting with fellow clansmen. He may have seen fellow hunters he knew to be dead in these dreams. Everything about his dreams would be exactly like the everyday world except that his 'dream world' would be intangible. That this world existed he had no doubt because he went there frequently, as did his fellow clansmen. What is important is the fact that when he woke from the dream he would probably relate his experience to his clansmen. Someone realized that as the body lies on the ground, something was departing the body and going to this 'dream world'. That same person may also have realized that if he could go to this 'dream world' and come back to his body, then it was possible that what he saw there could conceivably come into this world and even influence it in some way. Now, at this time in mankind's history, he began to formulate the idea of his 'other'. This 'other' was the life force that left his body at night to live in the dream world. He knew that the 'other' was the animating force within his body. This was the beginning of what eventually would become the Egyptian 'ka'. Without the 'ka' there was no life or animation of the individual. Man soon realized that a sleeping man was not much different from a dead man. Other than the color of the corpse, the dead person appeared to be sleeping. Perhaps his life force was still in the dream world and had not yet returned. Until now there had been no reason to bury the dead. The body was disposed of to prevent scavengers from eating it. Suddenly, it occurred to man that if the life force of a man came back from the dream world he would need his body to return to.

He would also need his weapons, clothing and perhaps some food. Man began to bury his dead. Not everyone who died, just the young hunters were buried, because they were of prime importance to the clan. The body would be arranged in a sleeping position and sprinkled with ochre to give it the 'color of life'. The ochre would probably be used with the intention of holding the person in suspended animation until the life force could return. Stones may have been placed on the burial site to prevent scavengers from digging up the body. Single burials had the head oriented to the west so the person could awake to the warmth of the rising sun. The culmination of this thinking is apparent in the elaborate funerary practices of the Egyptian dynasties a few thousand years later. They too buried their dead facing east, had their weapons, clothes, food and other personal objects entombed with them for reunification with their 'ka'. Even the Book of Revelation speaks of the dead arising to be once again reunited with their 'souls'. I believe these early burials were the beginnings of man's awareness of life beyond the everyday world. I do not think that man conceived of an 'afterlife' at this time. At best, sleep and death were the same thing except that the dead person remained in the 'dream world' longer than the sleeping person.

Concurrent with man's reflection on death would be his reflection on birth. He would have observed that when the child was born it already had the life force present. Perhaps babies came from this dream world. Perhaps the life force of those who couldn't find their body for one reason or another came back in the form of a baby. Man already knew that his 'dreaming self' was intangible, not a solid object like his body. The idea of a life force coming into this world from the 'dream world' gave man the idea that he might be able to bring this 'life force' into this world through the same means a pregnant woman uses. A pregnant woman's body gave Paleolithic man a method of controlling or influencing his environment. He conceived the idea of using fertility to influence the world around him. When man realized that the life force left the body and went to the dream world and then returned another thought occurred to him. If this was true for man, it must also be true for animals. Man now had a colossal problem. For years he had been killing these animals and eating them. He used every part of the animal. Their life force had no body to return to. If he kept doing that he would soon run out of food.

His first attempts to give these animals a body consisted of rudimentary drawings in wet clay. Later, engravings on open air rock walls or cave walls were used. Some rock formations resembled a particular animal and he took advantage of this by outlining that formation. The Renaissance sculptor/painter Michelangelo, when asked where he got his idea for a sculpture, remarked that he was only 'releasing' the figure he saw within the block of marble. Paleolithic man began by 'releasing' the animal he saw in the rock formation. These early attempts strived for an image as near as possible to three dimensions, to give the image a greater 'life-like' quality. Later, these early engravings were colored with ochre to give them the color of life. It is interesting to note that ochre, with a little black, was the first color used by the Paleolithic artists. Eventually man began to draw the animals. Even then, the artist used natural rock formations, ledges, etc. to amplify the shape of the animal.

There is no doubt that man observed a woman giving birth. When man observed a baby coming from the woman's birth canal it was not a big leap to formulate the idea that caves and sinkholes might be the 'gateways' or 'birth canals' from the dream world into this world. He engraved and drew the animals on the walls of these 'birth canals'. It didn't matter that some drawings were superimposed on other drawings or were drawn on the ceilings. The main idea was to provide bodies for the animals he had killed and eaten.

