PHENOMENON

The Magazine of the World Intelligence Network

Edition 26

EDITED BY GRAHAM POWELL AND KRYSTAL VOLNEY

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INTRODUCTION

As befits the World Intelligence Network, this is a magazine that has a cosmopolitan flavour to it, with some esteemed academics being interviewed (see below), plus members of the meta-society we commonly call "The WIN" having produced diverse work with great artistic expression. Also, for the first time, a piece has been submitted that is part-written by AI technology.

I wonder what AI would make of this: 4x +7 = 23, the quirky formula which indicates the date of publication of this edition of Phenomenon. Ever since the first edition of the WIN magazine, the "Genius to Genius Manifest" back in May 2004, we have tried to maintain the tradition of dates which have numerical significance. The first magazine was released on 6-5-4, hence the next edition of the magazine will come out on 2nd November 2023 (2-11-23), so all prime numbers equally spaced apart: **2**,*3*,*5*,*7*,**11**,*13*,*17*,*19*,**23**. Perhaps we'll break with tradition next May and produce a twenty-year anniversary edition?

Whatever, your participation is warmly welcomed as reader, artist, philosopher, musician – however you choose to express your appreciation of the World Intelligence Network. Please enjoy this little offering brought to you by the WIN editors, Graham Powell and Krystal Volney.

Featured (clockwise) on the cover are:

Professor Duncan Pritchard FRSE; poet, Aislinn Hunter PhD;

Dr. Cristina Atance and Professor Mir Faizal.

Aislinn Hunter, PhD, Creative Writing, and Seminal Books/Poems

Author(s): Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Publication (Outlet/Website): The Good Men Project

Publication Date (yyyy/mm/dd): 2017/08/19

Aislinn Hunter worked at Kwantlen Polytechnic University in the Creative Writing Department at the time, not sure where now or if the same, but this was interesting as I do not do a lot of creative writing. Here is part 2.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: Most recently, you have worked on your PhD at the University of Edinburgh. What is the basis of it?

Hunter: I'm looking at resonance and beloved objects in Victorian culture, and asking why certain objects appear again and again in Victorian writers' museum collections. It's 'thing theory' so to speak (I'm asserting that certain 'things' are more fit for the task of acting as remembrancers than others) with a narrative through-line in that I am also looking at how, in life-writing and literature, we tend to describe the way an object presences the absent beloved for us. It's quite a fascinating topic and intersects with some of the themes in my new novel.

Jacobsen: Since you began in writing, what do you consider the controversial books or poems? Why do you consider them controversial?

Hunter: I had to think a lot about this question because I don't think I'm considered controversial at all (in relation to my work in the Canadian literary landscape). I am quite an earnest writer, a meliorist, and that effects, I suppose, how much I'm willing to discombobulate or challenge the reader. That said I think that there's a slightly controversial position hovering thematically under a lot of my work (academic and literary) – ideas around how we humans presume too much agency for ourselves when things and events are actively shaping us all the time. I'm also interested in extended mind theory and in how we cognize the world through limiting ontologies (i.e. the depth ontology in Western culture where we forefront the concept of the 'inner being'). The most deliberately provocative work I've done has been in the essay form. I wrote a piece on why writers shouldn't do reviews for The Quill and Quire (an unpopular position) and a piece on the impossibility of competition amongst poets for Arc Magazine.

Jacobsen: How do you describe your philosophical understanding of the art of Creative Writing?

Hunter: I once said to a second-year creative writing class at The University of Victoria that "to be a writer one needs to procure wisdom, knowledge or wonder." I said it wanting to be challenged but no one so much as raised an eyebrow or a hand.

Jacobsen: How has it changed?

Hunter: Well, given that I sort of believed what I said to that class a decade ago (though I remain open to revision) I'd have to say that my understanding of what is required of a writer or 'writing' hasn't changed: I believe you need something of use to say, or an ability to create a sense of wonder in another, and craft in order to do so in a way that locates and dislocates the reader simultaneously, adds to what they had when they entered into the conversation with your work. But the literary landscape has changed significantly in the last few years, in part because what's valued drives the market. Information is highly valued now (the kind of 'information' that's arguably different from wisdom or knowledge) as is escapism, and so there's a commerce in that; digestibility matters too, and that means that what gets written and what sells, what is 'successful' changes. I still tend to differentiate between classes of literature which is probably an old-fashioned thing to do in the age of the blog-turned-film-turned-novel.

Jacobsen: What advice do you have for undergraduate and graduate students in Creative Writing?

Hunter: Fail, fail better. Take risks. Remember that rejection makes you stronger.

Jacobsen: Whom do you consider your biggest influences? Could you recommend any seminal or important books/poems by them?

Hunter: I think the first time I felt as a reader that I was in the hands of a master writer was reading the Irish writer Dermot Healy. He's widely considered a writer's writer because you can marvel at his craft even as you're set adrift in his narrative or poetic worlds. I especially love A Goat's Song which is a novel and What The Hammer (poems) but all of his work has taught me something, and he innovates every time when a lot of writers would be content to repeat their successes. Anne Carson, Jan Zwicky and Carolyn Forché (all poets) make me think 'why bother' – they've already said so much so perfectly – but they also inspire me to keep at it. Alice Munro inspires me on numerous levels. It's not that I want to write like her but I am in awe of her craft and her tenacity. She makes me aspire to be a better writer, to try to be great at it.

Jacobsen: What poem has most influenced you?

Hunter: TS Eliot's Four Quartets. I don't actually have an academic's handling of it, but it sends me off in a new direction with every reading and I think his thinking about time in it is perfectly complex: 'Time present and time past / Are both perhaps present in time future, / And time future contained in time past…'. It's directly influenced a lot of my work.

AS BRIGHT AS ALL THE FEARLESS STARS

By Thomas Draper

"Ukrainian forces move guns up to woods around Bakhmut"- ITV.com

When at night we stand alone
Thoughts turn to others whose home
Is a silent, cut-off, little wood
Hands held closely to thick hood
To keep the savage winds at bay

A soldier he, has come this way
Stands in the snow-filled glistening rim
Of dug out trench and sheltered tin
Grim his risk to life and limb
Relieved by sparkled frost below

Moonlight glisters off his resting gun
Its monstrous shape with wheels are set...
For freedom that most fragile thing
Requires defence that must be met

Lest all us little folk forget...

