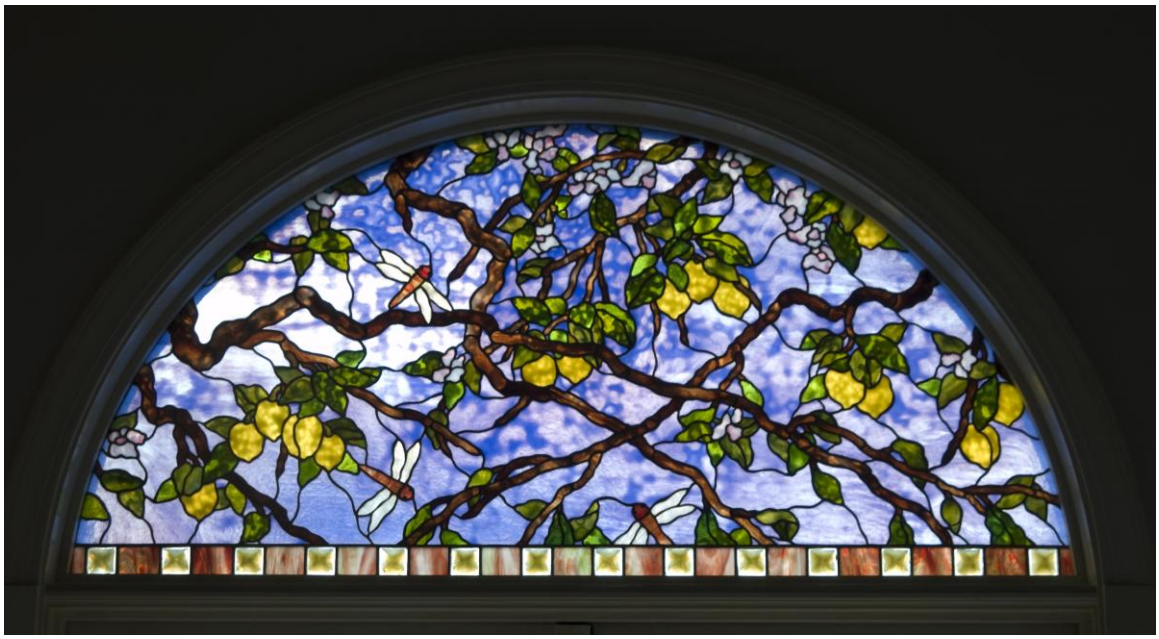

Noesis

The Journal of the Mega Society
Issue #198, May 2015

Contents

About the Mega Society

The Mega Society was founded by Dr. Ronald K. Hoeflin in 1982. The 606 Society (6 in 10^6), 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://archive.today/K32e

—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/

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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Opinions expressed in these pages are those of individuals, not of *Noesis* or the Mega Society.

Editorial

Kevin Langdon

Here's another issue of *Noesis*. This issue contains:

"Interview with Rick Rosner" (Part three of eleven), by Rick Rosner and Scott Douglas Jacobsen of the *In-Sight* journal site--

http://in-sightjournal.com/

--where this originally appeared. Rick is a former editor of *Noesis*. This interview shows his exceptionally wide range of knowledge and interests.

"The Coromandel Pilgrimage, New Zealand," by Tal Brooke. An interesting travel piece on the Coromandel Peninsula.

"Styling One's Life," by Rex Hubbard. A thoughtful examination of how the components of a life fit together and how to make them fit better.

"The State of the 'Higher-IQ Societies'," by Kevin Langdon. A brief examination of the condition of the societies with cutoffs at or above the 99.9th percentile today.

"Taoless Tao," by May-Tzu, from Richard May's "Stains upon the silence" site:

https://ferdlilac.wordpress.com/

We continue to need material for publication, from members and nonmembers of the Mega Society. The deadline for *Noesis* #199 is August 15. And we'd like to see your comments on what you read in *Noesis*. Send your submissions and letters to the Editor to:

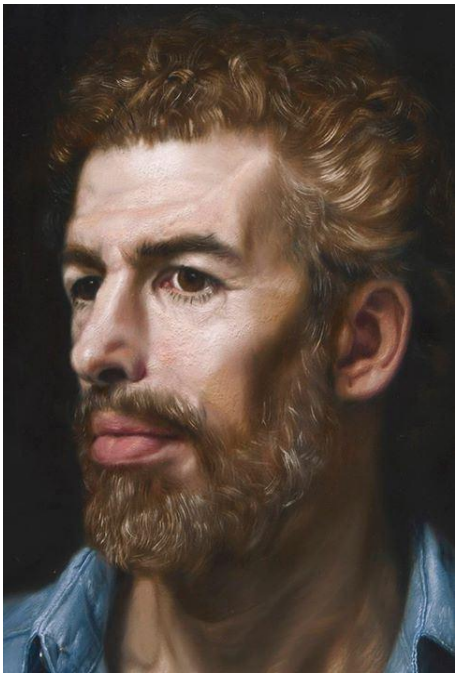
kevin.langdon@polymath-systems.com

Cover: "Lemon Branch," by Sharon Bladholm, glass artist, installed at the Bistrot Margot restaurant in Chicago. See more of Sharon's work at:

http://www.sharonbladholm.com/index.html
http://www.opalglassstudio.com/index.html

Illustration on page 4: A recent oil painting of Rick Rosner by Lance Richlin.

Interview with Rick Rosner by Scott Douglas Jacobsen (Part Three)



ABSTRACT

Part three of eleven, comprehensive interview with Rick G. Rosner, Giga Society member, ex-editor for Mega Society (1990-96), and writer. He discusses the following subject-matter: arguing for reinstatement of metaphysics into physics, their present estranged relationship, necessary relationship between logic and metaphysics, formal argument for the derivations from logic to physics and connection to metaphysics, unsuccessful attempts at metaphysical thinking, ancient Greece's lack of experimental science, the opposite trend today with much experimental science, the depth of understanding the business transactions of the universe on a macro scale, possible purposes for these transactions for the universe, brief overview of the universe's development, related objectives of organisms, purpose of laughter illuminated by George Saunders, and effective economy of thought for a possible grounding for the universe; methodology of science, derived facts from the methodology, and constructed systems of knowledge, a determined universe, free will as an internal sense of willing something, compatibilist and non-compatibilist free will, quantum mechanics, moral axiologists, free will and ethics implying moral accountability, considerations of this with an increased understanding of the world through science, framing the appropriate question for an accurate answer to the free will question, some peoples' arguments for the ability of free will based on quantum indeterminacy, impetus behind free will appearing to be not wanting restrictions "by genes, by creeds or institutions, by mental limitations," a better question for understanding the free will issue, evolved