Man now fashioned 'Venus' figurines and placed these at the back of the cave. These figurines were 'super pregnant' figures. They were not portraits of women. Because many of these figurines tapered at the bottom of the legs, they probably were inserted into the floor of the cave. Many of these figurines were deliberately broken into pieces. This shattering of the figurine was meant to release the power of fertility, the life force, into the cave. The cave itself was the 'birth canal' from the 'dream world' into the real world. It was probably man's belief that because the 'life force' was intangible it could be transferred to the animals drawn on the cave walls much like this 'life force' was transferred to the baby at birth. When this 'life force' entered the drawings on the cave walls, they would leave the 'birth canal' of the cave and go out into the everyday world. Man now believed he could have an inexhaustible supply of food.

Since man was now burying his dead there was a body the 'life force' could return to. It is interesting to note that the human figures depicted on cave walls were not 'life-like'. When a human figure was drawn on the wall, it was drawn as a 'stick' figure and not realistically like the animal drawings. The cave artists did not dare to paint human figures on cave walls for fear that the 'life force' would become confused as to where it should go and not return to its body.

Richard Badke responded to the Editor's request for a couple of sentences about him as follows:

I am retired, an artist, and belong to several high-IQ societies. My interests range from astrophysics to paleontology and art



Howard Schwartz (continued from page 21)

During my academic career I published various papers and a seminal textbook on research methods called Qualitative Sociology: A method to the Madness. Due to growing corruption in the field, I left this career about 1980—almost. I did create and teach the (quantitative and qualitative) research method program used at the UCB student learning center, and worked at a few other minor academic jobs. I also developed, early, a lifelong friendship with the now-famous psychologist Paul Ekman— and was trained in his methods of analyzing non-verbal communication and facial expressions of emotions. From there it was a small jump to an active interest in other areas of psychology and neuroscience.

From about 1982 to retirement I worked as a Quality Assurance Test Engineer for a variety of mid-sized and large companies like Sun, did sysad work, and wrote many in-house programs and scripts for internal use. I still do computer work on the side, mostly pro bono for friends.

A Trip to Lampedusa Island, September 2008

Jeff Ward

The only reason I went there is because it is on the TCC list. TCC (Travelers' Century Club) is an organization of people who like to travel the world. Their official list of 320 destinations includes all the countries of the world plus numerous subdivisions that are listed separately because they have autonomy (Scotland, Hong Kong) or are physically separated (Alaska, Tasmania). The exact criteria are explained at their web site www.travelerscenturyclub.org. Full membership is available to those who have visited 100 or more destinations (thus the word "century" in the title). Recognition and a different lapel pin are awarded to those who achieve 150, 200, 250, and 300 destinations. I was closing in on 150 and wanted to add a few more with my next trip.

Sandra and I had already planned a trip that would start in Rome and proceed south to Naples, Pompeii, Sicily, and Malta. Italy's southernmost Mediterranean islands are not far from Sicily and would be easy to include. One of the islands, Lampedusa, counts for TCC purposes, so it was added to the itinerary.

Although Lampedusa is the largest of the three Pelagie Islands, its area is only about 10 square miles. It has a population of about 6,000. Although the Pelagies are further south than Tunis and much closer to Africa than the European mainland, they are part of Italy proper (like Hawaii is part of the US). I research destinations before I visit them, but Lampedusa proved unexpectedly difficult. I consulted probably five different guidebooks on Italy, and none even mentioned Lampedusa or the Pelagies. I found some information on the internet, but I arrived in Lampedusa knowing much less about it than most new places I visit.

We got there from Sicily, on a flight of about an hour. A free shuttle from our previously booked hotel met us at the airport. The airport is located close to the only town, also called Lampedusa. I found the town to be surprisingly large, with many hotels and restaurants to choose from. Although Lampedusa has a small fishing industry, it is mainly a tourist destination for Italians wanting to relax in a warm place with beaches. Virtually all locals and tourists are Italian, and few speak English. Fortunately, our German hotel manager spoke English fairly well. She was the only non-Italian we met on the island. She was very helpful, but otherwise we had to rely primarily on my very limited Italian to get around. Lampedusa supposedly has a darker side. According to internet sources, it contains an internment camp for Africans trying to sneak into Italy illegally. As one of Europe's closest territories to Africa, Lampedusa serves as a stepping stone between the two continents. Some immigrants land there directly while others are intercepted in boats and taken there. Apparently, under Italian law, they are allowed to remain on Italian soil until the courts determine their status on an individual basis. However, we never saw the internment camp or any evidence of it.

