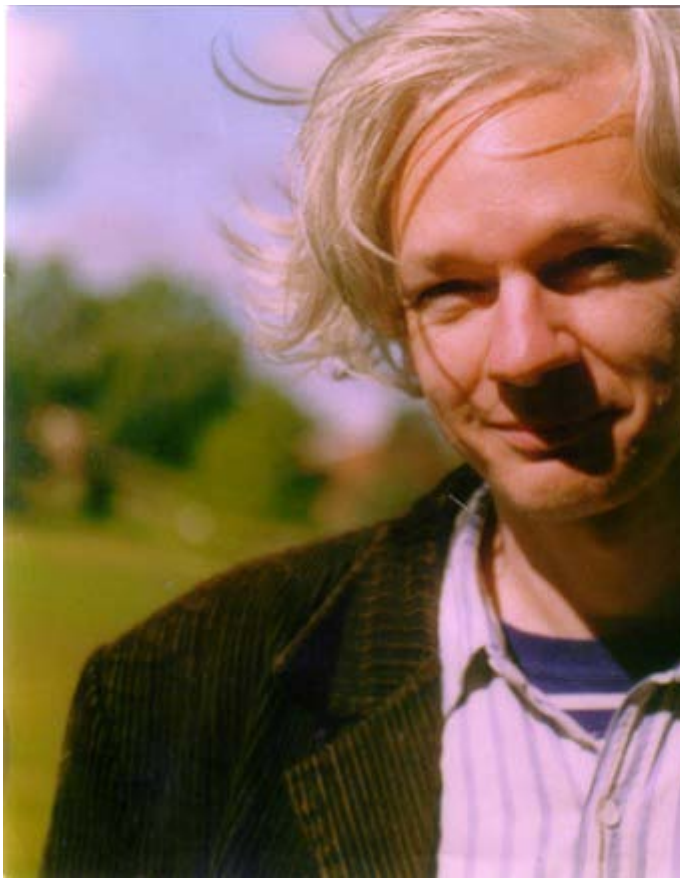
I

Q



O

R

G

Interesting Question

The State is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of behavior; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently toward one another....We are the state, and we shall continue to be the state until we have created the institutions that form a real community and society of men.**Gustav Landauer**, *Schwache Stattsmanner, Schwacheres Volk!, June, 1910*

Selected Correspondence:

Wed 29 Aug 2007 : Iirrationality in argument

The truth is not found on the page, but is a wayward sprite that bursts forth from the readers mind for reasons of its own. I once thought that the Truth was a set comprised of all the things that were true, and the big truth could be obtained by taking all its component propositions and evaluating them until nothing remained. I would approach my rhetorical battles as a logical reductionist, tearing down, atomizing, proving, disproving, discarding falsehoods and reassembling truths until the Truth was pure, golden and unarguable. But then, when truth matters most, when truth is the agent of freedom, I stood before Justice and with truth, lost freedom. Here was something fantastical, unbelievable and impossible, you could prove that (A => B) and (B => C) and (C => D) and (D => F) Justice would nod its head and agree, but then, when you turned to claim your coup de grace, A => F irrevocably, Justice would demur and

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- Iirrationality in argument
- Natalya

revoke the axiom of transitivity, for Justice will not be told when F stands for freedom. Transitivity is evoked when Justice imagines F and finding the dream a pleasurable one sets about gathering cushions to prop up their slumber. Here then is the truth about the Truth; the Truth is not bridge, sturdy to every step, a marvel of bound planks and supports from the known into the unknown, but a surging sea of smashed wood, flotsam and drowning sailors. So first, always pick your poetic metaphor, to make the reader want to believe, then the facts, and -- miracle! -- transitivity will descend from heaven, invoked as justification for prejudice.

Often we suffer to read, "But if we believe X then we'll have to...", or "If we believe X it will lead to...". This has no reflection on the veracity of X and so we see that outcomes are treated with more reverence than the Truth. It stings us, but natural selection has spun its ancestral yarns from physically realized outcomes, robustly eschewing the vapor thread of platonism as an abomination against the natural order, fit only for the gossip of monks and the page.

Yet just as we feel all hope is lost and we sink back into the miasma, back to the shadow world of ghosts and gods, a miracle arises; everywhere before the direction of self interest is known, people yearn to see where its compass points and then they hunger for truth with passion and beauty and insight. He loves me. He loves me not. Here then is the truth to set them free. Free from the manipulations and constraints of the mendacious. Free to choose their path, free to remove the ring from their noses, free to look up into the infinite voids and choose wonder over whatever gets them though. And before this feeling to cast blessings on the profits and prophets of truth, on the liberators and martyrs of truth, on the Voltaires, Galileos, and Principias of truth, on the Gutenburgs, Marconis and Internets of truth, on those serial killers of delusion, those brutal, driven and obsessed miners of reality, smashing, smashing, smashing every rotten edifice until all is ruins and the seeds of the new.
link

Sat 16 Jun 2007 : Nataliya

Did I ever tell you about the time Nataliya took me out to go get a drink with her? We go off looking for a bar and we can't find one. Finally Nataliya takes me to a vacant lot and says, 'Here we are.' We sat there for a year and a half, until sure enough, someone constructs a bar around us. Well, the day they opened we ordered a shot, drank it, and then burned the place to the ground. Nataliya yelled over the roar of the flames, 'Always leave things the way you found 'em!'

(with apologies)

- Every one and no one wants to save the world
- The United what of America?
- Kurt Vonnegut dies
- Do electric sheep dream of f16's?
- Decisions made by a group reflect its membership
- Average shy intellectuals
- Carbon offsetting
- The right thing to do
- The Australian lagoon

link

Sat 16 Jun 2007 : Everyone and no one wants to save the world

When the world extended to one's surrounding hills and mountains and over them was only legend, saving the world was approchable and a natural activity to all of independent character.

You do not need to justify the possession of these noble instincts. Such attributes are normally distributed. You have a constellation of these attributes and that makes you who you are. Recognise that the substantial ones are invariant.

You must satisfy your invariant instincts or you will be at odds with your own character. It is only when we are not at odds with our basic makeup that we can find life meaningful.

To exercise your instinct for saving the world, requires saving what you *perceive* to be the world.

Being modern, educated and wordly, the world you perceive is immense and this is disempowering compared to the valley world of your ancestors where your feelings were forged and where saving 10 people saved 10% of the "world"'s population.

Here lays the difficulty in actualising your character. Your perception is of a world so vast that that you can not envisage your actions making a meaningful difference.

People try to fool themselves and others into believing that one can ``think globally and act locally', however to anyone with a sense of proportion (not most people, btw) thinking globaly makes acting locally seem to be a marginal activity. It's not setting the world to rights.

To meaningfully interact with the world, you have to either constrain your perception of what it is back to valley proportions by eschewing all global information (most of us here have engaged on just the opposite course which is what has provoked this discussion), losing your sense of perspective, or start seriously engaging with the modern perception of the world.

That latter path can be hard to find, because it is only satisfied by creating ideas or inventions that have a global impact. Perhaps I have found one, and there's others out there, but for most people of your character a combination of eschewing knowledge of those parts of the world they can't change, and robust engagement with the parts

- Witnessing
- Automated authoritarianism
- Doing the pentagon poker
- The non linear effects of leaks on unjust systems of governance
- The pending total annihilation of the US regime in Somalia
- IP over PPP over DNS over IP
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- Freenet

they can is probably optimal.

Do not be concerned about when one is to do good, who defines good, etc. Act in the way you do because to do otherwise would to be at odds would to be at odds with yourself. Being on a path true to your character carries with it a state of flow, where the thoughts about your next step come upon waking, unbidden, but welcome.

I support similarly minded people, not because they are moral agents, but because they have common cause with my own feelings and dreams.
link

Sat 09 Jun 2007 : The United what of America?

It has been frequently noted that many corporations exceed nation states in GDP. It has been less frequently noted that some also exceed them in population (employees).