creatures not necessarily constructing the most accurate views of reality, evolutionary examples of hijacked thought, Plato's Cave, the 'freakout' over determinism based on Newtonian mechanics, technical rather than transcendent aspect of thinking, and lack of determinacy of the universe based on quantum mechanics; free will intrinsic to an individual consciousness, free will for the penultimate armature of the universe, derived-from-armature free will for an individual consciousness (or set of them), the more important angle of informed will and targeted thinking; and set of mainstream physicists considering the universe to exist in 11-dimensional hyperspace in string theory, constraints of the universe's structure based on the specification of dimensions, implied limitations of a three-dimensional universe, analogy of Donald Rumsfeld and Errol Morris' *The Unknown Known*, origin of the phrase with John Wesley Powell, John Keats and Robert Browning mentioning the phrase too, the universe as an optimized information map, commonalities of the universe exist close to one another while those far apart have less in common, 30% of the speed of light (.3c) of objects moving away from us equating to ~4 billion light years away, forming a sphere of that radius about twice the radius of everything moving away at 15% the speed of light away from us with four times the area, further considerations and calculations with the reciprocal Lorentz factor from special relativity, redshift and information in common, Big Bang universe, size proportional to age of universe (look farther away, the universe appears smaller because younger, or larger because older), Hubble redshift, a non-Big Bang universe having lack of uniformity with an active and burned-out center with collapsed outskirts clustered to T = 0 (Time equates to zero or absolute beginning of the cosmos), inverse-square law, and an economy of dimensions likely defeating an 11-dimensional universe posited out of string theoretic constructions.

Keywords: Apple, armature, Big Bang universe, Dave Damashek, determinism, Donald Rumsfeld, Donald Trump, Dyson spheres, Errol Morris, economy of dimensions, ethics, evolution, experimental science, fields, fixed orbits, free will, galaxies, George Saunders, Giga Society, gravitational wells, Greece, Hubble redshift, hypersphere, indeterminate, infinity, informed will, inverse-square law, John Keats, John Wesley Powell, laughter, life, logic, long-distance particles, Lorentz factor, mathematics, Mega Society, meta-physics, Michael Scott, Microwave background radiation, moral axiologists, morality, neutrinos, particle physics, photons, physics, Plato's Cave, principles of existence, quantum mechanics, Rick G. Rosner, Robert Browning, science, 'The Unknown Known', thought, toxoplasmosis, unconscious biases, universe, unpredictable, writer.

24. You think metaphysics needs to be reinstated into physics. Yet they have an estrangement. You mean physics and metaphysics together. Indeed, I would reason much further than this. Metaphysics needs logic; logic needs metaphysics. Furthermore, mathematics derives from logic, physics derives from mathematics, and hence – for a more comprehensive framework – physics needs metaphysics and vice versa. At root, we have a deep relation between physics and metaphysics. This estrangement seemed temporary before someone directed appropriate attention to the need for conscious reunification of the two.

Compared to science, metaphysics has been very unsuccessful, to the extent that few people, scientists included, do much metaphysical thinking. Science has helped us build the modern world. Metaphysics can't even definitively answer its own questions. Pondering "What is being?" doesn't bring us Apple products. Our era is kind of the reverse of ancient Greece, which was all "Why is everything the way it is?" and not much for doing experimental science. The Greeks should've performed some experiments. It's hard to do effective metaphysics if you don't have sufficient information about how the universe works. It's like solving a crime without evidence.

But perhaps, by now, we have almost enough information, via physics, to come up with a system which has some "whys" as well as "hows." We've learned a lot of "hows" about the universe: how it transacts much of its business – on a macro scale, via fields and long-distance particles such as photons and neutrinos. We should be able to use our knowledge of these transactions to propose theories of how the universe might benefit from these transactions, asking "Why? – What does the universe gain?"

Via these processes, the universe becomes simpler in some ways – over billions of years, stars boil down – and more complex in others – across billions of years, life arises. The universe becomes more stable in some ways – matter accretes into galaxies and stars which are cradled in fixed orbits and gravitational wells and the universe clusters on a range of scales, adding to stability and informational compactness. As my friend Dave Dameshek likes to ask, "To what end? To *what* end?!"

Take a look at a business model for a system with "whys" – with goals we kind of understand – thought.

Thought has several related objectives – manage an organism's normal activities, look for exploitable regularities, and avoid error, all within the context of constructing a model of reality. The brain has a finite capacity, so it wants to compress information to reduce the chance for error and make room for more information. The brain likes finding analogies and shortcuts – they help compactify information.

Thought involves risk. If the brain can figure out how to make knowing fewer things as helpful as knowing more things, it can know those few things with greater certainty and less distraction and chance of confusion. Think of it in terms of sending a message – if you have a 15-word message but can compress it to 5 words, better to send the shorter message 3 times to increase the likelihood the message gets through.

I view laughter as delight at finding a shortcut and as a signal to other people that a shortcut has been found. George Saunders has the same theory. "Humor is what happens when we're told the truth quicker and more directly than we're used to." ― George Saunders, *The Braindead Megaphone*

So we have a rough idea of the brain's informational priorities and procedures. Similarly, we can speculate about what the universe is up to with regard to information.

The universe does what it does, which I believe is information processing – thinking, even – within some context. It's grappling with – thinking about – some world beyond itself – a world that includes the physical structure that makes the universe's information-processing possible. We can assume that the universe has objectives in that world. We can assume that the universe has an economy of thought – that its thinking is effective because some rules of information are in place. We can try to figure out those rules, dagnabbit.

25. You think that people may be better able to answer philosophical questions today than in the past because of more accurate depictions of reality through the methodology of science, derived facts from the methodology, and constructed systems of knowledge: quantum mechanics, particle physics, chemical sciences, biological sciences, psychological sciences, and economic sciences onward with inclusion of every relevant discipline and subdiscipline. Of note, traditional 'great' questions can have placement in complementary scientific frameworks. For instance, in a determined universe, freedom of the will, 'free will', does not exist because determinacy reigns supreme. Either branch of determinism, compatibilist or non-compatibilist, bears little or no proper fruits. Why? Quantum mechanics shows either deterministic branch of the tree to be barren. Therefore, zero factual streams to hydrate and nourish the roots. Unless individuals defy the larger systemic laws (they would not) behind the hypothetical determinate universe. Furthermore, in an indeterminate universe, free will does not exist due to 1) no genuine point of contact for free will and 2) any utility of free will dissipates into meaningless randomness and noise. Peoples' ability to freely will represents the fulcrum for each stream of reasoning, which makes intuitive and immediate experiential sense. Our universal, internal sense of willing something, of choosing one thought or act over another. Moreover, free will implicates ethics, morals, and legal systems, which binds upon bearers with the ability to freely choose right over wrong. Moral axiologists connect "right over wrong" to value systems. Value systems found in theological and non-theological contexts. Therefore, an important question for most people to consider with due ratiocination. In short, free will and ethics implies moral accountability. With increased understanding of the world through science, what do you think of this issue? What evidence and argument most convinces you of this answer/these answers?