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Around the harbor is a road that traces an arc-like route. On one side of the road are most of the town's businesses including its restaurants. On the other side is the water, some beaches, and the fishing fleet. It is pleasant and easy to walk this road, especially in the evening when the temperature is ideal. The first night we ate dinner at one of the harbor restaurants. As one would expect, Lampedusa restaurants tend to specialize in seafood. Outside, a surprisingly good street band entertained the many strollers.

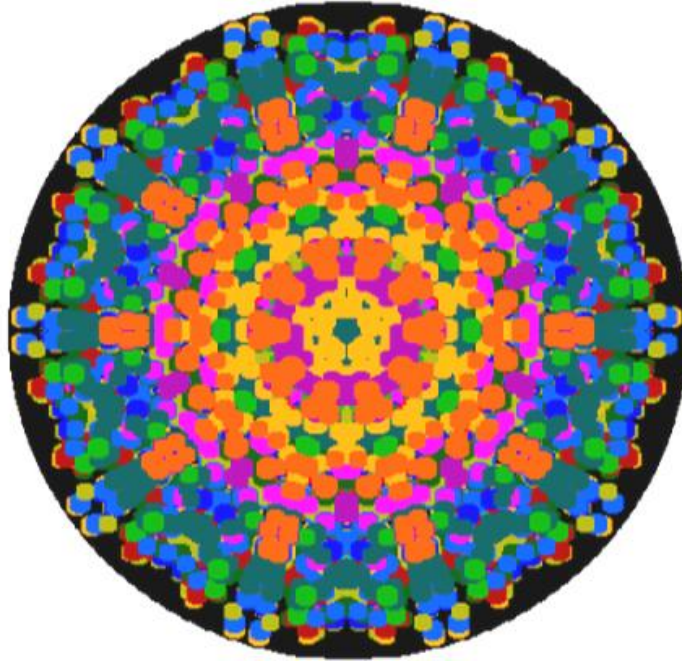
The next day, we rented a car to see the rest of the island. At the rental office, I was told that all convertibles were in use and only hard-tops were available. I quickly found out why. Convertibles are driven with the top up, but are much breezier than what I was stuck with. Our car was a little old stick shift clunker with no air conditioning, and it came with less than half a tank of gas. It was mid-September and hot which made driving it less than ideal.

We drove off to see the island. Although Lampedusa has few roads outside of town, there is a good paved road that extends from town at the island's eastern end almost all the way to the western end. Because Lampedusa's shape is long and thin, one can see much of the island from the road and by taking a few short hikes. Except for a few government buildings here and there, the island is undeveloped once you leave town. It is very dry and relatively flat, and the sparse vegetation is mainly grasses, weeds and bushes. Scattered throughout the rocky limestone terrain are many low wall remnants. I do not know if they are ancient or modern. Along the northern shoreline, waves continually crash against high, steep cliffs that are quite picturesque and very photogenic. The only beaches we saw were those in town, and they were crowded.

By the time we returned to town, the gas gauge was riding on empty. Before leaving the hotel, we were given an excellent road map that showed only two places to get gas in Lampedusa. The hotel clerk had told us the same thing. We drove to the first one and it was closed. We drove to the second one, and thankfully it was open. But it was self-service with virtually no instructions and no one around. For the life of me, I couldn't figure out how it worked. We had to wait until someone came to get gas so that we could see how they did it. Finally, we gassed up (not full of course) and returned the car. In the evening, we had a pleasant walk to and from another restaurant on the harbor, but there was no street band this time. The next morning we flew back to Palermo.

Will I go back? With limited time and many enticing places not yet visited, probably not. But I certainly wouldn't mind going back. It was an interesting experience and well worth the time and expense.

Jeff Ward writes: PhD-Geography, University of Iowa, BA-Economics, Political Science, and Geography, University of Kansas, originally from the Kansas suburbs of Kansas City, income tax accountant, recently married (Oct. 29, 2010), second marriage, two kids from first marriage (both girls), three grandchildren, main hobby is world traveling, fanatic Packer fan, moderately liberal Democratic, strong environmentalist, loathe the ignorant right wing hatemongers like Limbaugh, Beck, Palin, Bachmann. I have written and published four books: two on technical income tax subjects and two on backgammon.