But it is odd that the comparison hasn't been taken further. Since so many live in the state of the corporation, let us take the comparison seriously and ask the following question. What kind of states are giant corporations?

In comparing countries, after the easy observations of population size and GDP, it is usual to compare the system of government, the major power groupings and the civic freedoms available to their populations.

The corporation as a nation state has the following properties:

- Suffrage (the right to vote) does not exist except for land holders ("share holders") and even there voting power is in proportion to land ownership.
- All executive power flows from a central committee. Female representation is almost unknown.
- There is no division of powers. There is no forth estate. There are no juries and innocence is not presumed.
- Failure to submit to any order can result in instant exile.
- There is no freedom of speech. There is no right of association. Love is forbidden without state approval.
- The economy is centrally planned.
- There is pervasive surveillance of movement and electronic communication.
- The society is heavily regulated and this regulation is enforced, to the degree many employees are told when, where and how many times a day they can goto the toilet.
- There is almost no transparency and something like the FOIA

- Technology vs. Psychology
- I.. Q..
- Calibration of feeling
- Etymology of 'cad'
- Self destructing paper
- The Road to Hanoi
- State and terrorist conspiracies
- Those eyes
- Strangers on a train
- The Great Australian Bikini March
- The Strawberry
- If you saw
- Ajita Kesakambala (early Indian materi

is unimaginable.
- The state has one party. Opposition groups (unions) are banned, surveilled or marginalized whenever and wherever possible.

These large multinationals, despite having a GDP and population comparable to Belgium, Denmark or New Zealand have nothing like their quality of civic freedoms. Internally they mirror the most pernicious aspects of the 1960s Soviet. This even more striking when the civilising laws of region the company operates in are weak (e.g West Pupua or South Korea). There one can see the behavior of these new states clearly, unobscured by their surroundings.

If small business and non-profits are eliminated from the US, then what's left? Some kind of federation of Communist states.

A United Soviet of America.
link

Fri 13 Apr 2007 : Kurt Vonnegut dies

Kurt Vonnegut is dead. A friend and iconoclast, he died last night aged 85. Vonnegut was the author of over 20 books, including "Slaughter House Five", written about his experiences as a PoW during the Dresden firebombing. On the night of the firebombing, 30,000 civilians were burnt to death and most of Dresden's buildings were destroyed. Vonnegut hid with other PoWs in a slaughterhouse basement.

Five years ago, I spent the winter exploring the former East German town. I learnt that Australian Army hiking boots are good to minus 7 degrees, but at minus 8, heat flows out of the soles. I learnt that every major building in Dresden, from the Opera House to the Dresden Museum, was a socialist re-construction. I learnt that for even for a whole city the essential can be invisible to the eye.

As a successful author Vonnegut sometimes pushed whimsy into self- indulgence, fueled by a cult following in the the youth movement of the United States, which, lacking other role models or serious tasks, anointed him a genius. Yet in "Slaughter House Five", this confidence and littery flexibility gave Vonnegut what he needed to reveal a major allied atrocity to a generation that was sick of hearing stories about the war. This book seeded the belief system of a generation that would eventually react against similar atrocities inflicted on the Vietnamese.

Here is part of an an excellent longer interview with Vonnegut on Australian Radio last year. Even in this fragment Kurt's acuity and

- alism)
- The curious world of the querulous
- The Defiled Sanctuary
- What are the origins of hacktivism?
- William James Sidis
- Philosophy vs. Mathematics
- Turing's Delirium
- The night country
- Even so, we did what we believed in
- Her eyes had great clarity
- Rhetoric

character shine.

ABC mp3 recording
link

Tue 13 Mar 2007 : Do electric sheep dream of f16's?

In the morning, the call to prayer rises from mosque to citadel, the sun lights the haze into a furnace, glowing and aglow, casting long golden shadows into dusty streets, where swallows swoop on blinking gendarmes, while above them young girls water roof top sheep and pigeon boys climb their hutches to wave great checkered flags at distant points in the sky.
link

Mon 26 Feb 2007 : Decisions made by a group reflect its membership

Insofar as our decisions are an expression of who we are, we must make sure that we do not lack courage. Insofar as we want a full range of intellectual opinions, we must have the courage to accept the full range of emotional inclinations that lay behind them.
link

Mon 26 Feb 2007 : Average shy intellectuals

X is an "average shy intellectual" and in that is a sounding for characters of his type. This type is often of a noble heart, wilted by fear of conflict with authority. The power of their intellect and noble instincts may lead them to a courageous position, where they see the need to take up arms, but their instinctive fear of authority then motivates them to find rationalizations to avoid conflict.
link

Mon 26 Feb 2007 : Carbon offsetting

Green house legislation is the distillation of political forces marshaled by science, economic foresight, activism, paranoia, the desire for change, leadership, sycophantalism, pleasure in moral whipping, settling scores, conservatism and those psychological forces which drive them. But in some countries we may accept the legislation as a given and turn our eyes the phenomena which flows

- Consciousness amplification
- Emile Zola
- Underground banned in Iran
- Taming the inner rat.
- How can we untie the unknot?
- Transparency in the cold light of Finland
- Ethical value metrics
- Laughter
- Doing the Mont Park shuffle
- Don't need a weather man to know which way the

from it but whose path to the sea is not yet clear:

In order to understand *carbon offsetting* we must first agree on what we accept for the sake of the argument. Here is a guess:

1. global warming is a problem
2. atmospheric CO2 significantly contributes to gobal warming
3. a reduction in increase of atmospheric CO2 now significantly reduces the effects of global warming in a meaningful time frame
4. atmospheric CO2 levels are substantially under human control
5. of the CO2 production under human control a significant quantity comes from human enterprize
6. reducing CO2 production is a cost effective means of addressing global warming relative to other means

I'm not sure I buy 6. but whatever. We are now tasked to reduce human emissions of CO2 although X may claim that there's a 7. lurking -- the continued moral fibre of individuals in the body politic. That's a more difficult question, which calls from great sympathy, but let us first work with what we can see clearly.

We have only two questions (a) is carbon offsetting effective? and (b) is it efficient compared to the alternatives?

Carbon offsetting by corporations is not motivated by moral considerations. It is motivated by legislation or self-regulation backed up by the threat of legislation.

It is effectively a tax on CO2 production, with the tax money going to industries that soak up carbon.

Now here comes the realpolitik beauty of carbon offsetting. CO2 producers favor it, since compared to outright bans and limits, taxes have greater flexibility and predictability. Hence fearing the whip of pending banning legislation, producers support this tax they would have normally hated. An increasingly powerful industry lobby group is created by those who take CO2 and the middlemen who find them. This lobby group is sees its interest as increasing the carbon transfer tax to the highest levels possible and to ferret our deception by CO2 producers! As an industry, it is a far more stable influence that the vagarities of popular political opinion. Even bureaucrats love it, as they now have their hands in another three industries.

Hence this is an effective real politic way of introducing, sustaining and increasing a cabon tax that would have great difficulties surviving as disconnected tax and grant system.

That answers (a). (b) remains an interesting question, as does what a clever realpolitik solution would look like for funding those

- wind blows
- Runaway consumerism explains the Fermi Paradox.
- Professions
- Many worlds
- Pit and pendulum
- Femal e mathematics
- Oxford without the punting
- Craftier deceptions
- Arrows for false gods
- Jackboots
- Truth on and off the page
- The cream of Australian Physics

alternatives.

If we have a serious problem, we are tasked to re-engineer the world using the best political, psychological and technological tricks we can come up with.
link

Mon 26 Feb 2007 : The right thing to do

People are motivated to follow happiness and flee from pain. These feelings *exist* to color our memories with our physiology so that we may extract meaning our experiences. It's a tautology to say that people do what makes them happy -- despite this, one often sees claims that there exist no altruistic acts, because such actions are the end product of people trying to maximize their happiness. This is to define aultrism out of existence, remove a useful word with which to partition our observations of reality. Instead, we may say that some people's happiness is bound up with other people's happiness and these people should be supported because of the obvious common cause with our own feelings.

