

Noesis

The Journal of the Mega Society

Issue #188 March 2009

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

and the official Mega Society page,

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

Noesis, the journal of the Mega Society, #188, March 2009.

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

Mega Society elections are overdue. As no one else has submitted a statement of candidacy to run for any of our three offices, Administrator Jeff Ward, Internet Officer Chris Cole, and Editor Kevin Langdon are all declared reelected for another year.

Featured in this issue are an appreciation of the late Jacqueline White, artist and former Regent (President) of the Triple Nine Society, Patt Wilson McDaniel's reflections on a trip to Joshua Tree National Park, an essay by Mega Society founder, philosopher, and IQ test designer Ronald K. Hoeflin on the definition of intelligence, an unusual travel report from Calcutta by physicist Andrew Beckwith, a short article by Chris Harding (also a founder of high-IQ societies and IQ test designer) on legendary Australian strong man Don Berry, two poems by Richard May (May-Tzu) and an amusing vignette by Brian Schwartz.

The deadline for *Noesis* #189 is May 15, 2009. Material is needed. Please send us a letter, an article, or an image for publication.



In Memoriam: Jacqueline White

Kevin Langdon

I'm sorry to have to report that my dear friend, artist, nonconformist, and former Triple Nine Society Regent Jacqueline White passed away on October 26, 2008. Jacqueline held several TNS ExCom posts, including Regent, and was very popular in TNS and the larger high-IQ societies community. She will be greatly missed.

For the last few years of her life I took her out to lunch and for joy rides in Marin County, North of San Francisco, where she lived, about once a month. This continued after she moved to an assisted living facility. She was very grateful for this attention—and I was grateful to have her in my life. Our time together was always very enjoyable for me and I believe that Jacqueline enjoyed our excursions too.

I'd been notified by her daughter that she was being moved to hospice care. I called the facility and was given wrong information which delayed my final visit. I arrived at her room on the afternoon of her death and was directed to her room—only to find a sheet pulled up over her head. She had died so recently that the front desk hadn't gotten word yet. I regret not only the death of my friend but the fact that I wasn't able to say goodbye to her while she was still living.

What I do not regret is my relationship with her. She was a smart, creative, kind person and an all-around fine human being. Much more should be said but I find myself at a loss for words adequate to describe this fine human being and how she touched my life.

Joshua Tree: Moments Borne on the Breeze

Patt Wilson McDaniel

In the past I have come to Joshua Tree in the spring to see wildflowers and search out rare plants, enjoying the unusual and interesting geology. But Easter weekend, 2008 . . . I went to the desert to be alone, alone with myself, or to find what that might be, to be stronger than suffering, to be free of all other factors besides myself reflecting on myself, to breathe the expansive air, rest in the dry austere terrain and intriguing rock formations of Joshua Tree . . . and to contemplate Easter, sacrifice and redemption, death and resurrection. A childish hope of radical realization always persists, even if subliminally, but present-moment awareness is a more tangible and accessible experience. The silent dry air invites it.

Of course, if some wildflowers were to be found, all the better to soothe and delight. An internet search revealed some promising sites, exciting enough to email an old friend who is known to frequent Joshua Tree. An answer came back; there would be a gathering that weekend, would I join? This was perfect, to roam alone by day and join with others around the campfire by night.

The heavy weight of life's involvements began to lift as I traveled East. Feeling was light and ethereal. Arriving at the park entrance while it was still dark, I stopped to take in the brightness of the stars and drift off until there was a hint of changing light and critters skittered across the road to find their burrows for the day.

I drove on and, in time, the long shadows would alternate with bright sun, dismissing the soft, subtle colors. I began to photograph the stark and striking rock formations.

The rocks are sensuous, with textures, crannies and curves like intertwining bodies, heads and arms rising from the earth as if to say this is our body, walk with us, lie on our outstretched arms, our belly, you are in our care, our place. Merge with us in the oneness of the universe. Feel with us the penetrating heat of the sun and the dry cooling breeze. Hear the hum of silence, the scratching of an insect, the rustle of a bird rising from the brush, a lonely song.

Here my thigh is blown rough-smooth, like well-used sandpaper. Here my heart of rock has had the soft matrix etched away, revealing an aggregate of hard crystals of charcoal grays, pink tans, and manila whites, a geologic story in a language foreign to me.