Boy Scout Camp

Kevin Langdon

When I was a kid, back in the 1950's, I was a Cub Scout and then a Boy Scout. It was fun to do various activities with the other kids and complete projects to earn merit badges and get promoted to higher levels (I only got to First Class Scout though).

I saw that there was a lot of chaos in our scout troop but I nothing I'd experienced prepared me for what I ran into when I went away for a week to a Boy Scouts summer camp at a lake in the Sierra Nevada foothills.

The camp was in a beautiful setting and I was very excited about being there with a bunch of other scouts and looking forward to a lot of fun and educational activities. The reality turned out to be quite different.

One day one of the other boys wanted to fight me. I was reluctant but we boxed for a few minutes—but then I quit after he hit me below the belt. The other kids didn't seem to understand this but I didn't care. I wasn't going to fight somebody who didn't play by the rules.

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The camp counselors were authoritarian brutes and our activities were regimented to an unpleasant extent, though we did get to swim in the lake and row boats around on it. But for the most part the fun times were the times between these activities.

There was a rule against throwing rocks and one day I was caught by one of the counselors throwing rocks into the lake. I pointed out that the reason for the rule was to avoid hitting anyone and there was no one in the lake at that time, but he insisted that I would have to carry a heavy rock around all afternoon as a penalty. He handed me the rock and I dropped it on his foot. I was not about to submit to an authority I didn't consider reasonable.

To my surprise this didn't lead to further attempts to penalize me for this incident. Maybe the young counselor was too embarrassed to report it to the camp director.

There were exclusive meetings on certain evenings on the other side of the lake for certain privileged members, among whom I was not included. I snuck over there and observed the proceedings from behind a rock (dancing around, ceremonies, and other silly stuff; I was amused but not impressed).

The kids from my troop were housed together in one tent, with one or two in the next tent over. On one evening something I said made them angry with me and I was kicked out of my tent—and then by the kids in the next tent too. I felt persecuted and decided that if they were going to be that way I'd just go off into the woods and sleep there in my sleeping bag—and I did.

Several hours later I heard noises and saw flashlights through the trees. I realized they were searching for me but I didn't move or make a sound. It took them another half hour to find me.

In the morning there was an assembly and the head of the camp read me the riot act. "Don't you realize that the whole camp was out there looking for you last night?" he demanded, glowering at me.

And I answered "I didn't ask them to." I was *not* in the mood to apologize to the kids who'd ganged up on me.

But the worst part was at the end. After a few days at camp I got very sick but the camp counselors ignored it and offered me no help at all. There was almost nothing I could eat. I remember subsisting for the last couple of days on bread and jelly. I was finally able to telephone my parents and they drove a long distance to the camp to get me. They were very upset with the way I'd been treated and I was very glad to see them. It was as if my world had been turned right side up again.

I don't want to denigrate the Boy Scouts of America. I know they do a lot of good work. But the clowns in charge of this summer camp were a disgrace to scouting.

Genetics of Intelligence

Charles Schwartz

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Intellectual ability plays an important role in human interactions and certainly influences a person's life. It is also self-evident that it exhibits a wide variation within the human population. We as humans assume intelligence is a critical aspect which separates us from other primates. We also accept the notion that both genetics and environment contribute to differences between people's intelligence. Additionally, intelligence has also been viewed as a quantitative trait, usually expressed as an IQ (intelligence quotient) number. Since the trait is influenced by genetics, researchers have strived to understand the genetic influences by uncovering genes which contribute to it and how variants in these genes or other genomic alterations might impact intelligence.

What Is Intelligence

The first important question that needs to be addressed is simply: What is meant by the term "intelligence" or "cognitive ability"? Everyone knows that for any given test of intelligence, within a group of individuals, there is a wide range of scores reflecting their abilities to perform. But what factors influence the performances observed?

The act of conducting a mental exercise actually involves two contributing factors: the level of general cognitive ability as well as the capability related to the specific mental task at hand. The general cognitive ability can be represented by a general cognitive factor, *g*, which influences performances on all cognitive tasks (Spearman, 1904; Spearman, 1927). Across multiple studies, it has been estimated that 1/2 of the variance in cognitive ability can be accounted for by *g* (Spearman, 1927; Gustafsson, 1984). Of special note is the observation that *g* scores across different batteries of tests of domains of cognitive skills correlate quite well. These domains include, for example, verbal comprehension, nonverbal reasoning, working memory and executive function. In fact, in psychology, the *g* factor is one of the most replicated findings (Carroll, 1993).