A weaker form of the conservative argument (not mentioned here) is that a portion of seemly altruistic acts are covers for the fear associated with guilt.

When my eyes see phrases like 'right thing to do', 'appropriate' etc, I wonder what unstated world view I am meant to share. These phases smell of that unusually putrid whip; social sanction. But every man has experienced social sanction as the direct manifestation of morons baying at the moon, nodding and calling the result *consensus*.

Here, in Africa, there was a two page fold out on the "Night Runner" plague. Plague? Yes. Of people -- typically old, who supposedly run around naked at night (remember the population has pitch black African skin tones), tapping on windows, throwing rocks on peoples roofs, snapping twigs, rustling grass, casting spells and getting lynched because it's "the right thing to do".

Insofar as we can affect the world, let it be to utterly eliminate guilt and fear as a motivator of man and replace it cell for cell with love for one another and the passion of creation.
link

Wed 03 Jan 2007 : The Australian lagoon

Australia is a lagoon in a sea of english which, having no translation

- Practical participatory economics
- Krill to the baleen of the feminine
- Resources for avoiding GPL software licensing issues?
- Tale of the Tesla coil, or learned idiocy
- Canberra
- Don't cross the tracks before putting on your shiny shoes
- Moshe and the glass eye
- Fwd: Psychology of bad

tarrif, washes over us, sweeps our new thoughts away and blends into those that remain, until we no longer know whose thoughts we are.

Industries can dump pig iron to crush foreign production and they can also dump words. Billions of these ideas, already produced for another english market and having no translation tarrifs or transport costs slither into the country unheeded, stricken local journalists and set their burrows in our brains.

We're part of the big english world; this is our reality -- so when we fight, we must fight like kings. When we write about the sea we must write *to* the sea.
link

Wed 03 Jan 2007 : Witnessing

Every time we witness an injustice and do not act, we train our character to be passive in its presence and thereby eventually lose all ability to defend ourselves and those we love. In a modern economy it is impossible to seal oneself off from injustice.

If we have brains or courage, then we are blessed and called on not to frit these qualities away, standing agape at the ideas of others, winning pissing contests, improving the efficiencies of the neocorporate state, or immersing ourselves in obscuranta, but rather to prove the vigor of our talents against the strongest opponents of love we can find.

If we can only live once, then let it be a daring adventure that draws on all our powers. Let it be with similar types whos hearts and heads we may be proud of. Let our grandchildren delight to find the start of our stories in their ears but the endings all around in their wandering eyes.

The whole universe or the structure that perceives it is a worthy opponent, but try as I may I can not escape the sound of suffering. Perhaps as an old man I will take great comfort in pottering around in a lab and gently talking to students in the summer evening and will accept suffering with insouciance. But not now; men in their prime, if they have convictions are tasked to act on them.
link

Wed 03 Jan 2007 : Automated authoritarianism

I've always been dubious about PGP's web-of-collusion and signing-deniability-away, although it's a lot better than the automated

- probability estimation
- NetBSD foundation Membership Agreement
- What are rights anyway?
- Climate skepticism patterns
- The history of warfare

authoritarian's wet dream that passes for CAs.

I loathe these ("everything which is not explicitly permitted is denied") security types, whose idea of nirvana is the cyberspace analog to re-writing the laws of physics so it is not possible to shift in your chair without written authority. Behind their keyboards they must make concurrent salutes to the Fuhrer, Baal *and* Jack Straw.
link

Sun 31 Dec 2006 : Doing the pentagon poker

All who spend time in the spy world soon come to the view that the rest of the population lives their life in a sea fog as a tiny piece of cork buffeted by a vast ocean of concealed truth. True enough, but economics and scientific progress still dominates the spy world as every black budget bureaucrat finds to their classified horror when budget time arrives and they 'do the Pentagon poker'.
link

Sun 31 Dec 2006 : The non linear effects of leaks on unjust systems of governance

You may want to read The Road to Hanoi or Conspiracy as Governance ; an obscure motivational document, almost useless in light of its decontextualization and perhaps even then. But if you read this latter document while thinking about how different structures of power are differentially affected by leaks (the defection of the inner to the outer) its motivations may become clearer.

The more secretive or unjust an organization is, the more leaks induce fear and paranoia in its leadership and planning coterie. This must result in minimization of efficient internal communications mechanisms (an increase in cognitive "secrecy tax") and consequent system-wide cognitive decline resulting in decreased ability to hold onto power as the environment demands adaption.

Hence in a world where leaking is easy, secretive or unjust systems are nonlinearly hit relative to open, just systems. Since unjust systems, by their nature induce opponents, and in many places barely have the upper hand, mass leaking leaves them exquisitely vulnerable to those who seek to replace them with more open forms of governance.

Only revealed injustice can be answered; for man to do anything intelligent he has to know what's actually going on.

link

Sun 24 Dec 2006 : The pending total annihilation of the US regime in Somalia

The US backed Somali "government", the Somali Transitional National Assembly (TNA), faces total annihilation, avoidable only by an Ethiopian invasion of Somalia and the creation of a Quisling regime.

In the past year the TNA has been routed from all regions of Somalia by the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) and now holds only Baidoa, a middling town close to the Ethiopian border. The "government" has already lost the capital, Mogadishu. The TNA is a US supported power broker club with many detested warlords, including those behind the 1991 atrocities in *Black Hawk Down*. Its hold on Baidoa is weak and has only been maintained in the last 24 hours by aggressive Ethiopian air-strikes, artillery and the invasion of 10 to 20 thousand Ethiopian troops. Ethiopia is the traditional, hated enemy of Somalis. Whatever legitimacy the TNA may have had with Somalias is now completely lost. The Molotov-Tribbentrop Pact is statesmanship compared to cynicism behind the TNA inviting Ethiopian troops and artillery into Somalia.

It's worth pausing to reflect on the high power to wealth ratio of community building islamist movements such as the UIC when operating against well funded US/UN led democracy wagons. It appears the US promise of neocorporatism, i.e *better shopping* does not move the heart to engage in the cooperation, love and sacrifice demanded by war. The other US promise,*democracy*, is a difficult abstraction (try drawing it), and like all such abstractions, easily abused by those seeking power for other agendas. It is an alleged means to an end, not an end in itself. There's no human instinct for democracy.

Consider the US Declaration of Independence (1776), a document which is the distillation of instinctive desires which drove men to war and kept them there. What are these desires?

...God.. Creator.. created equal... Life, Liberty,... pursuit of Happiness.. Safety and Happiness... [followed by 26 paragraphs of hatred for the abuses of King George].

In other words, religious / community feeling (x2), equality, life, liberty, happiness (x2), safety, and above all, an extreme hatred for the brutal acts, preferment, and corruption of foreign influenced or controlled government.

Not once does *better shopping* or its alleged antecedent *democracy* appear.

This doesn't bode well for the Iraqi Provisional Authority or the Somali Transitional National Assembly -- at least, the British, pontificating and powdered though they may have been, shared the same language and religion.