What can he do? His fight is ours
We squander time on dance and bars
Or all dwell in an unlit haze
And do not see the way things are
Our dim perceptions often mar

Yet in this darkest hour of night, in distant plains
Of lands afar, a glimmer shines, a ray of light
As bright as are the fearless stars
Little soldier on the rim
Think, think, think of him.

ARTWORK BY ERIC TROWBRIDGE

THE DESCENT

by Paul Edgeworth/gpt

In the depths of the abyss,
where darkness reigns supreme,
a void of nothingness persists,
a place where dreams and hopes
lay unredeemed.
The abyss calls out to those who stray,
a siren's song that echoes deep,
a temptation that leads astray,
and into its darkness, one may creep.
In the depths of the abyss,
we find the ultimate truth of existence,
an eternal void, the end of our dream.

I had always been fascinated with the mysterious stories of the occult, the unknown and the macabre. So, when I received a letter from H.P.L. inviting me to a deserted mansion on the outskirts at midnight, it was a temptation I could not resist. Such is my nature.

The decrepit house stood ominously at the end of the street, like a silent sentinel guarding its dark secrets. The air around it was thick with an acrid smell that made the stomach churn, and the hair on the back of the neck stand on end. At night, strange noises emanated from the boarded-up windows, as if the walls themselves were alive with some malignant force. The paint on the walls was cracked and peeling, revealing rotting wood and crumbling brick underneath. It was a place that looked as if it had been abandoned for years, but something about it seemed to suggest that it was not truly empty, that something unspeakable lurked within its depths.

As I approached closer and closer, a deep chill ran through my very being. I noticed a door that was barely visible beneath the peeling paint and the overgrown vines. I hesitated for a moment, but my curiosity got the better of me, and I pushed the door open. The hinges creaked loudly, as if protesting the intrusion. As I stepped inside, I was enveloped by darkness, and the caustic smell grew stronger.

I ran my fingers over the wall searching for a gas light, but my hands found only a rough surface that felt like crumbling plaster. Feeling my way forward through rotten and decaying room after room, I stumbled upon a dark stairway at the rear of the house that when I peered down into its ominous darkness seemed to descend ever deeper into the musty earth.

The stairs were steep and slippery, and I had to use my hands to steady myself as I descended. With each step, the darkness grew thicker, and the air grew more oppressive. Occasionally, strange noises echoed around me, as if the walls themselves

were alive with some baleful force. Perhaps, it was only my imagination. Perhaps, it was not my imagination. Still, I went on for what seemed like hours, for I was now quite tired. As I descended deeper and deeper into the darkness, I couldn't help but wonder what kind of horrors might await me in the subterranean depths. The stairs seemed to go on forever, and I had lost track of time long ago.

I was an inquisitive man, always eager to explore the unknown, but I was beginning to question the wisdom of venturing this far into the earth. I had read of ancient civilizations and forbidden knowledge hidden beneath the surface, but I had never imagined the kind of malefic force that now seemed to surround me.

The staircase was narrow and steep, with a well-worn railing that offered little comfort. The steps were slick with moisture and slick with slime, and I could hear the faint sound of dripping water resounding through the darkness. I had brought a lantern and oil, which had providently been left on a small table adjacent to the stairway, but even its feeble light seemed to be swallowed up by the abyss. The shadows flickered and danced around me, mocking my feeble attempts to banish them with light.

At last, after what seemed like an eternity, I reached the bottom of the staircase. I found myself in a vast chamber, dimly lit by glowing fungi that clung to the walls and ceiling. The air was thick with the stench of decay and corruption, and I could hear strange, inhuman whispers emanating from the darkness. I was certain now that this was not my imagination at work.

I felt a shiver run down my spine, but I pressed on, nonetheless. Something deep within myself urged me to continue, to uncover the secrets that lay hidden in the depths. I took a deep breath and stepped forward.

As I moved deeper into the chamber, the whispers grew louder and more insistent. I could now make out words and phrases, spoken in a language I did not recognize. I felt a sense of dread, knowing that I was intruding upon a realm that was not meant for human ears.

Suddenly, as if summoned from the very depths of the abyss, a grotesque figure materialized from the darkness before me. Its body was twisted and deformed, with a skeletal frame covered in glistening, leathery skin. The creature's bat-like wings extended far beyond its body, rustling in the cold air as it stepped forward. Its head, crowned with triple horns, was misshapen and elongated, with eyes that glowed with a sickly yellow light that pierced through the darkness with an infernal intelligence. A low growl emanated from its throat, sending a tremor through my very bones. I realized with a sickening feeling that I was facing an ancient being of great power, a creature that had long been forgotten by human history, but whose dark influence still lingered on the fringes of reality.

The creature spoke, its voice now rumbling through the chamber like thunder:

"You have come far, mortal," it said. "But this is not a place for you. Leave now, before it is too late."

I hesitated, torn between a strong desire to know and immobilizing fear. I knew that I was outmatched and stood no chance against the formidable creature before me. But I could not bring myself to leave, not when I was so close to discovering whatever secrets that lay hidden in the darkness.

I took a step forward, and the creature lunged at me with a speed that belied its size. I stumbled backwards, my lantern falling from my grasp and shattering on the stone floor.

In the darkness, I could hear the creature's wings beating, drawing ever closer. I knew that I had made a grave mistake, and that I had ventured too far into the abyss. But even as the darkness consumed me, I could not help but wonder what kind of knowledge lay hidden in the depths, waiting to be discovered if I could only somehow go on.

But my days of descending into the unknown depths of the earth had reached a climax. The reader may ask:

"What then was my end?"

