

Ventriloquism and the Paradox of Foolish Intelligence by Rich Norman

I was afraid. I will admit it, these guys were downright scary. My paper was right. Hell, it was perfect...but these guys were something else. The reviewers would decide my fate, and were the best and the worst: psychiatrists and physicists who head university departments and hospitals, and all of them were just plain scary. I believed it, the pomp and all those degrees made me believe I had to pass a barrier of superior intelligence, and that's intimidating. I am a bright guy, but look at all that honorary pomp!

Intelligence is in small part, a function of IQ, that is, how much processing power you have, and the rest, is derivative of mental flexibility and "interest." One can accomplish much where passion intercedes to create with work, what ability has not bestowed. I have seen it. As a drum teacher, my students would succeed more as a matter of interest, of passion, than of ability. Both together, quite naturally, yield the best result. In the world of intellect, flexibility is king, passion is next, and IQ last. That's my take.

The period one waits in suspension, one's life on hold, waiting, for the opinion of another...is excruciating. I will never be fooled again. How silly! I have understood my error. You see, I was, and am, sure of my work. There is no doubt. If there were, I would not have submitted it. So one never need fear the opinion of others, since if the work is right, and the fact solid, *it is the reviewer* who is to be judged, as the work is correct. With this revelation in mind, the wait became easier. How would they respond? Could they grasp the idea? New thinking is most tricky to spell out, and this journal had a category for me: original theory. I need not collect data and fund experiments before I publish my idea. New thoughts were welcome here! In science, that is both strange, and rare.

Today, the scientist who publishes is required to have mastered a trick of false modesty, and, I have just ascertained its true function. The trick in question is one of ventriloquism. One must feign modesty, and never admit an original thought, no matter what. Instead, one pretends that someone else has said it, and demonstrates one's prowess at using "citations," footnotes, in making others say what you yourself have designed. It appears as modesty: "Look what I may think, but he said it," which is in truth, just lack of confidence in the precision of one's creative thinking. The very most intelligent men have this deficit, which is in no small part fostered by the educational system itself, that insists by method, on a citation every few words, and rewards compliance, not originality rightly organized so it may be proven. (The reader may enjoy my *Valley Times*, "Censorship and the Facebook Doctor" column, available for review through my online archive at www.richnorman.com). The capacity for new thought is uncommon, and so, it has become bad taste. One is to "show off" one's reading list, not one's thinking. To demonstrate new thinking is the worst sort of *showing off*—bad taste!

The letter arrived and I opened it and read. I was rejected. Then, I read the reviews. This should be informative. How did they fare? I have used quotation marks and references faultlessly, and am told it is unclear if I am quoting or not. I am told, even though I have supported each point, that the one privately researched and authored

source, the only one *not associated with a university*, this one work out of hundreds, *my work*, is unknown, unavailable to see and examine, and therefore: suspect—not fit for use. This is untrue, as the work *is* available at the largest of all retailers: Amazon.com. I am told terms are not defined, and I check one by one, and, in every case, all are defined. I soon understood: Each and every point—was false. The objections had no teeth, all were trivial, and all plainly false. Furthermore, the reviewers demonstrated no understanding of the new concepts, concepts so laboriously and clearly articulated.

You see, it is not the processing power so much as the flexibility. Patients with brain damage to the lateral prefrontal cortex can solve certain types of brain teasers which normal people of whatever intelligence, usually can not (Gazzaniga, 2009, pp. 578-579).

E.g., If each of the lines composing this equation was a matchstick, can you move one matchstick to make this puzzle true?— $VI = VI + VI$

These damaged frontal structures are responsible for our snap judgments, our preconceptions, which permit us to sort through information quickly. When these areas are damaged, our preconceptions, so useful for split-second decision making, are circumvented, and allow the mind to take a new approach to problems, an approach unconstrained by preconceived definition. This rapid fixing of an idea related to the proper functioning of the lateral prefrontal cortex, is what psychologists call "functional fixedness." Psychologists love technical terms. More plainly: Preconception = limited thinking. I must have a deeply atrophied lateral prefrontal cortex. A "volumetric reduction" to be sure. I delight in seeing new solutions to old problems. In the case of the genius, I am quite sure that most are imbecilic. They use the sum total of their hyper-developed intellect to defend themselves and their preconceptions. Under no circumstance will they lose an argument, and to accept a new idea into their head amounts to nothing less: a defeated preconception! How unacceptable! With their world as a garrison set against every new thought which is not already substantiated, they seek to sustain themselves against the enemy: new ideas! They will not be defeated! So intelligent are they, that the outcome is sure: Victory!—Defense!—Ignorance! As an isometric exercise against the fabric of all new thought, they defend, using every bit of their pulsing, throbbing, super-superior cerebrum to refuse the fact! How delightful to see it, to laugh and to know: "There is nothing so foolish, as an intelligent man."

The paper, quite naturally, has been accepted into a finer and more astute publication, and will be published in: *The Black Watch: The Journal of Unconscious Psychology and Self-Psychoanalysis*. In atypical form there is no fee or educational restriction of affiliation to access this journal—all may know.

Reference:

Gazzaniga, M., et. al., (2009). *Cognitive neuroscience: The biology of the mind*.
London: Norton Press.

The puzzle answer: The vertical matchstick of the plus sign is moved to parallel the horizontal to form: VI = VI = VI

This work is the sole property of the author, Rich Norman © 2013.