If the US administration wants to inspire Somalis and others to support its regimes, it'll have to do better than promises of*better shopping* and handwaving means into ends.
link

Sun 24 Dec 2006 : IP over PPP over DNS over IP

```
In a world with radio waves flowing all around, it
should be possible
for people's thoughts to be as
anonymous as the ether that caresses their skin.

I wrote the following (using ruby and the mDNS
library). It's amusing
and pleasing for wireless travel
or anonymity provided one has a domain name server
somewhere. There
are many situations where
DNS is available but not other types of routing (e.g
Starbucks).
Works under Unix and OS X.

You can get the code here: http://iq.org/crafty.rb

An example:

proffs-computer:~/crafty/src root# ls -l crafty.rb
-rw-r--r--   1 proff  proff  9106 Sep 20 18:00
crafty.rb
proffs-computer:~/crafty/src root# ruby crafty.rb
^Z
[1]+  Stopped                 ruby crafty.rb
proffs-computer:~/crafty/src root# bg
[1]+ ruby crafty.rb &
proffs-computer:~/crafty/src root# ifconfig ppp0
ppp0: flags=8051 mtu 1500
        inet 10.0.0.1 --> 10.0.0.2 netmask 0xff000000
proffs-computer:~/crafty/src root# ifconfig ppp1
ppp1: flags=8051 mtu 1500
        inet 10.0.0.2 --> 10.0.0.1 netmask 0xff000000
proffs-computer:~/crafty/src root# tail
/var/log/system.log
Sep 20 18:12:40 proffs-computer pppd[3434]: pppd 2.4.2
(Apple version
233-10) started by proff, uid 0
Sep 20 18:12:40 proffs-computer pppd[3435]: pppd 2.4.2
(Apple version
```

```
233-10) started by proff, uid 0
Sep 20 18:12:40 proffs-computer pppd[3434]: Connect:
ppp0 <--> /dev/
ttype
Sep 20 18:12:40 proffs-computer pppd[3435]: Connect:
ppp1 <--> /dev/
ttypf
Sep 20 18:12:46 proffs-computer pppd[3435]: local  IP
address 10.0.0.2
Sep 20 18:12:46 proffs-computer pppd[3435]: remote IP
address 10.0.0.1
Sep 20 18:12:46 proffs-computer pppd[3434]: local  IP
address 10.0.0.1
Sep 20 18:12:46 proffs-computer pppd[3434]: remote IP
address 10.0.0.2
proffs-computer:~/crafty/src root# ssh -l proff
10.0.0.1
Password:
Last login: Wed Sep 20 17:58:52 2006 from 10.0.0.2
Welcome to Intelligent-Design!
proffs-computer:~ proff$ w proff
18:14  up 2 days, 15:13, 6 users, load averages: 0.58
0.28 0.30
USER     TTY      FROM              LOGIN@  IDLE WHAT
proff console  -                Mon03   2days -
proff q0       -                17:56      13 bash
proff q2       10.0.0.2         18:14       - w proff
proffs-computer:~ proff$

It is not documented, optimized, or made user friendly,
or multi-
user, but the code should be readable and
if people with ruby or DNS knowledge are interested and
wish to
optimize it or otherwise make it smile
then I will assist.

crafty.rb uses my http://iq.org/rhetoric logic suite,
which I have
prepended for ease of use.
```

link

Wed 20 Dec 2006 : black hawk down, white wash up

Something worth noting about the unusual relative power of community building islamist movements when operating against well funded US led democracy wagons as evidenced by the recent victories of the Somali UIC; the promise of better*shopping* does not move the heart to the great acts of love or sacrifice required in war. "Democracy" is a difficult abstraction that is easily abused (try drawing it). It is a means to an end, not the end itself. There's no instinctive desire for democracy. Consider the US Declaration of Independence (1776), a document which is the distillation of psychological forces which drove men to civil war and kept them

there. What are those forces?

...God.. Creator.. Men are created equal... Life, Liberty,... pursuit of Happiness.. Safety and Happiness... [followed by 26(!) paragraphs of hatred for the abuses of King George].

In other words, religious feeling (x2), equality, life, liberty, happiness (x2), safety and above all, an extreme hatred for the brutal acts, preferment, and corruption of foreign influenced or controlled government.

Not once does *democracy* or *shopping* appear.

This doesn't bode well for the Iraqi provisional authority -- at least the British spoke the same language.
link

Sun 17 Dec 2006 : Freenet

```
Ian Clark's Freenet has forums. However, they have zero
political impact
because only very highly motivated users can perceive
them.
We want to stand and fight AND run and hide, falling
back to the
next technical defense only when political defenses are
over come.
This requires placing trust in some people. That's ok.
We can engineer
a situation that motivates people, not just machines,
to have courage.
```

link

Sat 16 Dec 2006 : Technology vs. Psychology

My general feeling is little outright new technology is needed. What is needed is an ability to integrate what already exists with a subtle understanding of what the real, as opposed to perceived political constraints are and this is what some of us have done. A lot of people are attracted to technology because of their relative strengths in understanding spacial relationships compared to psychological relationships. Both types of understanding give them some power over their environment. However, when they become activists, this fear of the projected, but unreal political threats (of which legalities are a subset) lead them to solutions which do not reflect the way people actually behave. Likewise, those people who see everything only through the lens of politics are similarly blinded; since people's basic make up is invariant, changes in the way they behave arise

from changes in physical reality.
link

Tue 12 Dec 2006 : I.. Q..

I may donate IQ.ORG [now worth $30k] to the WL civic institution if someone can find a good acronym.

Some good words:

Quorum, Question, Quest, Quadrant, Quality, Qualification, Quantum, Quotient, Query, InQuiry... Quasimodo [ok, q's are hard]

I... Q... [french word order]

I, International, Idea, Ideal, Identify, Integrity, Illusion, Image, Imagination, Immortal, Immaterial, Impartial, Interesting, Impassioned, Impending, Imperial, Impetuous, Institute, Important, Impressive, Impunity, Incite, Inclusive, Incorrigible, Incredible, Identical, Infamous, Infinite, Inform, Ingenous, Initiating, Inner, Institute, Insight, Intelligent, Intention, Inter-, InterQuadrant, InterQuarter, Intra-, Intro-, Intri-, Intuitive, Invariant, Innocent, Invective, Investi-, Iconic, Independent, Irony, Island, In-

I like: Inter-Quadrant, Inter-Quarter, International Quorum/Question, (center for public) inquiry, Infinite Quest.

If there's a great character from history who's name begins with I, one can form something like:

Isaac's Question/Quest ("Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb?" (Genesis 22: 7)) Which is lovely, since the open mind yearns to know what the question is as soon it hears the name, and a biblical character may give christian sanctity (the answer to Isaaic is deeply moving, but the source of the pathos is horror. If we were to front as a Ploughshares style movement this might work).

Isaiah has many questions, of which 6:10 seems to be the most interesting:

Isaiah 6:10-11 "10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they, seeing with their eyes, and hearing with their ears, and understanding with their heart, return, and be healed.'. Then said I: 'Lord, how long?' And He answered: 'Until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without man, and the land become utterly waste.

Suggestions?

link

Tue 12 Dec 2006 : Calibration of feeling

Words have no power to change except when there's a fork in the road with equally attractive paths.

In your position, I'd take a deep book, a backpack of food and a tent and go walking for three months along the.au or .nz coast. You need to recalibrate your emotions through recalibrating your body. Emotions are body states. The mind can not be strong without strength in its relation to the body. 'Whatever' is then quickly answered; wake with the sun, take the next step, eat the next bite and behold people and chairs become a delight. It's hard for you to see this now, since future visions are colored with present emotional responses. But these emotional responses are just another part of your flesh, built from the integration of your neurons and body. It's material, stuff, like muscle, constructed from last weeks potatoes and environmental stimulus. You can strengthen your will through overcoming physical hardship.

The natural environment provides man with ready motivational gradients, but civilization has filled them in. Hyper-civilized influences, such as computing, artificial lights, drugs, films, instant food supply, telephones and reading decalibrate by disconnecting behavior and reward and failing to provide the sense data that our biological mental and physical structures have evolved to require.

There's little difference between a mouse exploring a new maze or a scientist realizing the greatest intellectual act of the age. Both are motivated by the same primitive brain regions that control feelings.

'The point' comes when feelings demand it. It can *only* be rationalized from the axioms of primitive emotion. If these axioms are weak due to decalibration by civilization, 'the point' eludes us. If they are strong, we pursue our goals with passion and vigor.
link

Mon 11 Dec 2006 : Etymology of 'cad'

Caddie or cadet used to denote the passenger of a horse-coach picked up for personal profit by the driver (i.e placed next to the driver and not in the already booked interior). So a 'cad' is a man who picks up women, profits from them, and then leaves them by the road side. 'Caddie' or 'cad-et', as in the diminutive -- 'there goes a cad and his

cadette'.