The fate that befell me remains shrouded in mystery. Did the unnamed beast that slithered and writhed in the dark far beneath the earth's crust consume my flesh and spirit, leaving no trace of my existence? Or did I, despite my body initially being savaged by the creature and my psyche subsequently shattered

by the arcane knowledge bestowed upon me through the ancient tomes entombed in that damp chamber, ascend to a higher plane of existence? Was there some unseen force at work during this whole, incomprehensible, experience?

If, indeed, the former scenario proved true, then who could have survived to recount this tale? Yet, whatever the truth may be, one thing is certain. The descent into darkness is a journey that must be undertaken with the utmost care. There are abominations lurking in the shadows that are best left undisturbed. There are malevolent entities that bask in anarchy and conspire to drive the curious and the unwary to madness. In the end, there are destinies far worse than death.

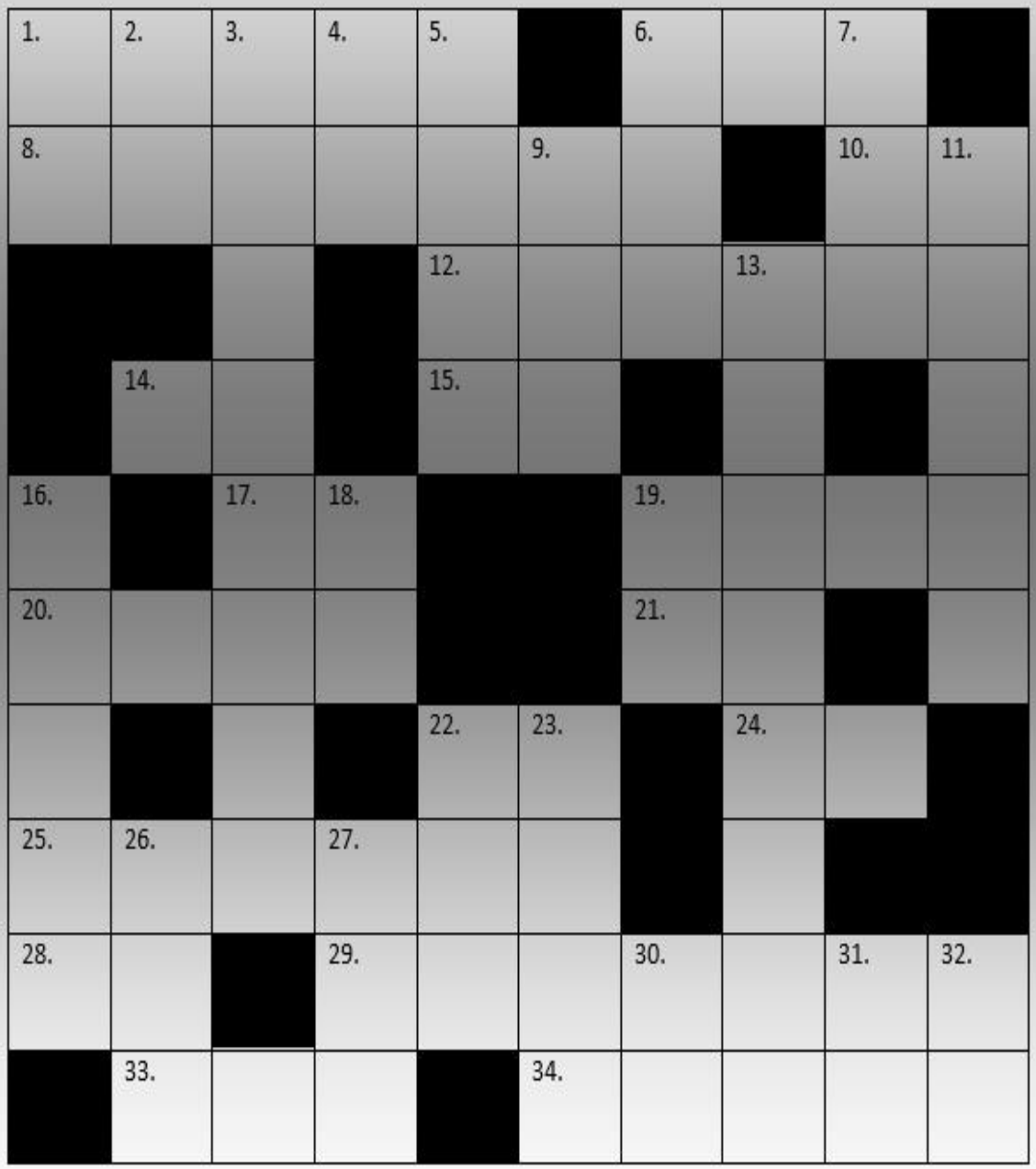
Amidst the void of infinite space,
lies a realm where angles displace,
the rules of our reality, a place of non-Euclidean locality.
a world of twisted geometry,
a land of perplexing anomaly,
where corners bend and angles warp,
and shapes defy what we once knew.
With stars that gleam with an alien radiance,
the light bends and twists like a vortex,
as if the laws of physics had been hexed.
The horizon stretches in strange dimensions,
with hues of colours beyond human apprehension,
and shapes that twist and writhe and tumble,

as if they were alive and could truly learn.
A place where reason crumbles and reality dreams,
where shadows dance and the impossible gleams,
and the landscape echoes with unheard screams.
Here lies a realm beyond our ken,
a place where even the bravest does not enter,
a world where the rules of space and time,
are twisted and distorted in a cosmic pantomime.
A realm of strange geometry,
a land of perplexing anomaly,
a place where the impossible is the norm,
and reality is BUT A FLEETING FORM.