IQ (intelligence quotient) is a score derived from one of many tests designed to assess intelligence. These tests and thus the IQ score are considered to reliably reflect an individual's intelligence because they are designed to highly correlate with *g*. Intelligence, whether it be viewed as the *g* factor or the IQ score, is quite stable over decades (Deary et al., 2000). Additionally, the score correlates well with other important societal achievements: level of education, success in an occupation, level of income, and social mobility (Deary et al., 2005; Strenze, 2007). Beyond these, an individual's IQ appears to be predictive of health and longevity (Batty et al., 2007; Deary, 2008). Thus it is not too difficult to grasp why scientists are extremely interested in unraveling the genetic influences which contribute to this trait.

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Heritability of g

People are quite aware of the argument over what most influences human intelligence: nature (genetics) or nurture (environment). The argument is not one that began in the 20th Century. The argument was probably initiated by Francis Galton, noted British scholar, with the publication of two articles in 1865 (Galton, 1865) and his book entitled *Hereditary Genius* in 1869. His belief that there was hereditary transmission of intelligence and exceptional ability was completely at odds with the prevailing view that everyone was born with equal abilities. In the 150 years that have passed since Galton's publications, many people, through numerous studies, have reached the same conclusion. Studies comparing monozygotic (identical) and dizygotic twins have shown genetic influences on intelligence, ranging from 30-80% (Nichols, 1978; Bouchard et al., 1990). Similar findings appear in studies of parents and adoptive and biological offspring (Plomin et al., 1997).

One of many interesting findings regarding the heritability of intelligence is the apparent increase of heritability of g with age (Spinath et al., 2003). The reason for this is not evident. Twin studies do indicate that correlation with the mother's education and the father's social status increased over time (Wilson et al., 1978). It is possible that although genetics regulates cognitive development and intelligence, environmental factors maximize the optimal development one would observe over time. Also, as will be discussed in the next section, the findings may also support the view that genes on the X chromosome (contributed by the mother) play a critical role in the development of cognitive ability.

Genetic Studies

The previous section outlined the overwhelming body of literature which shows the high heritability of intelligence. Unfortunately, there has yet to be identified a single genetic locus unquestionably associated with this quantifiable trait. This is not due to a lack of effort, but perhaps a result of various factors.

Intellectual Disability (ID) Genes

A major focus of research into intellectual ability has been the study of individuals with intellectual deficiencies. The thought has been that knowing the abnormal will teach us about the normal. Within these studies, the majority of findings have involved genes on the X chromosome. Numerous studies of individuals with ID have found the male:female ratio to be 1.2-1.4 (Stevenson et al., 2000). Researchers have interpreted this to imply that X-linked genes must play a substantial role in intelligence and cognitive development. This is logical in the sense that males, with only a single X, are more vulnerable to the effects of gene mutations on the X chromosome than females who have 2 X chromosomes. The investigation of families with X-linked ID (only males affected, no male-to-male transmission of ID) has identified almost 90 genes on the X chromosome associated with ID (Figures 1 and 2

<http://www.ggc.org/images/HIA-study-figs1-3.pdf>

Chiruzzo et al., 2008). However, with all of this success, these genes, together, can only account for about 8% of males with ID.

Based on the existence of 90 ID genes on the X chromosome and the large number of X-linked ID conditions without a gene, it is estimated that an equal number of X-linked genes are yet to be identified. Furthermore, based on the amount of the human genome represented by the X chromosome, researchers estimate that perhaps 4,000 such genes exist on the 22 other human chromosomes (autosomes). To date, about 200 autosomal genes have been identified.