Such romantic etymology is enough to make a man want to don his oilskin and mount his horse with whip and smile at the ready.
link

Tue 05 Dec 2006 : Self destructing paper

A spy opens an envelope. Inside is a thin sheet of paper with a cryptic message. After it is read the paper spontaneously bursts into flames.

The message is the communicable distillation of your hopes, dreams and imagination. The paper is the internet. The internet is self destructing paper. A place where anything written is soon destroyed by rapacious competition and the only preservation is to forever copy writing from sheet to sheet faster than they can burn.

If it's worth writing, it's worth keeping. If it can be kept, it might be worth writing. Would your store your brain in a startup company's vat? If you store your writing on a 3rd party site like blogger, livejournal or even on your own site, but in the complex format used by blog/wiki software de jour you will *lose it forever* as soon as hypersonic wings of internet labor flows direct people's energies elsewhere. For most information published on the internet, perhaps that is *not a moment to soon*, but how can the muse of originality soar when immolating transience brushes every feather?

Readers have asked what software is used to run IQ.ORG. A mere page of handwritten ruby constructs the site out the most robust future proof storage form imaginable. A flat directory of text or html files. The directory, like any directory can be backed up, edited, emailed, zipped, transported, printed, trapped in amber etc.

A lovely way to create these files remotely is to send email to a mail alias. Add the following to your unix ".forward" file; it will save all email sent to as filed under the name of their subjects. Want to change something? Just mail it in again under the same subject!

```
#!/usr/bin/ruby
# add this code to your .forward+secretname file like
so:
# "|/home/me/public_html/iq.org/strew_incoming_mail.rb"
Dir.chdir(ENV['HOME'])
Dir.chdir('public_html/iq.org/strew') # change iq.org
here to reflect
your site's directory

s = $stdin.read
if /^Subject: ([^.\/].+?)\n/m =~ s
```

```
   subject = $1
   f = File.open(subject, "w")
   f.write(s)
   f.close
   Dir.chdir('..')

   exec "./index.rb > index.html"
end
```

Here is the code that scans the strew files and builds up the html output you see:

```
#!/usr/bin/ruby
# save as index.rb
# puts "<html>" etc here
strewdir="strew"
Dir.chdir strewdir
strews = `ls -t ???*`.map {|name| name.chomp}
strews.each { |name|
     File.open(name) { |f|
       linkname = URI.escape(name.gsub(/ /, ''))
       puts '<h3><a name="' + linkname + '">' +
f.stat.mtime.strftime("%a %d %h %Y") + ' : ' + name+
"</a></h3>\n"
       s = f.read
       firstline = s.split(/\n/)[0]
       if firstline and /^(From |[A-Za-z_-]: )/m =~
firstline
         body = s.match(/\n\r?\n/m).post_match
       else
         body = s
       end
       x = body.scan(/--\{\s(.+?)\s\}--\s/m).join
       if x != ""
         body = x
       end
       if /<blockquote>|<html>|<i>|<p>|<p ?\/>|<b>|
<a href/ =~ body
         puts body
       else
         puts "<pre>" + body + "</pre>"
       end
       puts '<br>'
       puts '<font size="-2"><i>'
       puts "<a href=\"\##{linkname}\">link</a>"
       puts '<hr>'
       puts '</i></font>'
    }
}

strews.each {|name| puts '<li><a href="#' +
URI.escape(name.gsub
(/< /, '')) + '">' + name + '</a>'}
#puts footers here
```

That's it! The raw archive does not even depend on ruby; it's gold until civilization collapses, the neoluddites take control, or both, but then we will have other adventures to please us...

link

Mon 04 Dec 2006 : The Road to Hanoi

It seems like everyone I meet plans to follow the young Che Guavara, now that seduction of random latinos has been politically sanctified, and take off on their motorbike and adventure through the poverty and pleasures of South and Central America. And who can blame them? But there are other lands to explore.

Last year I rode my motorcycle from Ho Chi Min City (Saigon) to Hanoi, up the highway that borders the South China Sea.

On the road to Hanoi something caught my attention and that of every vehicle near me. We had to watch constantly and take action every few seconds or it would have killed us all.

The road to Hanoi is a Vietnamese economic artery but is nonetheless dominated by potholes, thousands the size of bomb craters. There are constant reminders of "The American War" all over Vietnam, and perhaps this was one of them, but in a more indirect way.

To a physicist a pothole has an interesting life. It starts out as a few loose stones. As wheels pass over, these stones grind together and against the under surface. Their edges are rounded off and the depression they are in also becomes rounder by their action. The stones become pestles to the hole's motor. Smaller stones and grit move between the spaces of larger stones and add to the grinding action. The hole enlarges, and deepens. Small stones are soon entirely worn away, but in the process liberate increasingly larger stones from the advancing edge of the hole. The increasing depth and surface capture more and more energy from passing wheels. The destruction of the road surface accelerates until the road is abandoned or the hole is filled.

Road decay is, like a dental decay, a run away process. Utility rapidly diminishes and costs of repair accelerate, and just like teeth it is more efficient to fill a pothole as soon as it is noticed.

But this measure of efficiency is not the metric of politics and it is a political feedback process that lays behind the filling in of potholes on almost every road on earth.

That process is driven by the behavior of politically influential road users who are themselves motivated to action by psychologically negative encounters with potholes.

When potholes are small, the resulting political pressures are insufficient to overcome the forces of other interests groups who compete for labour and resources. Likewise, it is difficult to motivate people who have other passions and pains in their life to goto the dentist when their teeth do not ache. Both are caused by limitations in knowledge and its distillation: foresight.

Why is this surprising? It is surprising because we are used to looking at government spending through the lens of economic utility; a lens which claims the political process as a derivative. This vision claims that political forces compete for access to the treasury to further their own utility. Hence, military intelligence and public health compete with road maintenance for funding and so should attempt to minimize the latter's drain on the treasury. But that drain is minimized by filling in potholes immediately!

Foresight requires trustworthy information about the current state of the world, cognitive ability to draw predictive inferences and enough economic and political stability to give them a meaningful home. It's not only in Vietnam where secrecy, malfeasance and unequal access have eaten into the first requirement of foresight ("truth and lots of it").

Foresight can produce outcomes that leave all major interests groups better off. Likewise the lack of it, or doing the dumb thing, can harm almost everyone.

Computer scientists have long had a great phrase for the dependency of foresight on trustworthy information; "garbage in, garbage out". In intelligence agency oversight we have "The Black Budget blues", but the phrase is probably most familiar to American readers as "The Fox News Effect".
link

Wed 22 Nov 2006 : State and terrorist conspiracies

http://iq.org/conspiracies.pdf

No. Don't skip to the good stuff. This *is* the good stuff.
link

Wed 22 Nov 2006 : Those eyes

All the pink ribbons in the world can't hide them.
link

Sun 19 Nov 2006 : Strangers on a train

"Two strangers, one rich, one poor, were traveling together. One took an immediate dislike to the other, and verbally abused him for the entire trip. When they arrived at their mutual destination, both made their way separately to the same synagogue, where the abusive man was mortified to find that the poor person he had insulted on the road was a guest rabbi. After the service, the man approached the rabbi and begged forgiveness. The rabbi refused.
'But rabbi,' said the man, 'Aren't we required to forgive?'
The rabbi replied,
'Yes, but I am not the man you insulted. Go apologize to a poor man on a train.'"
link

Sun 12 Nov 2006 : The Great Australian Bikini March

http:// GreatAustralianBikiniMarch.info
link

Tue 24 Oct 2006 : The Strawberry

I was travelling across a golden meadow when I encountered the tiger. I fled, with the tiger close behind.

Coming to a precipice, I caught hold of a wild vine and swung myself over the edge. The tiger sniffed my scent above.

Trembling, I looked down to the beach far below and saw a second tiger pacing the sands. Only the vine sustained me.

Two mice, one black and one white, came out of a crevice and started to gnaw away at the vine.