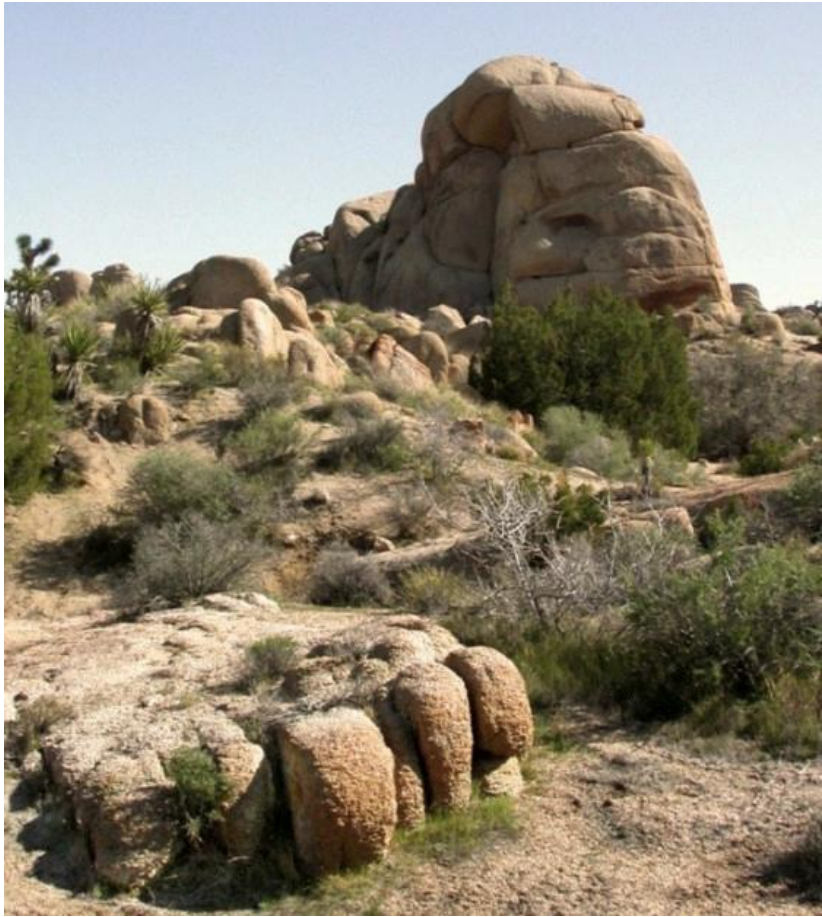
Gathered around the fire at night, moving to the drumming, listing with the flute, its sound flowing and eddying over the desert, the sensuous life of the desert infusing the living, slow and kind, liting and sacred, in acceptance of austere love.

Photographs were taken at Joshua Tree National Park in Southern California.

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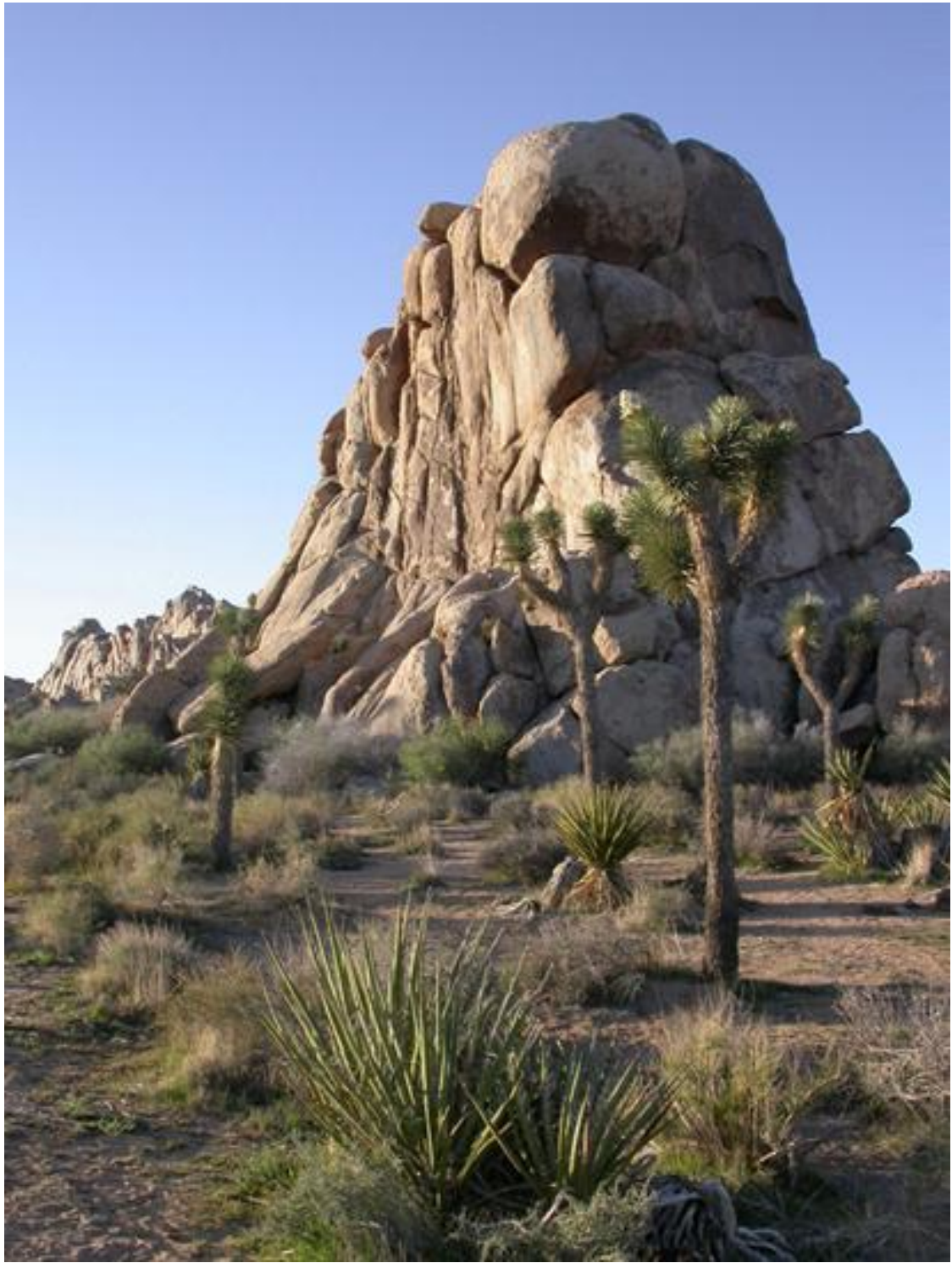