Table 1: Genomic CNVs and their associated phenotypes*

Locus	Del or dup	Size of critical region	Associated phenotypes	Possible candidate genes
1q21.1	del	1.35 Mb	Variable phenotypes: two groups report mild to severe ID, microcephaly; two studies find enrichment of the deletion in schizophrenia	<i>GJA5, GJA8, HYDIN2</i>
	dup	1.35Mb	Macrocephaly, mild to moderate delays, autistic features; unlike the deletion, has not been seen in schizophrenia	
3q29	del	1.5Mb	Mild to moderate ID	<i>PAK2, DLG3</i>
	dup	1.5 Mb	Mild to moderate ID	
10q22-q23	del	7.95 Mb	Two families had cognitive and behavioral abnormalities of varying severity including: learning disabilities, speech, and language delay, mild developmental delays	<i>NRG3, GRID1, BMPR1, ASNCG, GLUD1</i>
15q13.3	del	1.5 Mb	Variable phenotypes – mild to severe ID; autism; schizophrenia	<i>CHRNA7</i>
	dup		Few patients reported; mild to moderate delays; unlike deletion of the same region, has not been reported in schizophrenia	
15q24	del	1.8 Mb	Mild to moderate ID	<i>MAN2C1, CYP11A1, STRA6</i>
16p13.11	del	1 Mb	ID, autism, brain abnormalities	<i>NCE1, NTAN</i>
	dup	1 Mb	Autism, ID; decreased penetrance	
16p11.2	del	600 kb	Detected in 0.5-1% of individuals with autism; also seen in 0.1% of individuals with psychiatric or language disorders, 0.01% of controls	<i>MAPK3, MAZ, DOC2A, SEZ6L2, HIRIP3</i>
	dup	600 kb	Autism, psychiatric or language disorders (0.04%); also seen in 0.03% of population controls	
16p11.2-p12.2	del	6 Mb	Severe developmental delay	Many genes
17q21.31	del	700 kb	Mild to severe global developmental delay, friendly/amiabile behavior	<i>MAPT, CRHR1</i>
Distal 22q11.2	del	2.2 Mb	Learning problems, and/or developmental delay	<i>MAPK1</i>
	dup	2.2 Mb	Mild to moderate ID	

* Table is a modification of Table 1 in Mefford and Eichler, 2009.

Recent advances in molecular genetics and cytogenetics (study of chromosomes) have allowed researchers to scan the human genome for small alterations in its structure. Small deletions or duplications of DNA, referred to as copy number variants (CNVs) can be detected. It is evident that these exist as a normal occurrence in the human population. However, it is also clear that approximately 8% of individuals with ID have unique CNVs that are responsible for their condition (Sagoo et al., 2009). Figure 3 [at the same Web page cited for Figures 1 and 2 above] visually represents the CNVs associated with autosomal ID and Table 1 lists some details for the more common CNVs associated with ID.

Apart from the discovery of CNVs, a second technological advance has been employed to look for genes or genetic loci associated with an intellectual disability. Throughout a person's genome there exist tens of thousands of single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs)¹. These are locations where a letter in the genetic code (ACGT) has been changed to another letter (e.g., a C is changed to a T). Thus, when a large number of individuals are compared, a percentage will have the C and some will have the T, and thus not everyone will be identical. It has become possible to scan the human genome for most of these SNPs in any individual. Additionally, recent advances in technology allow this to be done in a large number of individuals in a rather cost-effective manner (Butcher et al., 2004). As a result, scientists have embarked on association studies. An association study attempts to determine if there is a particular SNP found more frequently in people with condition "X" than in people who do not have that condition. Such studies have been undertaken relative to intelligence using SNPs in genes thought to be candidate genes related to intelligence, based on studies of ID. The premise of the studies was that perhaps a SNP might be overrepresented in cohorts with some mild cognitive impairment. Unfortunately, these studies have failed to yield gene associations that have consistently replicated previous findings (Deary et al., 2004; Butcher et al., 2008; Houlihan et al., 2009). This disappointing fact likely results from a few factors mentioned by these researchers: 1) the numbers of normal individuals studied was too small (a few hundred) to detect an association of significance, and 2) many genes are expressed in the brain and any of these could conceivably be a candidate for being involved in intelligence.

These are quite valid explanations. However, it is possible another reason exists. As mentioned, the investigations have usually involved individuals who have intellectual disability (the abnormal will inform about the normal) or are normal (IQ presumed to be ≥ 70). It is very likely that the second group consists of individuals whose intellectual abilities span from 2 standard deviations (SD) below the mean to 2 standard deviations above the mean. This range is so broad that it is not surprising that it would be difficult to discern an association of significance, particularly if the number of individuals was not extremely large.

¹ An SNP differs from a mutation which can also be a single nucleotide polymorphism, in that the latter has been shown to adversely affect the function of the gene whereas an SNP is considered "neutral."