We can use physics to start to address whether we've even been asking the right metaphysical questions, such as, "Is there free will?" Free from what, exactly? From being trapped in determinism? Thanks to quantum mechanics, we know that the world isn't pre-determined. (However, it's easy to imagine that, even with quantum indeterminacy, our thoughts in any given situation could pretty much be pre-determined (unless we explicitly build in randomness just to be contrary). I don't think that quantum indeterminacy has much to do with whether we think one thought or another. Other people disagree.)

"Free will" can mean "thought that is independent from material constraints." Under this definition, if thought takes place in the material world, then it's materially constrained.

Material constraint doesn't bother me. I believe a more important question is, "Can we make decisions free of unconscious biases?" Are our conscious minds running the show, or are we puppets of our selfish genes? And can we overcome this puppetry?

In the past, some people thought there was ordinary matter, the tangible stuff that comprises the world and there was mind-stuff – special, as-yet-undetected twinkly stuff that does your thinking. (But even with two forms of stuff, there's still the question, is this mind-stuff free of material constraints? Are we free to think what we want to think without the material world constraining our mind-stuff ?)

I think today the situation is clearer. Our thinking consists of the information in our awareness and how we manipulate it with our hardware – our brains. We are our information. There's no mind-stuff that freely thinks independent of information.

When you ask the question, "Why am I me?" the answer turns out to be, "Because all of your information pertains to you." All your information came into your head, was processed by you, and pertains to you (if only because you perceived and processed it). You can imagine jumping into someone else's head, Quantum Leap style, but in that case, you're taking your information and your mental history and the ways you process information into somebody else's situation. You're not taking some abstract mind-stuff that's free from information with you – you are your information and your mental tendencies.

So there's not free will (as I understand the question – there are other interpretations of free will) because there's no mind-stuff judging from afar, independent of information. To be clear, information is not matter, but neither is it independent, free-floating, twinkly mind-stuff. Information in this context is representations of things presented in such a way that we can think about them – they're part of thought – they're mentally manipulable in our mind-space. This space isn't made of or facilitated by a special form of matter. Information is tightly coupled to and facilitated by our brains, which are concrete and material.

I'm vastly oversimplifying, but the impetus behind the interest throughout history in free will seems to be concern about whether thought is to some extent a sham – whether we have exalted powers to stand apart and above from the grubby, clockwork stuff of the world, and beyond that, whether can we avoid having our thoughts controlled – by genes, by creeds or institutions, by mental limitations.

We would want free will because that would mean we're not the beyotches of the pedestrian, earth-bound material world.

But the better question is, "Can we be in charge of our thinking?" That is, can we think without bias? Consciousness is always playing tricks on us, because consciousness is a product of evolution, not a pure product of a desire to give us the most complete and accurate view of the world. (But we don't need to be products of evolution for our brains and biology and consciousness to have hidden agendas. The biases are there, regardless

of what put them there. Just ask any grad student in psychology about what must be thousands of experiments which show that consciousness gives us a highly filtered and biased and monkeyed-with view of the world. Each of us is our own Fox News.)

There are a bunch of parasites that transact business by messing with the brains of their victims – parasites that make mice attracted to cats (toxoplasmosis) or bugs attracted to light – so they get eaten and pass on the parasite to the next host in their life cycle. The hosts' brains have been hijacked. To some extent, everyone's brain is hijacked by what our genes want us to do. Reproducing often runs counter to the well-being and continued existence of individual organisms, but the process that made us is based on reproduction, and it tends not to be denied. We are greatly manipulated by our sexual thoughts and drives. It's so crazy how fascinated we are with boobs and butts and symmetrical, easy-to-read faces, but all those things carry information about reproductive fitness that we're hardwired to scrutinize.

We can make and are making progress in understanding our thought processes. Figuring out the limitations and biases of our thoughts and perceptions and how to overcome them are how we slowly extricate ourselves from Plato's Cave. We can never get all the way out of the cave – never see and understand existence exactly as it is – but we can make unlimited progress, stacking up level upon level of scientific, philosophical, aesthetic and moral understanding. (If thinking entities are common throughout the universe, then not only scientific understanding is necessary. Thinking entities have narratives and morality.)

People freaked out over the idea of determinism which got a big push from Newtonian mechanics. They didn't like the idea of being locked into a perfectly predictable machine universe which seems to make consciousness unnecessary. How can we really be thinking and why do we need to think if our brains are just molecules bouncing off of each other in a completely predictable way? But thinking shouldn't have to be and isn't transcendent – it's a technical process involving considerable amounts of information simultaneously shared among a bunch of specialized subsystems. Doesn't matter if it's just electricity and bouncing molecules – the mental chatter is an unavoidable aspect of the processing. While not transcending mechanics, thinking, as an inescapable aspect of high-level information processing, may be the frame for all of physics (since the universe engages in high-level information processing), which makes thinking kind of transcendent, after all.

The universe turns out not to be deterministic – quantum events are, within their probability functions, perfectly unpredictable. (Future quantum events (which includes everything, really) precisely follow probability functions. We don't know the outcome of a quantum event. But we do know the probability curve that decides the outcome. That is, once we've narrowed down the possible outcomes as much as possible, what's left – the unpredictable, indeterminate part – is completely, inherently unpredictable except in terms of precisely defined probabilities.)

But this isn't good news for free will, because quantum unpredictability doesn't liberate thought from being a mechanistic process.

Consciousness is a technical thing, not a mystical in-the-realm-of-angels thing – it's a property of high-level information-sharing via bouncing molecules, etc. – not necessarily in a completely predictable way, but also not in a way that thought can bend or defy physics through thought itself.

Consciousness creates an information space (or mind-space) that owes itself to the physics of the brain but isn't comprised of the atoms of the brain. (It's as if your brain is running a video game environment which contains representations that come from (processed) sensory information and from imagination (generally not the Willy Wonka kind). It hasn't built a physical world – a scale model of the outside world like a model train set – but rather a system that allows the mind to envision and manipulate mental representations. As we think, we don't see neurons firing – we see what is represented by patterns of neurons firing.)