The Definition of Intelligence

Ronald K. Hoeflin

In Issue 33 of *Termite* [the journal of the Lewis M. Terman Society] I included the article on “Intelligence” provided by Wikipedia, the free internet encyclopedia. That article included two definitions of intelligence, each consisting of a number of factors. I mentioned in a note at the end of the article that I might include a unified definition of intelligence based on my cybernetic theory of categories, using factors mentioned in the two Wikipedia definitions. There are actually three definitions, and I will offer a separate classification for each of them.

I will first quote the part of the Wikipedia article that included the two definitions (numberings added):

At least two major “consensus” definitions of intelligence have been proposed. First, from “Intelligence: Known and Unknowns,” a report of a task force convened by the American Psychological Association in 1995:

Individuals differ from one another in their ability (A1) to understand complex ideas, (A2) to adapt effectively to the environment, (A3) to engage in various forms of reasoning, (A4) to overcome obstacles by taking thought. Although these (A5) individual differences can be substantial, (A6) they are never entirely consistent: (A7) a given person’s intellectual performance will vary (A8) on different occasions, (A9) in different domains, (A10) as judged by different criteria. Concepts of “intelligence” are attempts (A11) to clarify and organize this complex set of phenomena. Although considerable clarity has been achieved in some areas, (A12) no conceptualization has yet answered all the important questions and none commands universal assent. Indeed, when two dozen prominent theorists were recently (A13) asked to define intelligence, they gave two dozen somewhat different definitions.

A second definition of intelligence comes from “Mainstream Science on Intelligence,” which was signed by 52 intelligence researchers in 1994:

(B1) A very general mental capacity that, among other things, involves the ability to (B2) reason, (B3) plan, (B4) solve problems, (B5) think abstractly, (B6) comprehend complex ideas, (B7) learn quickly and (B8) learn from experience. It is not merely (B9) book learning, (B10) a narrow academic skill, or (B11) test-taking smarts. Rather, it reflects a broader and deeper capability for (B12) comprehending our surroundings—(B13) “catching on,” “making sense” of things, or “figuring out” what to do.

Another simple and efficient definition of intelligence is: (C1) the ability (C2) to apply knowledge (C3) in order to perform better (C4) in an environment.

My cybernetic theory attempts to allot the numbered defining factors above around the various phases of a cybernetic feedback loop. The loop can be divided into four main nodes as follows. Take a square and rotate it 45 degrees so that it is standing on one of its corners or nodes. The top node will be the drive, D, such as thirst or hunger; the left node will be the anticipatory factor, A, such as a tool or technique for resolving a drive, such as getting water with a bucket from a well; the bottom node will be the goal object factor, G, such as the water sought to quench thirst; and the right node will be the quiescence factor, Q, such as the quenching of thirst by swallowing cool, nonsalty, liquidy water. The feedback occurs because the quiescence factor reduces and then eliminates the drive factor such as thirst. Virtually all human thought and activity conforms to this pattern, which is why categories in virtually every field of endeavor can be grouped according to these four nodal concepts. To get a finer-grained analysis, one can add the four binary peripheral phases, DA, AG, GQ, QD, and the two spokes of the wheel, DG and AQ. There can also be a glue factor holding all these ten factors together, DAGQD, and a solvent category breaking them apart, not-DAGQD. Last, there can be two drive factors, D, and D', as when a father, D, influences his son, D'. Systems of categories greater than 13 can be accounted for by means of compound and complex reiterations of these basic 13 categories. In a sense, the 13th factor commences this process. Thirteen is a common ultimate grouping in human affairs, as in Jesus and his 12 disciples, or in a witches' coven, but smaller groups of categories are common, as in Aristotle's four causes or Aristotle's ten categories. The parts of speech of the English language were considered by Schopenhauer to be a better set of categories than either Aristotle's ten or Kant's twelve. Axiom systems such as Peano's axioms for number theory, Zermelo's axioms for set theory, or Euclid's axioms for geometry can be analyzed according to the phases of a cybernetic loop. Stephen Pepper, who suggested a similar concept he called the purposive act or selective system as the cornerstone of his metaphysical system, never went beyond the four basic nodal categories, but he did recognize that the purposive act is "the act associated with intelligence" (Concept and Quality, p. 17). Pepper never used the word "cybernetic" in connection with his theory, but I would say that this remark can be justified by saying that we demonstrate intelligence by learning from the feedback we receive in the many cybernetic feedback loops in which we engage.