The Need to Study Individuals with High Intellectual Ability

The rationale for utilizing cohorts of individuals with an IQ <70 should be applicable to a study of individuals of high intellectual ability (HIA), those with an IQ 2 SD above the mean (IQ \geq 130). In this instance the “exceptional” should inform the normal. Individuals in this category would be more homogeneous in their intellectual/cognitive abilities than individuals who fall within 2 SD of the mean. Genetic studies of a cohort of HIA individuals might therefore prove to be more informative than previous studies of normal individuals. Sequence analysis of candidate genes, those with alterations known to be associated with ID, might identify alterations that positively rather than negatively affect gene function. These alterations could be viewed as “enhancers” rather than “disablers.” Such results could provide researchers with valuable insight into how the gene contributes to intelligence, and perhaps brain development. Valuable information would also be gained from a more comprehensive analysis to identify CNVs and possible SNP associations in the high intellectual ability population. All of these studies, in turn, may point to the genetic core of cognitive abilities.

However, there would still be the need to address the issue of the number of individuals included in any studies of this nature. For a study of individuals with high intellectual ability to be successful, it would need to involve a sizable cohort of at least 400-500 people. Documentation of IQ and the level of ability in different cognitive domains (verbal comprehension, nonverbal reasoning, executive function, etc.) would also be needed for each individual. Specific details regarding a proposed potential study of HIA individuals is given in a document accompanying this article.

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Figure Legends

Figure 1. A visual representation of the location of the 68 genes associated with XLID syndromes.

Figure 2. A visual representation of the location of the 34 genes associated with non-syndromic XLID conditions. The genes on the right hand side are also associated with XLID syndromes (see Figure 1).

Figure 3. Overview of CNVs reported in genome-wide microarray studies in intellectual disability. Copy number losses and copy number gains are depicted, respectively, on the left hand side and the right hand side of the chromosomes. Dark gray bars represent CNVs associated with a well-known OMIM (Online Medelian Inheritance in Man) syndromes. Light gray bars represent novel recurrent CNVs. Black bars represent *de novo* CNVs not known to fall into the previous categories. Figure is a modification of Figure 4 in (Koolen et al., 2009).

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Study of Individuals with High Intellectual Ability

Purpose: Researchers have been attempting to identify quantitative trait loci (QTLs) for intelligence and cognitive impairment. Although progress has been slow, some gene defects have been identified in individuals with cognitive impairment. However, it has been difficult to identify QTLs which can be replicated in subsequent studies. Some of the difficulty may reside in the populations utilized for the studies. Almost none has endeavored to study a cohort of individuals with high intellectual ability (HIA), those whose IQ is 2 SD above the mean (≥ 130). Just as studies of individuals with cognitive impairment have led to an understanding of brain development and function, studies of individuals with high intellectual ability should be able to provide valuable insight into these areas.

Outline of Study: The proposed study of individuals with HIA will be conducted by researchers at the Greenwood Genetic Center. The study will apply current molecular and genetic technologies to ascertain variations in a person's genome. These variations will consist of either single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) or copy number variants (CNVs), indicating deletion or duplication of genetic material, respectively. Across the cohort of HIA individuals, an attempt will be made to identify SNP or CNV associations of significance.

Material Needed: Individuals interested in participating in the study would need to provide the following:

- a. Signed consent for participating in the study.
- b. Responses to a questionnaire which would provide us with some necessary demographic (age, sex, race, IQ, etc.) and clinical (medicines, behavioral characteristics, handedness, etc.) information.
- c. DNA and RNA obtained using Oragene saliva kits provided by us.

Privacy: For the purpose of the cohort analysis, samples will be anonymized. However, if an individual desires to have individual information provided to them, this can be arranged.

Other Notes: Besides individuals, we are interested in enrolling families which have multiple HIA individuals. Such families would provide an invaluable resource for genetic studies of intellectual function which cannot be undertaken in a study of a large number of unrelated HIA individuals. This is a research project. Therefore, results will not be immediately available and final analysis of all the findings will likely take more than 2 years. Additionally, some of the analysis will be undertaken by scientists in collaboration with researchers at the Greenwood Genetic Center. It is hoped that funding for the study will be provided by NIH (National Institute of Health, US) and/or other private/public sources.

Contact: Individuals with IQ 130+ or families with multiple members having an IQ 130+ who are interested in participating in our study should contact:

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A Shadow of the Light of Higher Space

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Emergence is but a shadow of the light of higher space.
It is beyond mathematics, at least that of mere humans.

The forms that emerge can be ordered or randomly guided.
Perhaps the light guides the magical forms of emergence.
I conjecture a guiding light.