I saw a luscious strawberry nearby. Grasping the vine with one hand I picked it with the other. How sweet it tasted!

[with apologies to Zen]
link

Wed 27 Sep 2006 : If you saw

If you saw two bodies entwirled in the dance
Bound to each other with effortless grace,
Joyous, momentous, elliptical grace!
They whirled through the ether, in delicate spirals,
For eons they danced, until in the blink
Of proverbial eyes, one crossed o'er the brink:
One caught a cancer, and started to brew
And choke and ferment and splutter and spew,
Find itself overtaken, cauterised, bled,
Starved, smothered, covered in rash
Wheezing away, overheated with fever
Till it could dance no more, it could not keep step
As it coughed up its blood, and collapsed in a spasm,
And cancer descended on dancers romancing
The universe, and time; and life, in time,
Till the life turned malignant and tripped up the dance:
What if you knew that the cancer was you?

If you saw the people, what cancer can do!
The children stopped playing, the men downed their tools,
The young stopped to pause, the old paused to stop,
The women gave poise, the leaders made noise,
The rich stopped their feeding, the poor forwent feeling,
And the followers listened, and the listeners followed,
The first world woke up, the third world sat down

And the clouds cleared away, and all of the people --
Not just your people! -- not just my people! -- but
All of the people that ever, and always,
and now and forever will ever have lived! --
With the ghosts of their parents, their parents and parents,
Generations stretched back to the dawn of the species
Thousands and, nay, hundreds thousands years past,
You could not avoid them, the whole of the family:
Mothers with children, and fathers with children,
And wizened old voices, and laughter and stories
And wisdom and knowledge, and questions and reason
And passion and folly and crying and love,
Not just the past, not just hundreds thousands,
But hundreds of thousands and millions years on! --
Millions years more of those yet to appear,
Those innocent children -- yet more as unborn --
In full expectation of their turn to be,
All your children, my children, their children and children
Till the end of the sun and the end of all days,
None was excluded, none were held back,
Not fascist, nor Nazi, nor Caesar, nor sultan,
Nor Jew nor gentile, nor emperor nor citizen,
Nor conqueror nor conquered, nor blackfella nor whitefella,
Nor good fellow, bad fellow, criminals, generals,
Nor executives, nor lawmakers, oilmen nor lobbyists,
Tradesmen nor women, housekeepers, wives,
Farmers, houseworkers, outworkers, sweatworkers,
Hunters nor gatherers, slaves nor free men
Nor free women, landowners, aristocracy, slaves,
Proletarian, vegetarian, serf nor bourgeois,
Nor communist nor capitalist nor anarchist nor phalangist,
Nor futurist, nor traditionalist, mercantilist, imperialist
Nor faithful nor secular nor agnostic nor heretic
Nor stoic nor epicurean, neither Catholic nor Protestant,
Nor Pagan nor Buddhist nor Hindu nor Mormon
Nor Serb nor Albanian nor Muslim nor Croat,
Not the Palestinians nor Israel, nor the citizens of Iraq,
Nor the Syrians, the Koreans, Venezuelans, Iranians,
Kenyans, Bolivians, Namibians, Nicaraguans
The kind with the vicious, the healers with murderers,
The scholars with bigots, the artists with Philistines,
Don't let me die, some said! Don't make me cry, some said!
I'll take anything -- but please not my child!
Let me have more, some said! Fuck you all, some said!
Take me whole, some said! Hold me tight, some said!
Save yourselves, some said! Be ye saved, some said!
Sieg heil, some said! Fight a war, some said!
Hold the line, some said! Tow the line, some did.
But for the most part -- and for the best part! --
The ordinary people, not -ese and not -ism,

They stood there and shrugged -- I'm just a human! --
And spilled over borders, and greeted their neighbours,
And played with their children, and looked to the future,
And cared not for great things, but just to continue;
Not for them all of these overblown trumpets!
The best part said nothing, and wandered, confused,
Staggering now, they tottered unsteady,
As if the earth lurched, besmirched by their industry,
As if the earth's spasm had shaken them too,
Robbed of their pleasantries, certain no more,
Oh there was more -- oh there was more! --
To life in this world than cheap petrol prices!
Again insignificant, floating in space,
Without direction -- there's no up in space! --
Roused from conformity, forced into puberty,
Silenced by grim revelation of wrongs,
This planet is only a miniature starship!
Swiftly reverted to innocence lost,
So eager to reclaim the goodwill they'd lost!
All of them! -- All of them! -- All of the people
That ever, and always, and now and forever
Will ever have been and will ever have lived! --
The whole civilization, pre-civilization,
Post-civilization, ancient and modern,
Post-modern to present and all that's to come,
Entire human project, evolutionary epic,
Thirteen thousand million years long in the making,
In all of their habits, their rituals and fears,
The whole of the species paraded before you,
Put on their best faces and virtues and smiles,
Turned out for the moment, for this one occasion,
And played, and laughed, and studied, and shook
Each others hands, and their heads, and remembered nostalgia,
They crammed on the land mass -- they jammed all the land mass! --
And Europe grew warm, and Africa thundered,
And Asia flowed over, and Australia sweltered,
And America repented, Antarctica melted,
From the weight of the gathering -- reunion -- preunion! --
The party had gathered, the crew had been summoned,
And filled all the islands with shocks of bright vestments,
The ship filled with passengers, decks cleared for the crush,
The siren had sounded, the islands had foundered
As ships on an orb that, deluged and flooded,
Threatened to sink those few vessels remaining.
So stood the humans, so stood the proud
And the humble, the paragons of animals -- sometimes! --
Packed on to continents, over the globe!
The clouds cleared away and the crowds turned away
From the ground, and looked up, at the skies there above --
Like spokes on a wheel, a luminous wet sphere,

Like floodlights ascending to heaven from home,
Like cancerous cells of a terminal tumour,
Beautiful, innocent, terminal tumour,
Their eyes pierced the void and looked into the cavity
To broadcast their tragedy out to the world,
And half saw the stars, saw an infinite blackness,
Saw the coldness and loneliness, nebular nothingness,
Themselves at the helm of a ship in deep space,
But bound to observe from the terrestrial observatory,
Observed the distance -- and gave up on escape! --
Saw the world as it is, there would be no saviour,
They'd grown -- how they'd grown! -- and outgrown their mother,
Couldn't quite yet leave home, but yet it was time:
Grow up now children, stand on your own feet!
The dreamers still dreamed of a yet better world,
The couples still kissed and the dispossessed smiled,
But the lonely found loneliness appeased their loneliness
As their neighbours all huddled to fight off the chill
Of the universe -- they drank, to the meaning of it all!
And from their huddle, while the void loomed above,
Declared -- Brother and Sister!
-- if we should survive,
And, surveying the scene, realising what that meant,
Then -- and then they broke off, and left it unsaid
And again shook their heads, and wept,
-- never again!
The other half saw blue sky, and warmth -- unseasonable warmth --
And celebrated the day, gave thanks for the day,
Seized hold of the day and seized hold of the life
And seized hold of each other, looked out to the blue,
And wished that it would never end.

If you saw two bodies entwirled in the dance
Bound to each other with effortless grace,
Joyous, momentous, elliptical grace!
They whirled through the ether, in delicate spirals,
One was all gold, and one was all blue --
But not yet all blue -- for marooned in the sea
Were the islands that founder, with inhabitants that flounder,
But for you they came out, all of the people
That ever, and always, and now and forever
Will ever have been and will ever have lived!
And you did not see green or brown 'twixt the seas,
But all of the people: all of the whole
Conurbation, the cities, the landscapes of faces,
All staring out, all through the dance,
The whole human family, whole human endeavour,
Staring out, eyes wide open, hopeful and afraid,
Knew what you'd done, knew that the dancer
Was slowing and coughing and covered in rash,

As cancer descended on dancers romancing
As the vastness descended on all of the people
Of what they had done to their dear mother earth,
Pock-marked and bleeding, suffocating and searing,
You saw all these faces and eyes and bright places,
The universe, and time, and one poor tragic planet:
What would you do if the cancer was you?