Here is my suggested classification:

Phase	A No.	Defining factor associated with intelligence
D	A7	A given person's intellectual performance
DA	A12	No conceptualization has answered all the important questions
A	A8	Will vary on different occasions
AG	A3	To engage in various forms of reasoning
G	A9	Will vary in different domains
GQ	A2	To adapt effectively to the environment
Q	A10	Will vary as judged by different criteria
QD	A1	To understand complex ideas
AQ	A11	To clarify and organize this complex set of phenomena
DG	A4	To overcome obstacles by taking thought
DAGQD	A5	Individual differences can be substantial
Not-DAGQD	A6	They are never entirely consistent
D'	A13	Asked to define intelligence, two dozen authorities gave two dozen somewhat different answers.

The second definition might be analyzed as follows:

Phase	B No.	Defining factor associated with intelligence
D	B4	To solve problems
DA	B5	To think abstractly
A	B3	To plan
AG	B2	To reason
G	B9	Book learning
GQ	B11	Test-taking smarts
Q	B8	To learn from experience
QD	B6	To comprehend complex ideas
AQ	B7	To learn quickly
DG ()	B12	Comprehending our surroundings
DAGQD	B1	A very general mental capacity
Not-DAGQD	B10	A narrow academic skill
D'	B13	Catching on, making sense, figuring out

And the third definition, much simpler than the other two, can be analyzed as follows:

Phase	C No.	Defining factor associated with intelligence
D	C1	The ability
A	C2	To apply knowledge
G	C3	In an environment
Q	C4	To perform better

Explanations for the first set of classifications might go as follows:

(A7) "A given person's intellectual performance" might be classed in D since a person is an agent or drive-bearer, D.

(A12) "No conceptualization has answered all the important questions" might be classed in DA since "questions" are drive-elicitors, D, while "conceptualizations" are means of anticipation, A, as in the concept of food, which leads one to anticipate nourishment, or the concept of poison, which leads one to anticipate bodily harm.

(A8) "Will differ on different occasions" might be classed in A since this alerts us to anticipate, A, different performance on different occasions.

(A3) "To engage in various forms of reasoning" might be classed in AG since reasoning typically proceeds from premises or assumptions, which are anticipatory, A, to conclusions, which are the goal objects, G, of the reasoning.

(A9) "Will vary in different domains" might be classed in G since a domain is a set of interrelated goal objects, G, such as the domain of biology, which consists of living objects, or the domain of astronomy, which consists of celestial objects.

(A2) "To adapt effectively to the environment" might be classed in GQ since the environment is a set of goal objects, G, and adapting to it is to register a set of appropriate quiescent responses, Q, to it, e.g., to avoid the sting, Q, of a bee, G, or to seek the taste, Q, of sugar, G.

(A10) “Will vary as judged by different criteria” might be classed in QD since judging is done by an agent or drive-bearer, D, with a drive to judge things, while criteria are the quiescent experiences by which we judge, e.g., the red or blue of litmus paper to assess acidity or alkalineness.

(A1) “To understand complex ideas” might be classed in QD since complex ideas arise from the welter of quiescent experiences, Q, that we encounter, e.g., the symptoms of a disease, while to understand these ideas is to manifest appropriate drives, D, in relation to those complex experiences, as when a doctor discerns what steps to take when he notices a certain set of symptoms, a syndrome.

(A11) “To clarify and organize this complex set of phenomena” might be classed in AQ since the phenomena at issue are the quiescent experiences, Q, associated with intelligence, while clarifying and organizing these phenomena is to arrange them in a way that they can be anticipated, A.

(A4) “To overcome obstacles by taking thought” might be classed in DG since “obstacles” refer to goal objects, G, such as the walls of a fortress, while “overcome . . . by taking thought” involves the desire or drive, D, to find a solution.

(A5) “Individual differences can be substantial” might be classed in DAGQD since a high level of intelligence would amount to the ability to work one’s way through all the phases of a cybernetic loop more efficiently than most, while low intelligence would indicate the general lack of this ability.