But hey – if you have your mind-space – an abstract arena for the information in your awareness – why so serious about the physical foundation of the space? Your brain is made of stuff – get over it. Legitimate concerns related to free will include not being in charge of what gets to enter your mind-space, how information has been sharpened, simplified, amplified or otherwise tweaked on the way in, and unconscious glitches in your information-processing.

There's the ass-covering, bogus storytelling nature of consciousness. Your unconscious or some specialized subsystem pulls the trigger on a decision, followed by your consciousness telling itself a story after the fact about why it made the decision. Happens all the time. Your consciousness is always telling you, "It's cool – got it – I'm the boss." Sure you are, consciousness – you're the boss like Donald Trump or Michael Scott is the boss – you can be a blowhard with an exaggerated sense of your own skills.

If you observe carefully, you can spot some of the mechanics of consciousness and watch your thoughts being assembled. One small example – when there's a name on the tip of your brain, sometimes you get clues – it's five letters, it starts with a B or an M. You can glimpse some of the mental landscape where the little ball of inquiry is rolling around, trying to drop into the pit that's the answer. But now you've thought about it too much – you've scrambled the landscape – you have to forget your inquiry and let it settle. Come back to it a little later, and often the answer is right there for you.

In addition to constraints on thought, there are constraints on existence itself. Our thoughts are fairly tightly bound to reality, and reality seems bound to some pretty inflexible principles of existence. Creatures that are the result of evolution in a natural (un-engineered) cosmos probably all live in three spatial dimensions with linear time and rules of physics which are fairly consistent among all the different possible universes. (I don't believe that the universe can take on any crazy dang form, with physical constants and number of dimensions at the mercy of 12-sided dice, and not just because the special

effects department only has the budget to cover a couple of extras in blue body paint. There are reasons for gravity and 4D space-time, etc.) Whether advanced civilizations can circumvent these somewhat uniform conditions and construct truly weird universes remains to be seen.

Evolved creatures are persistent creatures – they've evolved to persist by propagating offspring across time. If the general scheme of the universe is decipherable – if we can decode its physics and metaphysics – then advanced civilizations (at least those which retain the will to persist that they evolved with) will figure out the universe and be forced to address it on its terms (which we have to anyway, even without understanding it). Every civilization cooks from the same Mystery Basket – the universe.

So civilizations are locked into a template – they react to the conditions of existence, constrained by their persistent characteristics and by physics, resulting in a limited range of possible paths for civilizations. You hear people say, "There are only seven basic plots for movies." Well maybe there are a limited number of basic plots for civilizations. Some might be empire-builders. Though maybe not – in the words of Enrico Fermi, "Where are they?" It might be more efficient to stay close to home and exploit local resources for computing power – turning nearby planets into Dyson spheres and the like. Some might fall into decadence. Some might devote themselves to figuring out what the universe means and wants. Some might become artists, engaging in grand feats of beautiful, frivolous engineering. Maybe your standard advanced civilization is a mix of all the major reactions to existence, kind of like a TV lineup – comedy, drama, glitzy excess, hedonism….

The rules of existence will turn out to be fairly mathematical – not ordained from above, with God saying, "This is the precise and perfect Number One. It's the basis of counting," but hemmed in by slippery, iron-clad but fuzzy and evanescent tautological necessities such as non-contradiction – something can't both exist and not exist (except when it can because of quantum uncertainty) – with existence entailing space and time and matter and their delineation via interactions – a big, messy ball of bootstrapped logic. (Numbers seem inherently exact, but that's how we define and use them. We're really borrowing an infinity of information (about the relationships among numbers) to do so. Numbers are as bootstrapped as everything else, but they're amenable to procedures which hide that.)

Given that we're constrained by math-like rules, it's not unreasonable to think that we're math-like entities, with our existences boxed and bound and constrained by having to belong to the set of all possible things.

Imagine, for example, the mind-space of a sponge, which has no neurons but which can respond to stimuli. (A sponge can sneeze when it gets filled up with schmutz.) It has a tiny-to-the-point-of-nonexistent, fuzzy mind-space – a pretty close to minimum-possible mind-space – which could probably be replicated with a simple mathematical model. Then there are roundworms with 302 neurons. It would take a much more complicated model, but you could still build one, once the math of mental spaces is understood, which

would encompass all possible roundworm mental states. Which means that the mind of a roundworm is a mathematical entity.

Now imagine the brain of a chicken. The (always reliable) internet suggests it might have 100 million neurons. Hard to imagine precisely and accurately modeling a chicken's mental space. But on the other hand, it's a chicken. We'll eventually be able to do this. We could build Chicken (and Pig and Cow) Heaven. Sorry we keep killing and eating you, chickens, but we've replicated all possible chicken mind-spaces in this computer. You're in there somewhere, having what passes for a great time for a chicken.

There's no way we won't, in the next 50 years, try to build the mind-spaces of Abe Lincoln and Jane Austen and Shakespeare. "Have you read *Joy and Jealousy* by Jane Austen 3.3? Way too much sex." Yes, *Star Trek* Holodeck, I can see you. You can put your hand down. Characters in video games will have their own mind-spaces. People who freeze their heads might find themselves brought back to fight World War Two over and over in *Shell Shock 4* for the Goopple PlayVerse.

But we're saved from our constraints by infinity. Assuming (which we may never be able to prove) that possible universes can be of any finite size, and that the number of universes of any given size is proportional to the size raised to some exponential power, there's an infinity of possible worlds and destinies.

26. Free will might operate beyond present explanatory powers. It may exist intrinsic to an individual consciousness, or set of POVs, in the universe overriding/incorporating quantum indeterminacy or exist based on an intrinsic characteristic in a larger system. For instance, an armature of the cosmos beyond present explanatory powers. What of this armature for the universe? What if free will for the universe inheres in this armature? Intrinsic freedom of the cosmos. In other words, what if conscious creatures relate to such an armature and have derived (intrinsic to them or derived from armature) freedom of the will?

[Asked in a Seinfeld voice] What's the big deal about free will? I'm not overly concerned about free will; I care about *informed will*. Consciousness can function to somewhat optimize mental resources, with the objective being, the better the model you have of the world, the better your understanding of that model and the more angles and tactics you can deploy based on that understanding, the better your chances are of achieving your goals.

This is not free thinking. This is targeted thinking, based on where and what we are in the world. We're not free – we're part of the world, and we have to think about it. We can think freely about philosophical issues – about whatever we have the mental chops to think about – but even this kind of thinking is some kind of strategic reaction to the world. I would rather think well than think free. Freedom comes from knowing what's up and being able to react effectively to it. But you're still anchored to what's up.