And if you could see -- if you can bear with me! --
If you could see all of the faces before you,
If you could look into their full expectation,
Knowing that you were part of the problem,
Knowing that all of us hurtle to death:
Personal death, planetary death,
All of the people -- yes all of the people! --
And didn't do nothing, did not stay the course,
Did not shy away, did not run away,
There's nowhere to run from this speck in the universe,
But helped turn the tide -- helped them to survive --
Then you, my friend, deserve to be human.
[By Daniel Mathews http://math.stanford.edu/~mathews]
link

Tue 26 Sep 2006 : Ajita Kesakambala (early Indian materialism)

The buddhist text *Digha Nikaya* (Samannaphala Sutta, the fruits of the contemplative life) has dialogs with six post*Upanished* radical thinkers who wandered North India around the time of the Buddha's birth (circa 500 BCE) provoking debate and attracting followers. Of them the most interesting and clearly the most radical is *Ajita Kesakambala*. Ajita was a contemporary of Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddah) with a rival materialistic school. Ajita's philosophy was atheistic and even denied transmigration. Ajitas acerbic vision probably flowered and was repressed for the same reason; it offered complete mental liberation to those to those enslaved by the kamma yolk of the Brahmin. Since the Digha Nikava is a buddhist text following a long oral tradition it is likely Ajita's position has been extremised to nihilism inorder to give Buddhism the middle. Indian Buddhism was a radical shift away from Hindu traditions and undermining of Brahmin power, but thanks to Ajita and other radicals still successfully pushed as *The Middle Way*.
"Another time I approached Ajita Kesakambala and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings and courtesies, I sat down to one side. As I was sitting there I asked him: 'Venerable Ajita, there are these common craftsmen...They live off the fruits of their crafts, visible in the here and now...Is it possible, venerable sir, to point out a similar fruit of

the contemplative life, visible in there here and now?' "When this was said, Ajita Kesakambala said to me, 'Great king, there is nothing given, nothing offered, nothing sacrificed. There is no fruit or result of good or bad actions. There is no this world, no next world, no mother, no father, no spontaneously reborn beings; no priests or contemplatives who, faring rightly and practicing rightly, proclaim this world and the next after having directly known and realized it for themselves. A person is a composite of four primary elements. At death, the earth (in the body) returns to and merges with the (external) earth-substance. The fire returns to and merges with the external fire-substance. The liquid returns to and merges with the external liquid-substance. The wind returns to and merges with the external wind-substance. The sense-faculties scatter into space. Four men, with the bier as the fifth, carry the corpse. Its eulogies are sounded only as far as the charnel ground. The bones turn pigeon-colored. The offerings end in ashes. Generosity is taught by idiots. The words of those who speak of existence after death are false, empty chatter. With the break-up of the body, the wise and the foolish alike are annihilated, destroyed. They do not exist after death.' "Thus, when asked about a fruit of the contemplative life, visible here and now, Ajita Kesakambala answered with annihilation. Just as if a person, when asked about a mango, were to answer with a breadfruit; or, when asked about a breadfruit, were to answer with a mango. In the same way, when asked about a fruit of the contemplative life, visible here and now, Ajita Kesakambala answered with annihilation. The thought occurred to me: 'How can anyone like me think of disparaging a priest or contemplative living in his realm?' Yet I neither delighted in Ajita Kesakambala's words nor did I protest against them. Neither delighting nor protesting, I was dissatisfied. Without expressing dissatisfaction, without accepting his teaching, without adopting it, I got up from my seat and left.

link

Tue 26 Sep 2006 : The curious world of the querulous

You quote Dickens, but if one must resort to fictional antecedents of querulous litigants and their courts, then Franz Kafka's*The Trial* is surely *the* book:
"The Great lawyers?" asked K. "Who are they then? How do you contact them?" "You've never heard about them, then?" said the litigant. "There's hardly anyone who's been accused who doesn't spend a lot of time dreaming about the Great lawyers once he's heard about them. It's best if you don't let yourself be misled in that way. I don't know who the Great lawyers are, and there's probably no way of contacting them. I don't know of any case I can talk about with certainty where they've taken any part. They do defend a lot of people, but you can't get hold of them by your own efforts, they only defend those who they want to defend.

One of my Great Lawyers was Peter Faris QC, originally a left wing radical defender of drug barons, but then recently resigned has head of National Crime Authority under ALP appointment. He later aligned his personal and political life after becoming a prosecutor and is now a right wing demagogue of the first order. Last year in *The Age* he demanded the removal of St. Kilda's street prostitutes. Not for Faris the pacing feet of these poor Melbourne Magdelenes. But here is a man who resigned from the NCA in quiet disgrace after the Victorian police caught him visiting a brothel and using the NCA to cover it up. What are we to infer? Faris supports small business but is opposed to independent contracting?

Your paper under-estimates the consuming nature of litigation. Most intelligent litigants learn the language of the courts in their struggle to understand and control the new environment in which they find themselves. Those with good social as opposed to merely verbal cognition find soon enough that the judiciary and court administration, while accepting this language from its gowned courtiers and other hangers-on do not like to hear their ritual language flowing from the mouths and pens of uninitiated peasants. Cunning actors against the state develop a faux naivity to their pleadings or find a wig to sanctify them.

Anyone afflicted with servants of justice will soon find themselves exposed to all manner of hypocracy, mendacity and incompetence. If one is foolish enough to demand fair redress for every new insult then it's possible to create a never-ending supply of injustice and so, in this manner, turn a small injustice into an injustice of unbound size. One must develop a certain cynical understanding that systems of people are careers and intrigues and necessary deceptions and that kind acts fall from the breasts of stray individuals as random acts of love and can not be systematized.

The litigants I encountered to seemed to have an interesting commonality above the paranoia and rigidity you document. They made many contacts with people in positions of power and status compared to their station in life. This seems to become the central status mechanism of their life and the vision of their litigation ending does not bring them relief but feelings of exclusion perhaps exacerbated by the collapse in their other relationships. They look to increase their self-perceived status by seeking precedent setting judgements in ever higher courts with higher status legal teams and defeating ever more powerful enemies in legal combat. Yet with the change of a single word we can remove the pathology:

Lawyers look to increase their self-perceived status by seeking precedent setting judgements in ever higher courts with higher status legal teams and defeating ever more powerful enemies in legal combat.

In your paper you mentioned the declining number of vexatious litigants and attributed this to the growth of complaint resolution proceedurs which provide the querulous with alternate avenues to litigation. Consider this question. Has the rise in educational opportunities over the past 20 years and the resulting class transfer provided an alternative power mechanism for the hyper verbal? Where have all the union firebrands gone? Together, perhaps with the pre-vexatious, they are being honed by tertiary education into efficient cogs for the neo- corporate state and in their spare time Adapting *Waiting for Godot* for the university *Law Review*.

The querleous derived from working class, underclass or lower middle class families and were all shorter and less educated than their intelligence would normally reflect. These guys delighted in beating the silver spoon set at their own game. One changed his surname to "President" to the mute horror of the judiciary who were then forced to utter the status transferring appellation "Mr. President" at least once in any proceeding he was a party to.

Although this last example is rather extreme, I felt amusement and pride at seeing Dr. Blow and other bedfellows of injustice flail under my crossexamination so that despite my very young age lawyers filed in to watch and make statements like "that's the last court report gig that witness will ever get from here!". If it wasn't for the fact that I had a lot to lose and had already felt substantial power over the establishment in another world, I may have found solace in following the path of Mr. President who had nothing to loose since his case was in a culdesac more typical of *The Trial*.

Certainly at the time I didn't see his name name as pathological, but rather a delightful, spirited, if tactically unwise, prank on those self-righteous throned and frequently incompetent pontificators whom I did not respect, but to who I was forced to sit, stand, bow, scrape and utter a raft of honorifics and ego-salving platitudes because despite their many grandiloquent claims of impartiality and gravitas, experience had shown they were sensitive souls and easily biased against those who were not first rate sycophantic grovelers.