ARTWORK BY ERIC TROWBRIDGE

THE PUZZLE PAGES

The Phenomenon Crossword



PHENOMENON CROSSWORD CLUES

Across

1. Synonym of "First". (5)
6. "The Way" of Confucius, et al. (3)
8. First name of a mathematician whose surname is also the answer to clue 6. (7)
12. @ in your email address. (2)
14. Sanskrit "woven together" and a practice in Buddhist meditation. (6)
16. Present tense, third person singular of 'to be'. (2)
17. Knights close to the British monarch may have these letters after their name. (2)
19. Informal "Hello". (2)
21. Novel name by Jane Austen. (4)
22. Abbreviation for a large, luxurious car. (4)
23. Italian article used [for example] before "scudetto". (2)
24. Letters before Joe to indicate he's enlisted. (1,1)
26. "Yes" in Italian. (2)
27. Fruit before "Republic" and "Boat". (6)
30. Opposite of "Out". (2)
31. Mathematicians enjoy using these. (7)
35. Japanese currency. (3)
36. Name of a comic which had Dennis the Menace and Roger the Dodger in it. (5)

Down

1. Letters to describe your exercise instructor. (1,1)
2. Short form of the lessons during which you studied the Bible. (1,1)

3. Poet W.B. Yeats was this; Oscar Wilde was this, too. (8)
4. "___ and You and a Dog Named Boo" – song by Lobo. (2)
5. Latin prefix meaning 'within' used in compound nouns. (4)
6. 10. (3)
7. Implement used in rowing. (3)10.

10. River which flows through "The Backs" of a famous university. (3)

13. Arab word, also used in Turkish, to indicate "Okay". (5)

15. Anagram of an ex-Trinity College Law School lecturer: shoot mea. (3,1,4)

18. Justification exonerating a person from having committed an offence. (5)

20. Domain letters popularly used after the dot for new technology companies. (1,1)

21. Spanish language article used with singular, masculine nouns. (2)
24. Alternative name for wildebeest, genus *Connochaetes*.(3)

25. A metrical foot, whereby a soft syllable is followed by an accented syllable. (4)
28. The indefinite plural article used in negative and interrogative sentences in English (3)
29. First name of the woman who said:
"I believe in recovery, and I believe that as a role model I have the responsibility to let young people know that you can make a mistake and come back from it." (3)
32. The bare infinitive of the verb [in English] which can be considered ontological. (2)
33. A captain may use these postnominal letters, but an admiral does not have to. (2)
34. A less formal synonym of 'therefore'. (2)

Interview with Professor Mir Faizal – Adjunct Professor, Physics & Astronomy, University of Lethbridge

2022-04-27

Author(s): Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Publication (Outlet/Website): Canadian Atheist

Professor Mir Faizal is an Adjunct Professor in Physics and Astronomy at the University of Lethbridge. I wrote an article for Science, Technology & Philosophy, which gained the attention of one of the people related to the work in the article. It happened to be professor Faizal. He reached out in appreciation for the publication and the accuracy of the reportage on the research. I then returned with a request for an interview because… physics and astronomy. I love the field. Here we talk about some of the work.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: What is the relation between the structure of spacetime and gravity?

Professor Mir Faizal: A geometry can be flat like the geometry of a piece of paper, or a curved geometry, like the geometry of a ball. According to general relativity, the geometry of our spacetime is a curved geometry. In fact, gravity is caused by this curvature of spacetime. This is the main difference between gravity and other forces in nature. Other forces (like electromagnetism, weak or strong nuclear forces) act in spacetime, and gravity is the spacetime.

Jacobsen: What is a singularity?

Faizal: It is possible for the gravitational field to become infinite at a point. As gravity is the structure of spacetime, these points cannot be analyzed as points in spacetime, and laws of physics cannot be applied to such points. The occurrence of singularities is predicted from the equations describing the general theory of relativity. They occur at the center of black holes, and at the start of the universe. So, it seems problematic that our universe is described by elegant laws of physics, which cannot be applied to the beginning of our universe.

Jacobsen: Are these singularities physical or just mathematical artifacts?

Faizal: There are theorems by Penrose and Hawking called the Penrose-Hawking singularity theorems, which state that classically the singularities are an intrinsic feature of general relativity, and not just mathematical artifacts. By classical, I mean if we do not consider quantum effects into consideration.

Jacobsen: What happens if quantum effects are taken into consideration?

Faizal: It has been argued that we need a full theory of quantum gravity to understand how quantum effects will change the structure of spacetime, and the physics of singularities. However, we still do not have a full quantum theory of gravity, but only various proposals for quantum gravity. All the past work on removal of singularities has been done using these different proposals for quantum gravity (such as the string theory and loop quantum gravity), so all of the past work depends on the

specifics of a particular proposal. However, we approached the problem from a different point of view.

Jacobsen: What was new in your approach?

Faizal: We looked at the mathematical ingredients used to derive the Penrose-Hawking singularity theorems, and tried to obtain a quantum version of such theorems. These theorems were derived using an equation the Raychaudhuri equation, and we derived a quantum version of this equation. Then we used it to obtain quantum versions of the Penrose-Hawking singularity theorems. Thus, we could demonstrate from our quantum no-singularity theorems that the quantum effects would prevent the occurrence of singularities, just like Penrose and Hawking demonstrated that classical effects would lead to the occurrence of singularities using classical singularity theorems. Our results did not depend on the specifics of a particular model, like the past work done in this field.

Jacobsen: What is the significance of this work?

Faizal: The universe (and even the multiverse), should be described by consistent laws of physics. There should be no inconsistency in nature, and it is this belief in consistency, which is at the heart of a scientific worldview. Every time, we observe that some experimental data is not being explained by a certain physical law describing a physical system, we propose there to be a better more elegant law behind that system (of which the existing law is an approximation). Thus, if the motion of mercury was being described by Newton's laws, it was not because there was an inconsistency in nature, but because gravity was described by Einstein's equation, of which Newton's laws were

an approximation. However, if the beginning of the universe could not be described by consistent physical laws, then the whole philosophy of science would view would break down. So, the absence of singularities, means the presence of consistency, at all points in the universe (including its beginning), which in turn means that scientific worldview is a consistent worldview.

Jacobsen: Does this work have implications for the existence of God?

Faizal: It depends on how you define God, as the word 'God' has been defined in various ways (many of those definitions are contradict each other). So, if you define God as the as a supernatural being, who keeps breaking the laws of physics by performing miracles, and use the occurrence of singularity to argue for the existence of such a being (by performing a miracle at the point of the big bang), then such an argument is broken. This, in fact, is still a god of gaps, with the big bang being a big gap. On the other hand, if you define God as the most fundamental aspect of existence from which all existence (including elegant laws of mathematics describing nature) emerges, then such a God exists by definition. What we could say about the nature of such a fundamental form of existence, in rather a poetic way, is that there is no inconsistency in the creation of God. However, the definition of God as a supernatural being who performs miracles by breaking laws of physics is inconsistent with this statement about the absence of inconsistency in nature, as miracles are by definition inconsistent with the laws of physics.