(A6) “They are never entirely consistent” might be classed in not-DAGQD since this factor amounts to the fact that some people will stumble over specific parts of the cybernetic loop, blocking, their ability to go through the loop, DAGQD, although they may do well with other parts of the loop.

(A13) Finally, “Asked to define intelligence, two dozen authorities gave two dozen somewhat different answers” might be classed in D’ since the asker is a primary agent or drive-bearer, D, while the two dozen responders are subordinate agents or drive-bearers, D’.

Explanations for the second set of classifications might go as follows:

(B4) “To solve problems” might be classed in D since problems are drive-elicitors, D, i.e., they elicit the drive to solve them.

(B5) “To think abstractly” might be classed in DA since in this phase we try to abstract the relevant factors for resolving a problem, e.g., the symptoms relevant to diagnosing a disease, by noting what characteristics can be anticipated, A, to be significant, e.g., to be the telltale signs of a disease, in response to a desire or drive, D, to solve the problem, e.g., diagnose the disease.

(B3) “To plan” might be classed in A since planning is to think ahead or anticipate, A, what needs to be done.

(B2) “To reason” might be classed in AG for the same reason given earlier for the A factors, namely factor (A3).

(B9) “Book learning” is said to be what intelligence is not *merely*, but it can be regarded as at least one limited indication of intelligence, and it can be classed in G since books are goal objects, G.

(B11) “Test-taking smarts” might be classed in GQ since a test is a goal object, G, while smarts in dealing with the test amounts to one’s ability to manifest appropriate quiescent responses to the test, Q, such as correct answers, just as an effective worker bee can manufacture the quiescent qualities of honey, Q, from pollen, G.

(B8) “To learn from experience” might be classed in Q since experience is a quiescent manifestation, such as tastes, smells, sights, and sounds, by which goal objects, G, reveal themselves to agents or drive-bearers, D, in the GQD arc of the cybernetic loop.

(B6) “To comprehend complex ideas” might be classed in QD for the same reason given earlier for the A factors, namely for the A1 factor.

(B12) “Comprehending our surroundings” might be classed in DG since our surroundings are goal objects, G, while our comprehending them is our intellectual relation to them as agents or drive-bearers, D.

(B7) “To learn quickly” might be classed in AQ since there is an inherent temporal factor in the gap between an anticipation, A, and its quiescent confirmation or disconfirmation, Q, and “quickly” indicates the importance of this temporal factor.

(B1) “A very general mental capacity” might be classed in DAGQD since to be general is to encompass a lot of material, which is achieved by taking into account the entire cybernetic loop, DAGQD, that is the basis structure of the feedback from which we learn and thereby exhibit intelligence.

(B10) “A narrow academic skill” might be classed in not-DAGQD since one might be good in working one’s way past one phase of a cybernetic loop without “not-,” thereby manifesting the ability to go through the entire loop, DAGQD, effectively.

(B13) Finally, “Catching on,” “making sense,” “figuring out” might be classed in D’ since it suggests that one has gone through the loop and is responding as an agent responding in retrospect, D’, to what the phases of the loop have revealed, as when a teacher or primary agent or drive-bearer, D, has tried to reveal to a student, D’, the nature of a problem and its possible solution by means of examples.

And explanations for the factors contained in the third definition of intelligence might be as follows:

(C1) “The ability” might be classed in D since abilities are manifested by agents or drive-bearers, D.

(C2) “To apply knowledge” might be classed in A since knowledge is an anticipation, A, of the nature of reality, and applying knowledge is using this anticipation, not just thinking about it.

(C4) “In the environment” might be classed in G since the environment is the set of surrounding goal objects, G.

(C3) Finally, “To perform better” might be classed in Q since such performance is a quiescent achievement, Q, just as winning a race is a quiescent achievement or making good-quality honey from pollen is.

Those Whom the Gods Would Destroy, They First Make Mad An American's Misadventures in Calcutta

Andrew Beckwith

As of this recollection, I can relate that it was in Calcutta, famous in British Raj/Indian lore as the “black hole” of Calcutta, and also as the seat of one of the few un-reconstructed Communist governments of India. As an invitee to the Indian General Relativity and Gravitational physics 25th jubilee meeting, the silver anniversary of the Indian GRG society, it seemed like an easy enough thing to do to traverse the earth from JFK airport to New Delhi, and then to the Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics.

It is a testimony to the valor of ignorance and also to my fortitude that there were no serious consequences, other than wasting about 130 Euros on phone calls from La Thuile in Northern Italy, at yet another meeting, Rencontres de Moriond a week later, where I set up a tremendous racket over it, especially in wearing the ears off Kevin Langdon, Amara Angelica, and a few others who could stand it about how I lost my research notes in a taxi, notes which were actually recovered in Calcutta and sent back to me via Air India and which I encountered right upon my return back to JFK. But that is part of the unexpected punch line of this story.