And about the universe's armature – I think the universe is thinking about the world that the armature is part of – the outside world that contains the mind or mind-like thing that is our universe. The universe's information processing or thoughts pertain to – are anchored to – its outside world. Everything that thinks is thinking about a world – it's thinking in an anchored context.

27. Out of another set of mainstream physicists, even while some claim lacking direct observational evidence, arises the possibility of additional dimensions as postulated in, for example, string theory with everything in existence operating inside of 11 dimensional hyperspace. How do these conceptual and mathematical frameworks hold in your view?

It takes information to build and specify dimensions. Where does the information contained in 11-dimensional hyperspace come from? Does the universe contain enough information to have all these extra dimensions? Maybe so, if the dimensions are small enough to not contain much information at all. But on a macro scale, the universe barely has enough information (from observing itself) to hold open three spatial dimensions.

I don't love string theory. Maybe if I knew enough math and physics to work with it, I'd like it better. But in my current ignorant state, it seems unnecessarily complicated. I hope there's a simpler explanation for the way the universe works, with string theory being one of a variety of helpful ways to conceptualize physics. I'm hoping we develop a toolkit consisting of a number of different but consistent angles on physics and the universe, each being handy for certain operations, and acting as cross-checks and sources of insight for each other. It would kind of suck for string theory to turn out to be the simplest way to understand the world.

Why does the universe have three dimensions? I think we live in a Rumsfeld universe. Donald Rumsfeld famously said, "…there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns — the ones we don't know we don't know." (Errol Morris, who made a great-as-usual documentary interview with Rumsfeld called *The Unknown Known*, traced the idea of unknown knowns and known unknowns back to the explorer John Wesley Powell. He also notes that John Keats and Robert Browning also mention the "known unknown.")

Suppose that the universe is an optimized information map (of itself, the same way we could imagine an information map of the mind, which when optimized would be a map of itself), with the distance between objects roughly based on how much information they have in common. Parts of the universe with almost everything in common will be very close to each other. (By "in common," I mean shared information – they've been exposed to largely the same history – belonging to the same group of active galaxies – as the universe unfolds.) Parts of the universe with very little in common will be distant from each other (and red-shifted and time-dilated). (Dormant galaxies which are distant from and mostly uncorrelated with each other can be hauled into stronger correlation with each

other by bringing them into the active center (kind of like popping open windows on a giant glass touch-screen on a cheesy *CSI*-type show).)

In an information-map universe, it takes information to hold space open. The number of dimensions depends on the amount of information available to specify the relationships among objects in these dimensions.

Every part of the universe at the same distance from us has about the same amount of information in common with our neighborhood. Say, for example, that we're looking at parts of the universe that appear to be moving away from us at 30% the speed of light; they're about 4 billion light years away. Everything that's four billion light years away from us forms a sphere of that radius, about twice the radius of everything that appears to be moving away at 15% the speed of light, with four times the area.

Just for fun, say that the amount of information in common with us is approximately (at low v) the reciprocal Lorentz factor from special relativity: the square root of (1 – v^2), where v is the redshift velocity (how fast that part of the universe seems to be moving away from us). For v = .15, information would be about 98.9% in common, or 1.1% not in common. For v = .3, information would be about 95.6% in common, or 4.4% not in common. For low redshift velocities, information not in common is proportional to the ratio of velocities squared.

This sets up a locally three-dimensional universe. At each redshift radius v, information not in common with our neighborhood takes up a region proportional to v squared, or the surface of a sphere of radius v. (Each redshift velocity corresponds to a (Hubble relation) distance from our galaxy.)

I've left out multiplying the information not in common by the information in common. The less information in common, the less you can distinguish the spatial relationships among distant objects, and space at that distance as we see it shrinks proportionately.

So here's a Rumsfeld way of thinking about the dimensionality of space. Distances from us are the known known – we know how much information we have in common with other neighborhoods and objects in space. Spatial relationships among *other* objects shade from the known unknown to, at higher redshifts, the unknown unknown. We know a lot about neighborhoods with almost all information in common with us, but, having almost all information in common, they don't spread out across a lot of space. The less information neighborhoods have in common with us, the more information space they could occupy, but the less we know about them, the less we know about their spatial interrelationships and the less we can see those relationships, and space at large cosmological distances is effectively shrunken (and smeared out as we look at it).

In a Big Bang universe, we can see across nearly 14 billion light years. (Microwave background radiation has spent nearly the apparent lifetime of the universe reaching us.) But we're not looking at a sphere 14 billion light years in radius, because the background radiation comes from a very small, young, recently exploded universe. (There's a

maximum radius we can see as we look across greater distances and farther into the past. Beyond that radius, we're seeing increasingly smeared-out images of our universe when it was younger and smaller. Of course, every image we see is of a younger universe, but it's usually only younger by a few billionths of a second – the time light takes to cross a room.)

If we could see to infinity, we wouldn't see Big Bang space as completely filling three-dimensional space. Looking farther and farther, we'd see the universe getting smaller and smaller (because younger and younger), until it's a point at T = 0. But that's just because we're looking back in time. Though we can't see it because of the finite speed of light, a Big Bang universe can be a fully three-dimensional surface of a hypersphere.

But I don't think we live in a Big Bang universe. Due to the nature of an information-space universe, it looks quite a bit like a Big Bang universe, and that it started with a Big Bang is a natural first conclusion to reach, based on general relativity and the Hubble redshift. Note that the idea of the Big Bang – space exploding from an initial point – while seeming indisputably established, is less than 100 years old, and has been the predominant theory of universal structure for less than 50 years.

A Big Bang universe is nearly the same everywhere – the result of a uniform outward expansion. But a universe that doesn't blow up all at once isn't the same everywhere. It has an active center and burned-out and collapsed outskirts clustered close to what looks like T = 0. This universe may not be perfectly three-dimensional – space is highly curved and riddled with collapsed stuff near the apparent origin, which may mean that space is effectively less than three-dimensional at great distances.

If space doesn't extend outward from any given point – if, on the outskirts, it tucks into itself – maybe it's lacking dimensionality. (Or maybe the scale of space is (relativistically) collapsed, allowing for space to be squeezed into less space. On the outskirts, you might be able to have an unlimited number of neighborhoods separated by high apparent relative velocities, because you can add relativistic velocities forever without reaching the speed of light – stuff just gets more contracted.) If the outskirts are less than three-dimensional, this might explain large-scale gravity not falling off according to the inverse-square law.

(If there's an actual collapsed outskirts not just a visual ghost of the early universe, can you build a rocket and travel close to T = 0? Probably not. For one thing, it's a many-billion-year trip, even at the speed of light. For another thing, space filled with collapsed stuff may have a smaller scale and contain even more distance than we can see from here. And there would be heavy radiation including lots of neutrinos.)