Jacobsen: Thank you for the opportunity and your time, Professor Faizal.

GINA AND EARLY

BY ERIC TROWBRIDGE

Gina: Hey, Early! I've been thinking a lot about metaphysics lately. Have you ever pondered the nature of reality and existence?

Early: Oh, hey, Gina! Funny you should ask. I've dabbled in metaphysics a bit, but it's such a deep and mind-bending subject. What's been on your mind?

Gina: Well, I've been contemplating the concept of dualism. Do you believe that the mind and body are separate entities, or do you lean more towards a monistic view?

Early: That's an intriguing question, Gina. Personally, I find myself leaning towards a monistic view. It seems to me that the mind and body are deeply interconnected, and their relationship is more unified than separate. How about you?

Gina: I tend to agree with you, Early. It's challenging to imagine the mind as something completely distinct from the physical body. After all, our thoughts, emotions, and consciousness are all influenced by our physical experiences and neural activity.

Early: Exactly! Our thoughts and emotions arise from the firing of neurons and the complex interactions within our brains. It's difficult to separate that from the physical reality we inhabit. But there are still some who argue for dualism, positing that the mind and body exist as separate substances.

Gina: Yes, indeed. Some argue that consciousness is an immaterial entity, separate from the physical processes in the brain. They believe that there must be something more to our existence beyond the physical realm. It's a fascinating perspective, even if I find it difficult to fully grasp.

Early: I can see why it's an appealing idea, Gina. The notion of a non-physical aspect to our being opens up the possibility of a deeper purpose or meaning in life. However, from what we currently understand about the brain and its functions, it seems more likely that consciousness emerges from the physical processes within it.

Gina: I agree. Our understanding of neuroscience and cognitive science has come a long way, shedding light on how the brain gives rise to our thoughts, perceptions, and consciousness. It's fascinating to think about the complex web of neural connections that underlies our experiences.

Early: Absolutely. And metaphysics extends beyond just the mind-body problem. It encompasses questions about the nature of time, causality, and even the existence of God or other higher powers. It's a vast field of inquiry that invites deep reflection and contemplation.

Gina: That's what draws me to metaphysics, Early. It encourages us to explore the fundamental nature of reality and our place within it. It challenges us to question our assumptions and delve into the mysteries that surround us.

Early: It's a never-ending journey, Gina. The more we explore and inquire, the more questions seem to arise. But that's the beauty of it—the pursuit of knowledge and understanding is a continuous process, and metaphysics provides us with a rich tapestry of ideas and concepts to explore.

Gina: Absolutely, Early. It's a journey that fuels curiosity and expands our horizons. I'm grateful to have these conversations and delve into the realm of metaphysics with you. It's a topic that keeps my mind engaged and constantly seeking answers.

Early: Likewise, Gina. I'm always up for exploring the mysteries of existence. So, let's keep questioning, pondering, and discussing metaphysics, knowing that even if we don't find definitive answers, the journey itself is incredibly rewarding.

Dr. Cristina Atance: Associate Professor, Psychology; Director, Graduate Training in Experimental Psychology, University of Ottawa (Part One)

2023-01-29

Author(s): Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Publication (Outlet/Website): In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal

ABSTRACT

Part one of two, interview with Associate Professor at the University of Ottawa and director of graduate training in experimental psychology, Dr. Cristina Atance. In it, she discusses: positions, Psynapse, and the lunch-time seminar series; increasing collaborating among universities through overcoming some barriers in competitiveness; management of the Childhood Cognition and Learning Laboratory; duties and responsibilities implicated with funding, mentor, influence on personal mentoring, and insights into and styles of research based on mentoring; core research interests of 1) "cognitive development," 2) "theory of mind," and 3) '"future thinking and planning in children"; definition of "theory of mind"; definition of "future thinking and planning in children"; "Maybe my Daddy give me a big piano:" The development of children's use of modals to express uncertainty; and three most cited papers since 2,000: 1) Episodic future thinking, 2) The emergence of episodic future thinking in humans, and 3) My future self: Young children's ability to anticipate and explain future states.

Keywords: cognitive development, Dr. Cristina Atance, episodic future thinking, episodic memory, experimental psychology, factive, mentor, modal, nonfactive, psychology, semantic memory, theory of mind, University of Ottawa.

1. You hold a number of positions. These include Associate Professor of psychology and director of graduate training in experimental psychology at the University of Ottawa. Within the graduate program of experimental psychology, you have two novel items of interest under your auspices, especially for building an intellectual community within an academic setting: 1) the newsletter Psynapse and 2) the lunch-time seminar series. (Although, the online listing of presenters ended in 2011 for the lunch-time seminars.) What does/did each cover? How have you developed these separate items for the benefit of the graduate students? What comes across as the majority feedback from graduate students?

Although the newsletter is no longer in circulation (it was an initiative undertaken by our former director, Dr. Cate Bielajew), the lunchtime seminar series is going strong! This, too, was an initiative taken by Dr. Bielajew that I have decided to continue because the student feedback has been so positive. Essentially, we provide students with the opportunity to listen to Experimental psychology PhDs (as opposed to Clinical PhDs) who have decided to work outside of academia. I think that this is really important given that, more and more, our graduates will need to/want to use their research skills and expertise in a variety of settings. Although these include academia, we have had speakers who work for the government, the RCMP, federal funding agencies (e.g., NSERC), private companies, hospitals, and school boards. They all have unique and inspiring stories

about how they have used their PhDs in Experimental psychology in these various settings. Our current graduate students find their stories very helpful and come away with concrete ideas/tips about how to tailor their graduate training as a function of where they'd like to end up in their careers.