But, first of all, for openers, Air India is different, and therein lies much of the dynamics. Air India is a leftover of a statist, administratively top-heavy heritage of quasi-socialistic control which is now becoming the past in the modern India of Jet Blue and other very dynamic Indian multi-national airlines.

I encountered the difference in dynamics mid-stream when I was informed of a flight from JFK to New Delhi, non-stop, i.e., a delight to passengers, but a health hazard to the crew. I was in transit for 14 hours straight which seems like a lark.

No it wasn't. First of all, I was crammed in the back of the jet, with two considerate Indian businessmen as seat mates, but first of all, I found out, even though I was given an early entry into the jet, due to my deafness, that there was no space for two of my bags.

No problem. The Stewards of the flight crammed the bags right in the back of my seat, which was situated 3 meters from the jet toilet. I should have taken the hint, but didn't and proceeded to watch John Wayne movie re-runs from the 1960s about “the longest day,” a 1963 movie about German and Allied perspectives on the D Day landing.

Air India's attitudes were as dated as the movie, as I found out in a slinging match I had in the Calcutta airport.

After innumerable glasses of wine, which I drank like a fish, I passed out semi-inebriated seven hours into the flight.

I was awakened by Air India security right after the airplane landed at the Indira Gandhi Airport.

“Did you really need to get drunk?” This was asked in a sing-song accent by an air stewardess, who was hovering above me in an Air India sari. No I did not, but it would have been better for me had I been drunk earlier, since I was cramped in the bucket seat, but two burly security guards steadied me on my feet and then walked me through two checkpoint gates, in no time flat, and then unceremoniously plopped me into a waiting room where I sat in a rock-hard chair for six hours waiting for my flight.

“Sir, are you really going to the Saha Institute ?”. Yes I was. “Why do you have a tourist visa ?” I told them I was in Calcutta to relax and to get a break before Rencontres de Moriond.

Normally impassive Indian faces broke up. “Dr. Beckwith, you are going to THAT place for a vacation?”

“Ayyup.”

The merriment on the Indian side was palpable. “You will need to save your arse a few times over there. It’s a bloody Commie government everyone in India despises, Dr. Beckwith. And you are not kidding me? So you think you can *relax* there?”

“Ayyup.”

This was the valor of ignorance.

As if to transcend the valor of ignorance, a much seedier version of Air India awaited me as I was crammed into a 1970s time warp flashback to Aeroflot junk service as I got in a semi-rusty, old, beaten-up jet with all of 60 seats. And all of an overwhelming 34 people were in that sixty-seat flying rat trap.

Awaiting me as my intro to the depth of decrepitude I was to encounter was a 50-year-old-if-a-day air stewardess who reminded me of an Indian version of “Big Nurse” of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (1975) fame. Big Nurse was there to give me a badly-needed crash course in major industrial-strength dysfunctional service.

I never got her name, nor did I ask, but Big Nurse got royally pissed at yours truly as I asked for an Indian curry dinner for the flight, as advertised in the menu. I tried to make friendly inquiries with Big Nurse regarding her time of service on the airline and was frostily told (no I am not making this up) that she served 10 years on Aeroflot, in a route from Moscow to New Delhi, and then was relegated to *this* backwater route to Calcutta and was only staying on the job because her husband was out of work.

“He worked in telecommunications, and was bullied by the likes of *you* and your kind in America!”

I apologized , and then tried to make amends by asking if she had ever been to Kashmir for winter snow fun, as advertised by the in-flight magazine.

“My son serves in the Indian Army in the gates of *hell*, because of people like you who support India’s enemy, Pakistan! He is in Kashmir, near Jammu, and he wants to come home and get married like a good son for his parents.”

Again, speechless, I shut up, and then asked if indeed I had been given curry, or some other form of food . “You are too stupid to know if that is curry or not, you dumb American!”

With that, Big Nurse yanked my curry meal.

“Humm, *not* promising” was what was going through my head as the jet landed in Calcutta.

Stage two in my deprogramming experience was to note that the Calcutta airport looked as though it had last had a paint job in 1984, a quarter of a century ago.

“Step right up, and listen *up*. *Do not flash* that money!” I was enjoined to this necessity as I exchanged 320 dollars USA into Rupees. After I heard it, the money changer abruptly pocketed 1000 Rupees, out of over 18 thousand I had on me, and waved me to the taxi-ordering stand.

With each step forward to the elemental depth of Calcutta, the crazier it was to get, and now the afterburners were to cut in at full force.

Now for some flashbacks to actual e-mail which I sent from India. The e-mail is reposted for dramatic effect.

Wednesday, January 28, 2009, 8:01 PM

Aside from one horror story where I was nearly robbed by two dishonest cabdrivers, which lead me to abandon a first cab in the middle of Calcutta, and get a second, the meeting has been a *gold* mine.

I will be back on this early Sunday.

The talks have been outstanding.