To get back to your original question about string theory and 11 dimensions – I think there's an economy of dimensions. Self-defining systems of information don't have enough information to hold open a space greater than three dimensions (not counting gravitational wells) (and maybe not even three dimensions over great distances).

The Coromandel Pilgrimage, New Zealand

Tal Brooke

Auckland, The City of Sails

On Air New Zealand flights from the States, you will be landing in Auckland, New Zealand, early in the morning following an all-night flight. After clearing customs, take a shuttle (lined outside) to the Barrycourt Quality Hotel in Parnell. It is by far the most recommended hotel, situated in the upscale Parnell area of Auckland. The downtown hotels are more expensive in a far less attractive area among huge skyscrapers where parking is impossible and traffic thoroughly intimidating. You can't go on nighttime strolls as you can in the quaint neighborhood of Parnell—think of Carmel or La Jolla—a chic place to hang out and stroll late into the evening, surrounded by restaurants of all kinds from the Palki Indian Restaurant, 279 Parnell Road, the Di Mare, 251 Parnell Road (a top option with classic *steak au poivre*) behind Bocci's Italian. Then there is the Java Room and a top French Restaurant near the top of Parnell Road. There is even a dedicated chocolate place nearby to have a sundae after your meal.

To get your New Zealand sea legs, it is recommended that you stay in Auckland at least two nights. That gives you a chance to explore Auckland—great place to explore. Give it a week if you can. Meanwhile, the prices are reasonable at the popular Barrycourt Quality Hotel; call them directly for reservations (info at end). You want to be in the main building if possible. The hotel is in residential Parnell, near Parnell Village—the most attractive shopping area of Auckland, with scores of fashionable stores, a great range of restaurants and cafés. It is a six-minute walk from the hotel to the top of Parnell Road. In the other direction on Gladstone Road, the Rose Hip Café sits across from the Rose Garden and is a three-minute. The large Garden has a range of park benches.

If you rent a car, you will be driving on the left-hand side of the road, so get adapted first before driving to Coromandel.

Coromandel is considered one of the most beautiful regions in all of New Zealand. Coromandel Peninsula is only a two-hour drive from Auckland, all on good roads. You can also take the Ferry from Auckland, Pier 4, 139 Quay Street, 09 307 8005 (a two-hour ride on Discovery 360—www.360discovery.co.nz). But you will need a car in Coromandel if you plan to stay. There are a few car rentals there.

Driving to Coromandel Peninsula, you start out on the M1 highway South. Getting on the entrance of the M1 motorway south to Coromandel is very easy from Parnell Village/Road and the hotel. You literally drive to the bottom of Parnell Road, then take a left at the light on Stanley Street at the bottom. The entrance to the M1 Motorway South is directly ahead. Stay on the M1 for an hour till you see the turnoff to the Coromandel Peninsula. It couldn't be easier. You will notice that the motorways are far less crowded than over here. The views will be stunning once you turn off. Remember, like Hawaii, New Zealand has no industry and bounteous farmland.

Coromandel Peninsula and Town

At the base of the Coromandel Peninsula you pass through the town of Thames, then you will be hugging the coastal highway, a stunning 40-minute drive along the Coromandel Peninsula. You might

see an orca or two and pass mussel farms. The coastal road is only ten feet above the Hauraki Bay as it passes coastal towns hugging the steep green rising hillsides, houses bunched together in tufts of precious land. Finally the coastal road ascends a rising hill and descends into a wide plateau of natural beauty that is reminiscent of LOST HORIZONS. You pass pristine farms and new vineyards. At the end of the plateau, you have a final climb and then descend into an expanse of rare flat land with a generous shoreline. You are entering **Coromandel Town** with its quiet, pristine coves on Hauraki Bay, subtropical weather, boating, fishing, bracketed by rising hills around it.

The main coastal road becomes Tiki Road near town. You will enter Kapanga Road, the main street of Coromandel Town as it faces an old English pub, the Star & Garter. Take a right and park within a block. You will see Richardson's Realty on the left, and Kelly Grice is the property manager of the house (information below). She will take you there and let you in (her info is below). Coromandel Town is as quaint as it gets.

The Rental House Option

You can't beat living in Coromandel Town itself for a week or two if you want to take in New Zealand at its best. "Coromandel Haven," as the house is called, is a well-built, classic English-style New Zealand farmhouse made of hard New Zealand Kauri and Rimu wood and is one of the few residences along the golf-course road—a three-minute walk to the course, seven to the Bay. There is a sizeable parking area on the property through a rear gate, great for boat owners. Recently, two brand-new heat pump/air conditioners were installed in the house, giving it total temperature control, summer or winter. Ecologically conscious New Zealand has embraced the new inverter technology from Japan that turns into a heat blower or air conditioner with minimal power consumption, as wood stoves go the way of the dodo bird.

"Coromandel Haven" is in an upscale Coromandel neighborhood with a generous garden on one acre, hidden from view of distant neighbors. This Holiday Home is surrounded by rare and protected native Rimu and Kauri trees on the property, including a giant Rimu tree overshadowing the house. It has a BBQ area set in native bush.

The house has two bedrooms with queen-size beds, a separate dining room, a complete kitchen, and a large den/living room with a new high definition Panasonic 39" LCD TV, SKY TV and a home-theater system also including Telecom Broadband Internet access using the new Wi-Fi hubs that can receive signals almost anywhere. Other amenities include telephone landline (use a telephone card to call anywhere in the world), LPG gas stove and imported Tempur-Pedic mattress on the master bed. There is a bookshelf of books (almost all of Lee Child) and over 30 DVDs. There is a separate shed with washer and dryer. The bathroom has tub and a 12" showerhead from England. There is also an outside patio with a barbecue. Ample parking in the rear can accommodate boats. The garden has natural views of Coromandel hills, and surrounding nature, the Bay is only a two-minute drive away.

Coromandel Town is half a mile down the road. Explore the town, explore, with its 4 or 5 top-rated restaurants, like the Pepper Tree. Then drive over the nearby peninsula road to the Pacific side and you will see a beach right out of Maui with a very broad white-sand beach, called Whangapoa Beach, a short 13-kilometer drive.

The summer season in New Zealand goes from early December through March. April and May are early fall and are quite pleasant. During their summer, the temperature range is from the mid-70s to the mid-80s. It is warmer than Berkeley in the summer and the nights are pleasant.