2. How might other psychology programs incorporate and improve upon these ideas to build such an intellectual community? From a provincial and national initiative perspective, rather than from within one university, how might multiple intra-/inter-provincial institutions partially dissolve barriers of competition – over quality students and funding, understandably – and facilitate more collaboration for the beneficial experience of graduate (and undergraduate) students across universities within Canada?

This may not directly answer your question but I think that many Universities both within and outside of Canada are "re-thinking" the PhD, so to speak. That is, we know that many of our students will not end up in strictly academic positions and, as such, I think that part of our job is to at least make them aware of their other options and, to the extent that we can (because we, ourselves, were trained as academics), provide them with some of the skills that will help them do so.

3. With Principal Investigator (PI) status of the Childhood Cognition and Learning Laboratory, you have time to manage overarching goals and research of the experimental psychology laboratory. How do you find the time spent in managing an experimental psychology laboratory?

By this, I'm assuming you mean how do I allot time to directing my research lab? It's definitely a challenge to manage the various aspects of my academic position which include teaching, research, and administration. I love my research and the time that I get to spend with post-doctoral, doctoral, and undergraduate students. At present, I have a wonderful lab that I'm quite connected to (it's down the hall from my office) and so I'm around it (and more importantly the students!) quite a bit. It's however essential that I have a good team of people (including a part-time lab co-ordinator) with whom I can share the workload. Recruiting participants (in my case young children and their parents) is an especially challenging and time-consuming aspect of the job and this is something I need help with, along with the testing of participants, so that I can free up most of my time to think about new research directions, experimental designs, and writing grants, articles, and chapters.

4. In addition to this, and with an intimate linkage to duties and responsibilities implied by the laboratory and research grants, you mentor young researchers into the discipline of experimental psychology. First, who most mentored you? Second, how did this influence your own mentoring? Third, what insights into and styles of research does the task of mentoring provide for you?

I would consider both my PhD and post-doctoral advisors as my most significant mentors. These were Dr. Daniela O'Neill (PhD Advisor) at the University of Waterloo, and Dr. Andy Meltzoff (post-doc Advisor) at the University of Washington. Both were very meticulous and careful researchers who encouraged me to think about a lot of different angles of my research and

experimental design. They are both also incredibly original and creative thinkers which I'm hoping has rubbed off on me! Because I was Dr. O'Neill's first PhD student we spent a lot of time bouncing ideas off each other and deeply discussing the research (then, as now, it was focused on the development of future thinking ability in young children). I was fortunate to have this much time with her because in bigger labs one doesn't always get the chance to have a lot of one-on-one time with their supervisor. Yet, I think this is critical. I don't think I'd ever want a lab with so many students that I rarely get one-on-one time with each of them. In terms of my style of mentoring, I would say that in addition to trying to work quite closely with students, I also try (though probably need to improve in this respect!) to allow them to really develop their own ideas without interfering – at least initially – too much. Obviously, once it's time to discuss these ideas and think critically about whether they can form the basis of sound experimental designs, then certain issues will need to be considered. At the same time, I think it's also important for advisors/mentors to help our students understand that we don't always have all the answers. That is, sometimes I get the impression that students think that we do and that we're somehow holding out on them! But, science doesn't work like that – that is, I don't always know whether a design is going to work or what exactly we're going to find but this keeps the process interesting! Sometimes the unexpected findings are the most interesting ones.

5. Moving into the area of core research interests, you have three: 1) "cognitive development," 2) "theory of mind," and 3) '"future thinking and planning in children." For those without the background of graduate level research in experimental psychology, how would you define "cognitive development"?

When asked by acquaintances/friends what I study, I often say "children's thinking and reasoning" (i.e., their cognitive development) and how it changes and develops during the preschool years.

6. With present research, how would you define "theory of mind"?

It really depends on how precise you want to be but, again, I sometimes define it as "perspective-taking." That is, how we (and, in my area of study, children) think about/understand other people's perspectives, as well as understand that their own past and future perspectives can differ from their current ones. I use the term "perspective" quite broadly to encompass physiological, emotional, and mental states. For example, when/how do children come to understand that although they may love a certain toy, another child may not; or, that they may know something (e.g., where a toy is hidden) that someone else does not. Appreciating these differences in perspectives is critical for interpreting and making sense of other people's behaviour. In many cases, this will also help us to act empathically (e.g., if we know that our friend is afraid of dogs – even though we are not – we wouldn't invite her to go to the dog park with us).

7. How would you define "future thinking and planning in children"?

By "future thinking," I mean children's capacity to think about future events – for example, if I ask you what you're going to do

tomorrow, next week, or even next year, you can respond to these questions by "mentally projecting" yourself, so to speak, into these scenarios (e.g., tomorrow I'm going to go to work and maybe stop by the coffee shop on my way in, etc.) and providing fairly detailed accounts of what you imagine you may be doing at these various time points. This process itself need not rely on planning but likely lies at the basis of people's ability to plan. One of the fundamental questions I study is whether, like adults, children have this same capacity for "mental time travel."

8. Your first publication in 2000 entitled "Maybe my Daddy give me a big piano:" The development of children's use of modals to express uncertainty studied "modal adjuncts to mark uncertainty." Modal terms consisting of "maybe, possibly, probably and might." Other indications are factive contrasted with nonfactive words such as 'understand' (factive) contrasted with 'consider' (nonfactive). You use the examples of "think" (factive) contrasted with "know" (nonfactive). You note adjuncts as among the earliest emergent properties from children's language. More to the point, you describe the lack of knowledge about modal use in children related to expressions of uncertainty. Since the research almost a decade and half ago, what other things have research into children's modal language development discovered about them?

This is actually not an area that I've followed or continued to do research in. Although the paper was framed in terms of children's understanding of modals, I was particularly interested in whether they used these terms of uncertainty when talking about the future. My/our logic at the time is that if children were saying such things as I might get hungry or probably it's going to rain then ,arguably, their thinking about the future must entail

more than simply recounting routine past events. Otherwise, why would these future events be prefaced by markers of uncertainty or modals?

