

# ANALYZE RESPONSIBLY

*Welcome to the White Wine Papers! Please Enjoy  
Gregory's Most Aromatic (Or Intoxicating)  
Thoughts About Business Analysis.*

December 3, 2014

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Discrimination



*From time immemorial, we have witnessed the battles of the sexes and the battles of the hues.*

*In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, a new –ism emerges: the Battle of the Q's.*

### **Qualitative or Quantitative? EQ or IQ? Paper or Plastic?**

People often ask me, “Gregory, you have a Bachelor’s degree in Comparative Literature from [the University of California] Berkeley, correct?”

I respond in the affirmative.

“Then tell me,” they continue. “How could you do so well at data analysis for the MBA at Santa Clara University?” [I have a general MBA but mostly excelled at analytics].

For those who (understandably) cannot read tones from a text (a facet of a Literature major), their tone is quite skeptical. My current tone is livid.

You might guess my source of fury lies within these:

- Anyone who knows anything about Cal (my beloved undergrad alma mater) knows that being admitted in the year 2000 required an insane amount of well-roundedness. My



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then pot belly aside, both integrating literary tropes and integrating continuous functions were a must.

- Cal and my teachers' assessments were not alone. I have consistently scored highly in both Q's across the SAT, ACT, GRE (slacked off slightly then), and the GMAT (if you're a Type A personality, my scores are published on my LinkedIn profile). The metrics are on my side.
- As a data analyst, my personal mission is to dispel the confusion between "because of" and "in spite of." My critical reading and free-fall thinking leveraged me above most rote-thinking engineers at their own game. Fields can be pie-expanding rather than pie-slicing.

### **Mental Segregation is as Ignorant as any Other Segregation**

The belief that one can only be good at 1 or 2 things is completely backwards. Yes, we do learn some fields faster than others, and tradeoffs exist. However, polymaths exist, too. Centuries ago, the Greek word *phusis* (from which we have "physics") meant "nature" without any distinction between mechanical nature or human nature. The word *dilettante*, now considered pejorative (it is synonymous with "amateur"), was once considered classy because only the wealthy could afford to acquire tutelage in multiple fields while most folk learned 1 trade through apprenticeship.

The tendency to pigeonhole a person's skill sets not only displays empirical ignorance but also reveals a self-weakness. In psychology, there is a concept called projection: "If I can't do it, I assume by default that you cannot, either." I find that those who narrowly categorize others might be very parochial in terms of their own self-efficacy.

### **Mental Segregation Leads to Real Segregation, Even by Gender and Race**

- Kobe Bryant and many African-Americans are above-average polyglots. Shall we assume by default they must be bad at math? Ridiculous! What genetic argument supports that? Sickle-cell anemia is one thing; Mathanemia is another.
- Women have proven excellent at humanities and historically have not outperformed men at quantitative fields until recently, some think. Ridiculous! Ada Lovelace (a woman) wrote the first computing code in 1842.
- Men possess the assertive upbringing needed to make effective salespeople. Ridiculous! Women comprise the majority of buyers today! A savvy manager should hire those who best win a female buyer, possibly women? Most of my past clients to date were women (in a theoretically male-dominated market, mind you), and I don't think I won them over by sheer sex appeal...

- “Asian-Americans belong in IT or Finance.” Ridiculous! Jack Ma, founder of Alibaba Group and now the richest man in China (granted, he’s not Asian-American, but...) was an English major and later English teacher. He later learned business skills and created his empire. Up to 2010, he never wrote a line of code. Now if someone in so-called restrictive China could make that kind of career, how much more an Asian-American in the “land of the free!”

We have to stop believing that a member of any so-called faction can only be good at one thing and that excelling in one field necessarily crowds out another.

### Glass Ceilings, Glass Walls, and Now, Glass Desks

I’ll assume that you already know what a glass ceiling is (and not that your expertise elsewhere has prevented you from knowing this term).

In more recent years, business experts including famous consultant Alan Weiss (i.e. author of Million Dollar Consulting famous) observed that “glass walls” were a much greater threat. [In a 2011 article in \*Human Resource Executive Online\*](#), Weiss writes that women and minorities have been placed into HR and “interstitial” departments as a mere guise of diversity, since management is reluctant to represent them in more central or frontline roles. Although NWONMs (Nonwhite Or Nonmales) can be promoted upwards to VP of HR, the honor is as utile as Robert Frost’s honorary doctorates (HR execs rarely ever become CEOs at Fortune 500 companies). Given Weiss’ long history of being very harsh (and very accurate) about HR, it means something when an HR publication actually publishes this.

I think we face a new problem with Glass Desks, with which we believe we are free to walk about a room but are actually compelled to sit and handle a specific task-set.

### Shattering the Glass Desks

- Only engineers should be involved in design? Have we learned nothing from Steve Jobs?
- Extensive auto industry experience needed for success in Detroit? Alan Mulally, recently retired CEO of Ford, came from a lifetime at Boeing only several years prior. In spite of not knowing how to make the hottest cars himself, his leadership in the field was par for the course (in his tenure, Ford alone of the US major auto makers avoided the government bailout fund).
- Patricia Fripp, the world’s greatest authority on public speaking, started out as a hairstylist. Speaking was originally a peripheral opportunity to promote business until she found both passion and excellence at the National Speakers Association and became its first female President.

(Over)specialization is the hallmark of a mature (old) company. Startups (young) require many hats for each person. While tradition says that a startup ceases to be a startup when it is acquired, I believe that startup ceases to be when its members ossify and “fuse their ends” (close bone growth) into departments and lose that cross-functional flavor.

Google is now the #1 brand in the world (yes, someone had to finally beat Coca-Cola). Google is also considered “amorphous.” Coincidence? I think not. It has no bone growth end. It is not calcified (yet). There is likely more freeflow than we think.

We need Mental Integration, not Mental Segregation. Scientists have recently dispelled the utter BS we call “left-brain / right-brain.” We have 1 brain and do not function with a split personality.

*Kampai!*