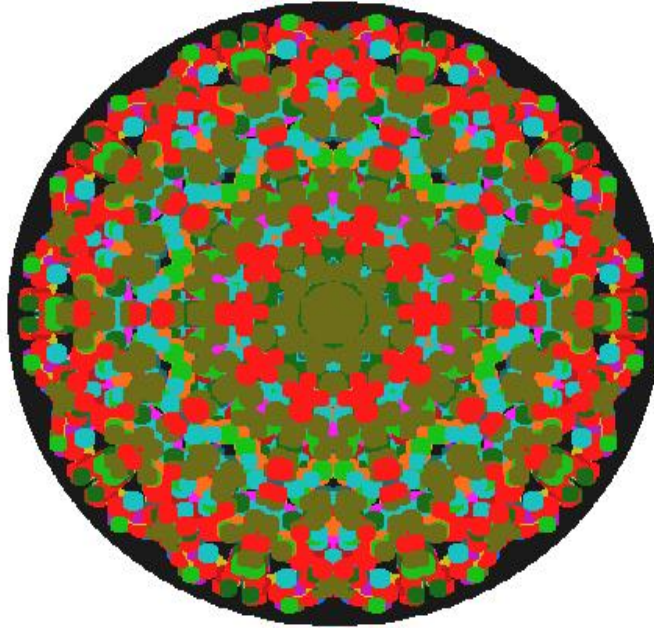
Even from outside the Megaverse,
[the collection of all “One World” universes]
this guiding light connects to us through emergence.

Here comes a “leap of faith”
that many prominent scientists
[such as Oxford philosopher John Lucas,
Penrose, the expressive flower,
and Chalmers, the neuroscientist']
have been willing to make:
“The realm of emergence borders the realm of
consciousness.”

In fact the two realms may be entangled.
But otherwise our Universe
is on its own.

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Richard Ruquist, Ph.D., is a retired Star Wars physicist, colonial drummer and race walker living in the country on a 10 acre farm with wife, mother-in-law, cat, dogs and chickens to take care of.



Dreams of Dreams Out of Paradigm

May-Tzu

This morning I looked down towards my bed and was very startled to see a guy lying on my bed asleep. An estimated fraction of a second later I realized to my relief that I was the guy asleep on my bed. As if to verify my location or presence I looked in a mirror adjacent to where I was standing and saw myself or my image smiling slightly in recognition. Then I either awakened or the dream immediately ended. The mirror actually exists in that location in the consensual spacetime world.

At first after awakening I was sure I understood the dream as “just a non-lucid dream that I had a lucid dream.” I was asleep and dreamed that I was asleep and while asleep in my dream, I experienced a lucid dream within my ordinary non-lucid dream, i.e., a dream in which I realized that I was asleep and dreaming.

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The more I analyzed it the less certain I became about it.
Had I literally dreamed a dream within a dream,
a meta-dream in which the second order dream was a lucid dream?
This is the only dream I can recall in which there were two copies of me,
not counting the image of me in the dream mirror.

I've had ordinary lucid dreams in which by definition the dreamer is aware
that he is dreaming, while remaining asleep.
In one I was being pursued and felt in danger.
Suddenly, although still asleep, I realized I was only dreaming.
The 'I' within the dream thought that this experience is only a dream,
so you can easily escape the danger by just flying away!
Upon awakening I distinctly remembered having thought within my dream
that I wasn't sure that I really could fly away,
because the scenery of hills, grass, trees and sky around me looked so real.
But I simply leaped into the air and once aloft effortlessly flew away.
Even while flying I remember thinking ". . . but the world looked so real,
as if I were awake."

But in all previous lucid dreams or "out of paradigm experiences"
there was only one dream copy of me and I've never before looked down to
see myself lying asleep and dreaming upon the bed,
and then had the 'awake' copy of me in the dream verify its identity
in a dream mirror, corresponding in location perfectly to a real mirror.

This is an unembellished description of my experience as I remember it.
Apparently even my dreams are convoluted sometimes.
Perhaps I experienced a so-called "out of body experience," an OOBE,
while asleep. The Tibetan Buddhist tradition calls this developing a dream
body. But maybe I only dreamed that I had an OOBE.
As Chuong-Tzu wrote, "Am I a butterfly dreaming
that I'm a man or a man dreaming that I'm a butterfly?"

For more of the crazy wisdom and sane foolishness of May-Tzu see:

<http://may-tzu.posterous.com>