9. With regards to the three most cited pieces of your research program since 2000, Google Scholar rank orders from most cited to least cited for the top three: 1) Episodic future thinking, 2) The emergence of episodic future thinking in humans, and 3) My future self: Young children's ability to anticipate and explain future states. Obviously, one common conceptualization of episodic future thinking. Your major contribution to the field of psychology. You gave the generalized definition earlier in question '6.'. I would like to cover each of these articles together and then alone. What theme of evidence and theory best characterizes this particular strain of your own research?

One of the most important themes of these 3 articles is the focus on the specific ability to imagine/envision ourselves in the future (as opposed to thinking about the future more broadly), and its development in young children. This type of thought is such a fundamental and pervasive mental activity for humans. That is, we're constantly thinking about the future – what we'll have for dinner, where we'll go on vacation, what we'll do on the weekend, etc. – yet until recently we knew very little about this capacity both in adults and in children.

THE LULLABY OF RAIN

By Nevcivan Açılkan

The lullaby was rain tonight,
a melody of drips hitting the lens,
he just melted my heart,
each drip, hitting a different note,
soft as a mother's voice,
my glasses could not resist,
taking me
to the semi-death realm,
the drops, whispering,
as someone caressed my hair,
someone kissed my eyes,
the lullaby of rain
raised me tonight,
washed my soul away,
took away the sorrow, the hurt,
gave me peace instead,
I,
I got the rain tonight.

An Interview with Distinguished Professor Duncan Pritchard, FRSE on Family, Sense of Self Over Time, Philosophy, and the University of California, Irvine (Part One)

2023-02-16

Author(s): Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Publication (Outlet/Website): In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal

Abstract

Professor Duncan Pritchard is UC Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the University of California, Irvine. His monographs include Epistemic Luck (Oxford UP, 2005), The Nature and Value of Knowledge (co-authored, Oxford UP, 2010), Epistemological Disjunctivism (Oxford UP, 2012), Epistemic Angst: Radical Skepticism and the Groundlessness of Our Believing (Princeton UP, 2015), and Skepticism: A Very Short Introduction (Oxford UP, 2019). He discusses: family background; a sense of self extended through time; inability to distinguish influences; lack of influential mentors; the influences of Graham Greene, Patricia Highsmith, JG Ballard, Anthony Burgess, Robert Aikman, and Shusaku Endo; the importance of reading fiction; formal postsecondary education; tasks and responsibilities with becoming a distinguished professor at the University of California, Irvine; provisions of UCIrvine; and current research.

Keywords: disjunctivism, Duncan Pritchard, epistemology, Irvine, knowledge, luck, philosophy, skepticism, University of California.

An Interview with Distinguished Professor Duncan Pritchard, FRSE on Family, Sense of Self Over Time, Philosophy, and the University of California, Irvine: Distinguished Professor, University of California, Irvine & Director, Graduate Studies, Philosophy, University of California, Irvine (Part One)[1],[2]*

Please see the footnotes, bibliography, and citation style listing after the interview.

1. Scott Douglas Jacobsen: What is family background or lineage, e.g., surname(s) etymology (etymologies), geography, culture, language, religion/non-religion, political suasion, social outlook, scientific training, and the like?

Professor Duncan Pritchard: There's nothing remotely interesting in my family background. I know this because some years back a cousin of my father's traced the Pritchards (an Anglicized contraction of the Welsh term for 'son of Richard') back to 1066 (incredible I know, but don't ask me how he did this; I was too young to know the details). He was disappointed to discover that none of us ever amounted to anything. (I'm not sure what he expected. Perhaps statuette feet in the shifting sands with the inscription: 'I am Daffyd Pritchard, Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and Despair!') I must admit that I don't find it disappointing at all; in fact, I think it's rather funny. In any case, in the grand scheme of things, no-one ever amounts to anything, so it's

actually quite useful to have a lineage that removes all doubt about this. There's no religion in the Pritchard family, except of the 'Church of England' variety, which is to say no religion at all. (There's an old joke back in the UK: 'Are you religious?' 'Good God no! We're C of E.') There's no real politics either, except of the apathetic kind—I can't remember anyone ever offering any sustained political arguments around the dinner table growing up. I'm from working class stock from a place called Wolverhampton, in central England. The area is known as the Black Country, on account of the industry and mining that used to be there, though there's none of that now—it's a very deprived, post-industrial urban sprawl. Very depressing, though this is mitigated a little by the fact that Black Country folk are the friendliest you could ever meet (though the local accent is usually regarded as by far the worst in the UK), and that makes going back there bearable. Plus all my family are there. (An odd fact about the Black Country is that people tend not to leave, even though there are zero opportunities there. Whenever I go back the first question anyone asks me is why I left, as if this were mysterious. Jeez, I currently live next to the Pacific Ocean in Southern California—does it really need an explanation?) My father worked his whole life, bar a brief spell in the army straight out of school (as was common in those days), in a local factory; my mother worked as a secretary in a local school. One of my earliest memories is the desire to leave Wolverhampton at the first opportunity. I rank it as one of my greatest achievements that I succeeded.

2. Jacobsen: With all these facets of the larger self, how did these become the familial ecosystem to form identity and a sense of a self extended through time?

Pritchard: Looking back, I think I have learnt the most from the (fiction) books I've read. Certain authors in particular have been particularly influential: Graham Greene, Patricia Highsmith, JG Ballard, Anthony Burgess, Robert Aikman, and Shusaku Endo spring to mind. It's notable that many of these authors are pretty rootless, as that's the way I feel too. I think I'm also drawn to writers who have a sense of mystery about the world, who think that there is a place for something beyond the natural. Unusually, I think, there's both a kind of fideism and a kind of scepticism (Pyrrhonian, I would later discover, on the model of Montaigne) that runs through me like the text you get in a stick of seaside rock (I think it's called rock candy in the US). It was there before I even knew what it was. I'm not sure how uncommon it is, but I occasionally come across people with the same affliction.

3. Jacobsen: Of those aforementioned influences, what ones seem the most prescient for early formation?

Pritchard: I'm not confident that I can distinguish between the ones listed in terms of influence.