Wednesday, January 28, 2009 8:32 PM

I could have been killed by those cab drivers. The Saha head was working himself into hysterics until I got him to calm down.

I told them not to involve the police, and to continue on with the meeting.

They took my advice and I am busy doing what I came here to do, which is to learn world-class physics.

I talked for 30 minutes, not 20. Good thing for me that I still have much the same alertness I have which justifies the faith of those who sent me to India in the first place.

The truth is that I like Indians, so I am very happy here right now.

Wednesday, January 28, 2009 10:45 PM

That was not part of the arrangement. The cab drivers started demanding thousands of rupees. *I told them to go fuck themselves, and then jumped right into a busy Calcutta intersection. What happened afterwards was funny.* That cab was hit midsection by another cab, which then got me scooped inside, and which took me to a guard house about two kilometers from the Saha Institute. The guards phoned for the director himself who, from what they told me, had a near nervous breakdown over the situation.

I told the Saha director to compose himself and to not let this idiot situation interfere with a good meeting. He eventually calmed down, but the news was initially a huge shock to him.

Hate to say it, but it was old home week for me. I have had nearly every piece of shit like this tried on me before. You would laugh if you saw the look on their faces as I left that cab, and then after the other cab did a perfect T-bone ram of their midsection.

The sight of the thieves' taxi being T-boned midsection by the other cab will be in my memory to my death bed. Then that cab got me to where I wanted to go for 200 rupees.

The meeting has been a five-star hit. One talk by Thanu Padamanadan was a home run hit. He got gravity as an emergent phenomena by not varying the space time metric $g(i,j)$, and then Thanu and myself talked at tea time for half an hour about his approach vs. one by Matt Visser. Thanu knows Visser, and he told me that my professional argument about emergent phenomena of gravity was to be expected. This was in reference to a discussion Visser and I had at Dark 2009 in Canterbury, New Zealand.*

Look up the following arxiv reference: [gr-qc/0701003](http://arxiv.org/abs/gr-qc/0701003).

A direct comparison of entropy, and the like for both condensed matter systems and general space-time is there.

After I talked with him Thanu highballed it back to Pune and the IUCAA. He started shooting off orders and then had an aide wheel his effects for a ride back in a Saha-provided limo. He is now the IUCAA director and is as busy as hell.

In any case, there are dozens of talks to come.

Thursday, January 29, 2009 10:43 PM

Had a talk with the brane theorist at tea. He wants to consult with me today about a possible extension of the material of his talk. He may give me his data slides directly.

* DARK 2009. Physics and Astronomy, University of Canterbury, New Zealand, January 18-24, 2009. The Heidelberg International Conference on Dark Matter in Astronomy and Particle Physics is a well-established, usually-biennial conference that brings together scientists working in the fields of cosmology, astrophysics, particle, and nuclear physics. The aim of the conference is to discuss the nature and origin of dark matter and dark energy in our Universe.

This will turn into something else. 😊

And he thinks I am well positioned now to help him crack this problem. 😊

I am an old has-been, a nobody, but even nobodies like myself need a bit of luck to get out of impossible situations.

This may be the end of my forced exclusion, but I will not say anything more until the shoes drop.

Friday, January 30, 2009 7:54 PM

Not so good news. As I picked up my stuff for transit, I found that six of my conference notebooks are missing.

I can only assume they are in that cab with the drivers who were trying to rob me.

You asked me to brief you on the background of the conferences.

Through no fault of my own, I will have to go to Rencontres de Moriond to get current dark matter/detection experiments, and to talk to you about them with current background.

The Indian GRG conference has been an outstanding success in terms of contacts, information, and the like.

FWIW, the Dark 2009 conference notes, as well as experimental gravity in Kochi, the mother lode of data/experimental descriptions and the like on experimental DM/DE, and similar stuff, is missing, presumably in the hands of the thief I got away from January 26th.

This is the end of my set of e-mails from India itself. Now for Rencontres de Moriond entries, with more stuff. This is about Air India on a rampage.

Monday, February 2, 2009 5:00 AM

First of all, I tried to return back to NYC on February 2nd, on the pleading of the Saha Institute people. Air India refused to even consider it. I then asked Jet Blue to get me to Geneva then NYC in a two-day trip back to America.

The head of Air India became so obnoxious that he tried to grab my travel bags. I asked him what was wrong and was rewarded by a burst of profanity. He was told repeatedly that Air India would lose no money, but he would not listen.

He then started cursing Jet Blue employees out; finally an Indian soldier went up to him and told him to pipe down.

Finally he relented, but then told me I would be banned for life from ever using Air India again.

Much more happened: I told the story to two Taha researchers in La Thuile; and they told me this is why they tell people to avoid that airline.

My legs are swollen up large with too much travel and I am none too happy about the situation; it is a blizzard outside.

When I get home to a computer board configured as I am used to, there will be much more to say; I merely scratched the surface of the last two days.