Both Coromandel and Auckland are at the mid-point of New Zealand's North Island, farther from the South Pole than the South Island. Indeed, Auckland and Coromandel are on the cusp of subtropical weather. The farther north you go, the warmer it is and there are increasing palm trees, papaya, bananas and avocados. You will see palm trees in the garden of Coromandel Haven.

A large core of people of New Zealand remind me of Americans in earlier eras—polite, true to their word and unpretentious. Though New Zealand has the land mass of California on its two islands, it has less than 1/20th the population, a much lower people-density. You feel less crowded. The air is clean, the water is clean, and the food is pure and tastes great. It is a welcome change from our overbuilt cities. Gourmet food is one of the growing factors in New Zealand.

When a region's natural vistas and pristine beauty are enhanced and reflected in the temperament of those who live in the land—by an easygoing optimism, an innocence and tranquility of heart—the combination can be overwhelming to those of us from jaded high-pressure/high-stress societies where social interactions are sufficiently adversarial for us to keep our defense shields up most of the time. I was disarmed the first time I arrived in Auckland over 12 years ago to house-hunt.

I noticed an atmosphere of calm peaceful silence, the sudden absence of that aggressive cynicism and sarcasm that come as a natural reflex in the home culture. What a nice change. You will find yourself smiling more than you have in a long time. I did and still do. You bet it's worth it.

Robert T. Brooke went to New Zealand looking for an affordable future residence to write books. He was stunned the moment he saw "Coromandel Haven" after having spent over a month searching. He was in Coromandel simply to see the famous region. Disliking winter, he is usually at the house a month in their summer (winter for the rest of the world). His novel now on Amazon, ***Return of the Giants*** (www.amazon.com/dp/B00MJBQQPQ), was written in large part there at Coromandel Haven.

The best time to consider coming to New Zealand is early December through April.

To share the bounty, climb aboard. Working out dates for visits can be done on the HolidayHouses Web site below and the information is sent to the property manager and owner. It is that simple. The rental link is below. Or call Kelly Grimes directly, at Richardsons Realty (**64-2120-26067**).

http://www.holidayhouses.co.nz/properties/6527.asp

Info for the Trip

Barrycourt Quality Suites Hotel

10-20 Gladstone Rd, Parnell
Auckland, Phone: 011-64 9 303 3789
can also reserve via Orbitz Internet

Coromandel House Property Manager

Kelly Grice, Richardsons Realty,
191 Kapanga Road Coromandel Town, 3506
rentals@coromandel.richardsons.co.nz
64 (New Zealand) 021 202-6067

Coromandel Restauramts

Pepper Tree

Success Café and Restaurant

The Admiral's Arms

Umu Restaurant and Cafe

Coromandel Hotel & Bar

Star & Garter British Pub

Giving Style to a Life

Rex Hubbard

I envision a field of study the purpose of which is to give style to one's life. By style, I mean a good fit among the different elements that make up a life.

An academic counselor may advise a student on minors that complement his major. E.g. he may tell him that statistics is a good complement to a psychology major. A physician may advise a patient on his polypharmacy. He may go over the interactions of possible medications, explain which combination is best, and try to eliminate unnecessary drugs if possible.

Something similar can be achieved at a broader level. Experts in the field of study I envision—"coherentists"—could give advice on the complementariness of pursuits, traits, and other states of being. For example, they may give advice on the fit between a certain occupation and a certain hobby.

What I have in mind is not quite a life coach. A coherentist would not address many common concerns of adulthood. He would focus on giving style to--unifying--someone's various pursuits and traits. Some pursuits or traits may have to be dropped. Others may need to be added. The result would be a life-style in which the elements work together for the happiness of the individual.

Who needs a coherentist? The guy who loses his family because of his addiction to work. The student who spreads himself too thin. The monomaniac who suffers from burn-out early in his career. The thousands of men and women who fail to integrate work, nutrition, and exercise. These are all cases that could benefit from the expertise of a coherentist.

Depending on the details of the case, the solutions to lifestyle incoherence may be obvious. Take the example of work, diet, and exercise. Perhaps all that someone needs to do is wake up earlier in order to exercise before work. Or it may be that someone simply needs to pack his lunch instead of eating in the workplace cafeteria.

If all solutions were this obvious, then there would be little need for coherentists. To better appreciate the role of the coherentist, consider a more complex case.

David, an attorney at a Manhattan firm, seeks the counsel of a coherentist. He says that he wants to get in shape but does not know what kind of exercise is best for his lifestyle. He tells the coherentist that he has considered weightlifting, long distance running, and swimming. The coherentist informs David that, given the culture of Big Law, being abnormally muscular is a professional disadvantage. He provides sociological evidence for this claim and asks David to consider how important it is for him to advance his career. Learning that career advancement is of the utmost importance

to David, the coherentist advises against weightlifting. The coherentist then tells David that, in light of David's competitive nature, long distance running is a better choice for him than swimming because of the greater availability of foot races compared to swimming competitions. As a result of his consultation, David decides to become a runner.

Giving advice to someone in David's situation requires knowledge of sociology, exercise, and psychology, combined with overall good judgment. What kind of specialist exists today who can offer advice to David? It is hard to think of an answer. A personal trainer may know plenty about exercise but not enough about sociology. A sociologist may know plenty about his science but nothing about exercise. What David needs is someone with a broad base of learning and an artist's eye for harmony. What he needs is a coherentist.

What sorts of services can a coherentist provide? Consider these possibilities.

i) Advise a client on how to match his pursuits with each other.

We have already seen David's case. There are infinitely more. The pursuits in question could be a full time job and a part time job, a full time job and a hobby, two hobbies, and so on.

ii) Advise a client on *how many* pursuits to have.

There are risks and benefits to putting all of one's eggs in the same basket. There are also risks and benefits to diversification. The particulars of the client's case, combined with the best information from academic psychology, would determine how many pursuits the client should have. The following are some things to consider:

- Excellence requires singular focus, even monomania. The level of achievement that someone strives for will affect how many pursuits he should have.
- The age of the client is relevant. Teenagers often have labile interests and therefore should not invest heavily in just one pursuit, rare exceptions notwithstanding. Older adults know themselves better and can afford to invest more in a single pursuit.
- Some pursuits are precarious. Being a professional strongman is almost guaranteed to result in a career-halting injury at some point. It is a good idea for a professional strongman to have a backup pursuit that he can engage in while he recovers from injury.

iii) Advise a client on how to match his *traits* with his pursuits.

Being smart fits well with the study of electrical engineering. Being tall fits well with an NBA career. To improve the fit between a trait and a pursuit, either a pursuit can be chosen in light of a trait or a trait can be acquired in light of a pursuit.