4. Jacobsen: What adults, mentors, or guardians became, in hindsight, the most influential on you?

Pritchard: I'm not sure there was anyone, to be honest.

5. Jacobsen: As a young reader, in childhood and adolescence, what authors and books were significant, meaningful, to worldview formation?

Pritchard: Please see above.

6. Jacobsen: What were pivotal educational – as in, in school or autodidacticism – moments from childhood to young adulthood?

Pritchard: As I noted above, I think I've learnt the most from reading fiction.

7. Jacobsen: For formal postsecondary education, what were the areas of deepest interest? What were some with a passion but not pursued? Why not pursue them?

Pritchard: I stumbled into philosophy (I had originally wanted to be a writer, but that was a bullet dodged, as frankly I'm not talented enough to pursue that), but once I had stumbled upon it I was hooked. I basically realized that it was really ideas that interested me. I was fortunate to get a scholarship to study for my PhD (unusual in the UK, but essential for someone with my background), and thereafter I somehow managed to inveigle my way in academia. I'm very lucky to be able to make a living doing that which I'm especially suited to doing.

8. Jacobsen: As a distinguished professor at the University of California, Irvine, wtasks and responsibilities come with this position?

Pritchard: One thing that is wonderful about UCI is how there is a real 'can-do' attitude that permeates through the campus. This has meant that I've been able to indulge a lot of my interests here. For example, I have a long-standing concern, both in terms of pedagogy and from a research perspective (e.g., epistemology of education and philosophy of technology), in digital education. Almost as soon as I arrived I was able to run a project to create two interdisciplinary MOOCs (= Massive Open Online Courses), on 'Skepticism' and 'Relativism' (the latter led by my colleague Annalisa Coliva). I've since been given funding to enable me to start a new project that brings the intellectual virtues into the heart of the UCI curriculum as part of a series of online modules that I am helping to develop. This project is a collaboration with colleagues in Education, and will soon result in some cutting-edge research in this regard, which we hope can form the basis for a major external funding bid. I've also been encouraged to create a new online masters program devoted to Applied Philosophy, which is an exciting and growing field where UCI has special expertise.

Relatedly, there is a real enthusiasm for innovation in teaching at UCI, which I think is wonderful. I've been able to develop new online courses and embed them into the curriculum. It's been great to see how the students have responded to working with the virtual learning environments that we have created.

In terms of my other commitments at UCI, I run the Philosophy Graduate Program, which like the Department of Philosophy is going from strength-to-strength, and I am the Director of a new research cluster (soon to be a research center) devoted to 'Knowledge, Technology and Society'. I also have a UCI-wide administrative role devoted to fostering digital education, as part of the Division of Teaching Excellent and Innovation.

9. Jacobsen: We have some relationship with one another through the University of California, Irvine, through the institution without formal contact. What does UC Irvine provide for you?

Pritchard: As noted above, this is a wonderful work environment for someone with my professional interests, both in terms of the great research that takes place here and also the enthusiasm and support for pedagogical innovation. I think it's also worth mentioning that being at UCI is advantageous in lots of other ways too, such as the beautiful campus, and the amazing location (I'm still not used to the fact that the weather is always beautiful, with the spectacular beaches, and much else besides, so close by).

10. Jacobsen: What are the main areas of research and research questions now?

Pritchard: I'm currently working on a range of research projects, some of them intersecting in various ways. I have a longstanding interest in scepticism in all its forms, including contemporary radical scepticism and the history of sceptical ideas from the

ancients to the early moderns (especially with regard to Pyrrhonian scepticism, both in its original expression in antiquity and its later manifestations, especially the work of Montaigne). The later Wittgenstein is an abiding interest of mine, especially the hinge epistemology that is inspired by his remarks in On Certainty, both with regard to the sceptical problematic and concerning its implications more generally. On the latter front, I've developed an account of the rationality of religious belief (quasi-fideism) which draws on hinge epistemology, and also on the work of John Henry Newman, whose philosophical writings are a side-interest of mine. I've done a lot of work bringing philosophical attention to the notions of luck and risk, and their applications to a range of debates (e.g., in epistemology, philosophy of law, aesthetics, ethics, and so on). I continue to work on a range of topics in mainstream epistemology, such as theory of knowledge, virtue epistemology, understanding, the nature of inquiry, epistemic value, epistemology of disagreement, social epistemology, and so on. Finally, I also cover some topics in applied epistemology, such as the epistemology of education (e.g., the role of the intellectual virtues in education), epistemology of law (e.g., legal risk, legal evidence), and the epistemology of cognitive science (e.g., the epistemological ramifications of extended cognition).

My last proper monograph was Epistemic Angst; Radical Skepticism and the Groundlessness of Believing, Princeton UP), which came out at the very end of 2015. Last year saw the publication of a short book I wrote on scepticism (Scepticism: A Very Short Introduction, Oxford UP). I'm under contract to complete a more advanced book on scepticism with my colleague Annalisa Coliva for Routledge in the near future. After that, I tentatively have three book projects in mind (though I'm

not sure what order I will attempt them): a mid-length book articulating the quasi-fideist proposal; a book on luck, risk and the meaning of life (which I'm hoping to pitch at the general educated reader if possible); and a substantial monograph exploring the role of truth of truth in epistemology, with the goal of bringing together a number of central epistemological debates under a common theoretical umbrella (the intellectual virtues, epistemic value, epistemic luck and risk, and the nature of inquiry).

THE PHENOMENON CROSSWORD answers are on the next page:

The Phenomenon Crossword Answers

1. P	2. R	3. I	4. M	5. E		6. T	A	7. O	
8. T	E	R	E	9. N	10. C	11. E		12. A	13. T
		I		14. T	A	N	15. T	R	A
	16. I	S		17. O	M		O		M
18. A		19. H	20. I			21. E	M	M	A
22. L	I	M	O			23. L	O		M
I		A		24. G	25. I		26. S	I	
27. B	28. A	N	29. A	N	A		H		
30. I	N		31. N	U	M	32. B	E	33. R	34. S
	35 Y	E	N		36 B	E	A	N	O