I picked up a little insect-bite reminder of Calcutta, which caused me all sorts of problems in La Thuile.

Wednesday, February 4, 2009 9:18 AM

A Dr. Han gave me antibiotics which pretty much shut out a serious infection which refused to leave. Consequences are that I have been sleeping a lot, but the inflammation is now gone. So I will not have to go to the doctor.

The talks are uniformly excellent.

Found out today that five talks were banned as not up to par by Dr Van. Did not affect me, as well as eight posters. Dr. Van will without hesitation weed out stuff in the meeting. He has been solicitous and friendly to me.

Have to go; the talks begin again in 5 minutes.

To keep it short, I was convinced that I had been to two excellent meetings but I was sans six months of conference meeting notes. My mood was somber, and I was sick with exhaustion. The infection I had gotten over in La Thuile was finished, but there was yet one last surprise for me.

This is the end of the saga, and I thought that there was nothing which could possibly top off the last two weeks of drama. I was wrong.

Waiting in JFK, next to transportation via Blue shuttle, an Air India representative came up to me and passed me a note:

Dr. Beckwith, we recovered your bag. Don't blame us. We are genuinely sorry for the inconvenience.

I came in to my apartment. . . .

Awaiting me in the apartment was that famous bag. Right in the center of the floor was the bag which had been grabbed by the rogue taxi. Tagged with a million transfer notes and a generator of God knows how many insane situations afterwards. . . .

I do not know how in the hell it got back to my apartment, or who sent it back, and so far I am not asking questions. But there it was, with the cluster of Air India tags and stamps of travel documentation on it. To whoever got it back, thank you.

Yes, it all happened. A fitting end to a madcap journey

How Strong Was Don Berry?

Chris Harding

Don Berry began his life at Belmont about 15 kilometers outside Rockhampton in Queensland Australia, the son of a distinguished family, and died at Rockhampton in his late 60's. His brother was the astronomer, artist, inventor and optician Robert Berry, and his father the famous long term Weather Prophet whose predictions were always in demand in the state. While he was a shrewd businessman it is for his strength that he is best remembered and which can be attested to by thousands.

Here are some of the many feats he performed. You be the judge.

As a 12-year-old he tried to lift a piece of farm equipment to no avail. Then, in anger over his own failure, he exerted so much force that the 12-mm-thick rods along the top bar over the length of several meters all snapped throwing him backwards.

Some four workmen were having a break sitting on a large fallen tree trunk when Don appeared and asked them if they wanted a hand to lift it onto the truck. Much laughter followed but it was short lived, because with one hand he lifted it and the four workmen off the ground, spilling them from their perch then tossing the huge tree trunk onto the back of the truck.

In the 1950's automobiles weighed several tons. At the demonstration of a new car at the local show the showman kept repeating, "If you can pick it up and carry it away it's yours to keep"—whereupon Don stepped from the crowd, opened the door, wound down the window, placed the palm of his left hand under the hood, lifted it onto his shoulder and proceeded to take the advice of a by-then stunned showman. This feat damaged the car, of course, which earned him a lot of flack.

As a demonstration of his colossal strength Don got under a 20-ton truck and, using his arms and legs, lifted all wheels clear of the ground.

Challenged to lift the weight of a very large iron wrecking ball which still had a chain attached to it he easily and without any apparent effort grasped the chain in his right hand and lifted the ball above his head. It was later weighed at 1,050 lbs.

In the 1950's his brother Robert attended a martial arts class. He reported back to his instructor that none of the moves and holds worked on his brother Don. Whereupon the instructor asked that he bring his brother in and he would show him how it was done. The instructor, a black belt, found that he too had no means to hold Don Berry. His final desperate effort was to pin an arm behind his back with both hands then tell him to break the hold which Don accomplished without any apparent effort, straightening his arm out in front of him while the instructor went blue in the face and had all the knuckles of one hand torn out! He later said, "I would never have believed a man could be that strong."

Security Check

From now on I'm going to do a "Security Check"
between each of "my" so-called 'thoughts',
to verify that they're really mine.
But can I trust myself to do the Security Check?
There are so many levels of encryption and security
that I'm no longer sure that I'm not an impostor, impersonating an impostor .

Maybe if I were capable of becoming a hacker,
I could hack my own brain,
actually just a rental unit, and steal my ontological password.

May-Tzu

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The Power of Emptiness

The power of the Tao is emptiness.
Its armies lead by following peasants;
attack silently and weaponless by surrendering.
The police of the Tao were trained by kittens.
How does an adversary decapitate the headless?
Can a dust cloud become disordered?
Open the door to let in the thief!

May-Tzu

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Please Leave Your Message After the Tone. . . .

Someone sent me a link to a news story about a woman who wanted to be,
after she died, buried with her cell phone. After the link, he wrote "THIS IS
PATHETIC!" I wrote back, "That depends on the calling plan."

Brian Schwartz

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