It is easy to imagine someone who chooses a pursuit in light of a trait. It may be harder to imagine someone who chooses a trait in light of a pursuit. Consider a woman who takes a strong interest in weightlifting. She then learns that her hormone profile is not ideal for lifting the weights that she wants to lift. A coherentist can explain to her that some relevant biological traits of hers can be changed, viz. her hormone levels. He can then explain to her that they can be changed with hormone therapy—perhaps a low dose of transdermal testosterone. If she wants to hear more, the coherentist can go on to discuss whether she should undergo hormone therapy. He can describe the way that therapy will affect other things in her life, e.g. her appearance and overall health, and help her to make the best decision, all things considered.

Sometimes a trait does not need to be changed at all. The client simply needs to be made aware of how a seemingly troublesome trait is in fact a benefit, all things considered.

Suppose that a man goes to a coherentist and says that he is not sociable as a result of mild depression. Many people, especially many physicians, would be quick to assume that his dysthymia is what needs to change and that his pursuit of social activity is of indispensable importance. A properly open-minded coherentist will consider all ways to resolve the mismatch. The coherentist may note that dysthymic people tend to see the world more accurately than happy people. He may then ask the client whether he has any pursuits that benefit from sober, accurate perception. Perhaps the man is an existential novelist whose writing would suffer were his mood to become normal. If so, he may become aware of the benefits of his dysthymia and choose to remain that way.

The trait of homosexuality was once assumed to be something that ought to be eliminated with therapy. Now, many contemporary Westerners believe that a homosexual should stay as he is and match his pursuits to his sexual orientation. This change of mind came about as a result of greater liberality and flexibility in thinking.

A good coherentist will demonstrate liberality of thinking to an even greater degree. He will take an interest in the *exploration of abnormality*. Before advising a client to change a trait that most people believe is bad, the coherentist will pause and ask what advantages may accrue to the client as a result of having the trait in question. For example, someone with schizoid personality disorder may seek the counsel of a coherentist. Initially, the schizoid may want to become normal. Before giving advice that will help the client become normal, the coherentist will stop and ask whether the schizoid personality is in fact a disorder at all (some psychiatrists do not believe that it is) and whether it should be changed. It is possible that, in a particular case, having a schizoid personality is all things considered a good thing for the client. The same may be true of asexuality, bipolar depression, and other traits that contemporary society is quick to eradicate with therapy and medicine.

iv) Advise a client on how to match his traits with each other.

In *The Gay Science* (Passage 290), Nietzsche writes about the need to achieve harmony among one's traits:

> *One thing is needful*. -- To "give style" to one's character -- a great and rare art! It is practiced by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye. Here a large mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of original nature has been removed -- both times through long practice and daily work at it. Here the ugly that could not be removed is concealed; there it has been reinterpreted and made sublime. Much that is vague and resisted shaping has been saved and exploited for distant views; it is meant to beckon toward the far and immeasurable. In the end, when the work is finished, it becomes evident how the constraint of a single taste governed and formed everything large and small. Whether this taste was good or bad is less important than one might suppose, if only it was a single taste!

A coherentist can help the client to achieve the intra-personal harmony that Nietzsche praises.

v) Advise a client on how to match his traits and pursuits with other states of being.

In addition to traits, there are other states of being that can also be made to fit well with pursuits or traits or both. An example of such a state is where someone resides. Living in Hollywood, California is a better fit for the pursuit of acting than living in Ozark, Alabama. But if a thespian decides to quit acting and become an officer in the Ku Klux Klan, then he may want to move from California to Alabama. Consider a subtler example. In the Deep South of America, a strong sense of personal honor pervades the culture. Indeed, an abnormal percentage of the violent crime in the Deep South consists of the perpetrator retaliating against a perceived slight to his honor. Parents who orient their lives around pacifism may choose to raise their children elsewhere in light of this information. A coherentist with a good geography education can help a client to match his location with his pursuits and traits.

As Nietzsche observed, there is a connection between a thing's style and the harmony of the elements that make up the thing. For a Ferrari to have its sporty style, the parts of the automobile must fit together for the common purpose of enabling the car to go fast.

The world is full of people whose lifestyles in fact have no style at all. They have no style because the elements of their lives do not fit together well. We see men and women who try to combine the rearing of five children with marathon running. We see teenagers who try to both as authentic as possible and as popular as possible. By having pursuits and traits that do not complement each other, they achieve nothing. Their lives are not Ferraris: they are jalopies made from the parts of a dozen different cars.

I hope that this essay helps to define the role of an occupation for which there is a need.

The State of the "Higher-IQ Societies"

Kevin Langdon

The twenty-first century came along and everything has changed.

IQ has taken a hit from political correctness and the societies which select members using IQ tests are viewed with suspicion or considered irrelevant by many people.

With more alternative activities easily available online and in-person, the "higher-IQ societies" (those with cutoffs at or above the 99.9th percentile) are competing in a more difficult market. Advertising can be effective but finding suitable places to advertise the societies is difficult. Editorial coverage attracts more attention but is even more difficult to get.

The membership of the societies is aging, with an average age somewhere in the late 40's. Growth tends to counter this trend but also tends to lead to more authoritarianism, as there are fewer members aware of more than one side of controversial issues.

And given that members of the societies, because of their selectivity, are widely stretched out across the world, the primary venues for members to exchange ideas are necessarily online, primarily on Yahoo! Groups and Facebook.

I have a few observations about what tends to happen in the societies' lists.

1. Societies with fuzzy admission criteria tend to be less active and crazier than the ones with a solid psychometric base.
2. Participants preferentially choose forums with fewer rules and more free speech.
3. Monopolization of a forum by one or a few posters leads to stagnation.

On several occasions someone has tried to organize an umbrella organization for high-IQ societies, but the organizers have always made the same mistake. They intend to run these lists and organizations. This has--rightly--not appealed to the societies or their members. What is needed instead is something like the United Nations, where governance of the intersociety forums and other activities is through agreement of the constituent societies.

A good step in the direction of healthy relations is the annual ggg999 (Global General Gathering of the Triple Nine Society) gatherings, which includes not only Triple Nine members but also members of the other 99.9+ groups with credible admission standards.

This year's ggg999 will be in Fort Worth, Texas, on the Columbus Day weekend (October 9-12). See:

http://www.ggg999.org

Taoless Tao

August 26, 2012

Pushing the air with fingertips,
hands trembling,
circles within circles,
yinning and yanging on the Bubbling Spring,
drawing in the energy of an imaginal star,
breathing into marrow of the bones …

Dancing our vows again for the first time
before aleph-null unconceived buddhas.
Hand trembling,
circles within circles,
seeing eyeless …
the taste of silence.

--May-Tzu