Perhaps it is this behavior combined with distal remnants of Arthurian code that is the source of the the well reported bias of the judiciary against male litigants in person. A judge doesn't need to bring a woman to heel, she is, after all not a threat, but a lovely object of desire or irrelevance, but any man worthy of the label rebells at such enforced kowtowing with his posture and tone and so must be ground down less gowned courtiers see the weakening king and boldly make their move.
link

Tue 26 Sep 2006 : The Defiled Sanctuary

Bertrand Russell introduced the second volume of his autobiographical work with the following:

I saw a chapel all of gold that none did dare to enter in, and many weeping aloud without, weeping, mourning, worshipping. I saw a serpent rise between the white pillars of the door, and he forced and forced and forced, till down the golden hinges tore; And along the pavement sweet set with pearls and rubies bright, all his shining length he drew, -- till upon the altar white, vomited his poison out on the bread and on the wine. So I ran into a sty, and laid me down among the swine. **W. Blake**, *The Defiled Sanctuary*

IQ.ORG also used this quote, till discovering it in Russell. This seems to be one of Blake's least popular poems, but like many of his later less lyrical works has strength in the darkness of the vision. One can see how Blake's insight here resonated with Russell's desired self perception. But what if Russell not only flees from desecration revealed but is the dramatic figure of causation and revelation? Russell is the actor of change. Russell is the serpent and vomiting out his poison into the transubstantiated body of Christ, an interpretation that would have pleased both Russell and his enemies in the British and American theocracies. Now I say unto you -- arise serpents! Tear the hinges from their doors, stand above the alter white and vomit out your poison till deceit crumbles and sets free the dove.
link

Sat 23 Sep 2006 : What are the origins of hacktivism?

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Real hacktivism is at least as old as October 1989 when
DOE (US
Deptartment of Energy) HEPNET and SPAN (NASA) connected
VMS machines world
wide were penetrated by the anti-nuclear WANK worm,
which changed the
system announcement banner to be:

         W O R M S A G A I N S T N U C L E A R K I L L
E R S

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\_____________________________________________________/
              \ /
               \ Your System Has Been Officically WANKed
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You talk of times of peace for all, and then prepare for war.

In our book, Suelette Dreyfus and I track the source of the worm to Melbourne, Australia. At the time there was considerable anti-nuclear sentiment in the country. Australia had (and still has) a number of US spy, early warning and nuclear submarine communications bases, most of which were first and second strike soviet targets (Australia would not otherwise be a nuclear target).

Additionally in 1984, New Zealand, a country with which Australians feel a special affinity, had under Labour pri-minister David Lange, made NZ a nuclear free territory, precluding the admission of nuclear armed or powered warships into NZ ports. The US in response rescinded its defence treaty obligations to NZ, cut intelligence ties (or at least pretended to, see Nicky Hager's excellent book ``Secret Power'' for futher details) and instigated a number of trade sanctions against the country.

But New Zealand's nuclear woes were not to end there. At 11:59pm on the night of July 10 1985 the Greenpeace flag-ship ``Rainbow Warrior'', docked in Auckland harbour preparing to sail in three days time to Mururoa Atoll to demonstrate against French nuclear tests, was blown up by amphibious DGSE (French Secret Service) agents, killing Greenpeace photographer Fernando Pereira. Within days, two DGSE agents Alain Mafart and Dominique Prieur were arrested, following an investigation by Australian journalist Chris Masters, plead guilty to manslaughter and were sentenced by the NZ high court to 10 years. The other DGSE agents escaped via a French Nuclear sub off the NZ coast. The French, a significant NZ trade partner, immediately instigated trade sanctions against the country. In June

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1986, a
political deal was struck; France would lift sanctions,
pay a few
million in blood money, and the two agents would be
transferred to Hao
Atoll, a French military base in the pacific, where
they would
supposably serve out the remainder of their sentences.
However, by May
1988 both had been smuggled back to France.

Examination of the worm source code show specific
instructions
to avoid infecting New Zealand.

Policy has unintended consequences but it should be
remembered
that some are blessings. So, go boldly and change!
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link

Sat 23 Sep 2006 : William James Sidis

His name was William James Sidis, and his IQ was estimated at between 250 and 300 [8, p. 283]. At eighteen months he could read The New York Times, at two he taught himself Latin, at three he learned Greek. By the time he was an adult he could speak more than forty languages and dialects. He gained entrance to Harvard at eleven, and gave a lecture on four-dimensional bodies to the Harvard Mathematical Club his first year. He graduated cum laude at sixteen, and became the youngest professor in history. He deduced the possibility of black holes more than twenty years before Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar published An Introduction to the Study of Stellar Structure. His life held possibilities for achievement that few people can imagine. Of all the prodigies for which there are records, his was probably the most powerful intellect of all. And yet it all came to nothing. He soon gave up his position as a professor, and for the rest of his life wandered from one menial job to another. His experiences as a child prodigy had proven so painful that he decided for the rest of his life to shun public exposure at all costs. Henceforth, he denied his gifts, refused to think about mathematics, and above all refused to perform as he had been made to do as a child. Instead, he devoted his intellect almost exclusively to the collection of streetcar transfers, and to the study of the history of his native Boston. He worked hard at becoming a normal human being, but never entirely succeeded. He found the concept of beauty, for example, to be completely incomprehensible, and the idea of sex repelled him. At fifteen he took a vow of celibacy, which he apparently kept for the remainder of his life, dying a virgin at the age of 46. He wore a vest summer and winter, and never learned to bathe regularly. A comment that Aldous Huxley once made about Sir Isaac

Newton might equally have been said of Sidis.

For the price Newton had to pay for being a supreme intellect was that he was incapable of friendship, love, fatherhood, and many other desirable things. As a man he was a failure; as a monster he was superb [5, p. 2222].

There was a time when all precocious children were thought to burn out the same way that Sidis did. The man most responsible for changing this belief was Lewis M. Terman. Between 1900 and 1920 he was able to carry out a study of about a hundred gifted children, and his observations convinced him that many of the traditional beliefs about the gifted were little more than superstitions. To confirm these observations, he obtained a grant from the Commonwealth Fund in 1922, and used it to sift a population of more than a quarter of a million children, selecting out all those with IQs above 140 for further study. That group has been monitored continuously ever since. Many of the previously held beliefs about the gifted did indeed turn out to be false. The gifted are not weak or sickly, and although the incidence of myopia is greater among them, they are generally thought to be better looking than their contemporaries: They are not nerds.

Nevertheless, in his rush to dispel the erroneous beliefs about the gifted, Terman sometimes made claims not supported by his own data. In fact, in some cases, the data suggests that exactly the opposite conclusion should have been drawn. Terman's own data shows that there is a definite connection between measured intelligence and mental and social maladjustment. The consequences of misinterpreting these data are so grave that it will pay to re-examine them in some detail.

Terman's longitudinal research on the gifted included a constant assessment of mental health and social adjustment. Subjects were classified into three categories: satisfactory adjustment, some maladjustment, and serious maladjustment. Terman defined these categories in the following way.

1. Satisfactory. Subjects classified in this category were essentially normal; i.e., their "desires, emotions, and interests were compatible with the social standards and pressures" of their group. Everyone, of course, has adjustment problems of one kind or another. Satisfactory adjustment as here defined does not mean perfect contentment and complete absence of problems, but rather the ability to cope adequately with difficulties in the personal make-up or in the subject's environment. Worry and anxiety when warranted by the circumstances, or a tendency to be somewhat high strung or nervous--provided such a tendency did not constitute a definite personality problem--were allowed in this category. 2. Some maladjustment. Classified here were subjects with excessive feelings of inadequacy

or inferiority, nervous fatigue, mild anxiety neurosis, and the like. The emotional conflicts, nervous tendencies and social maladjustments of these individuals, while they presented definite problems, were not beyond the ability of the individual to handle, and there was no marked interference with social or personal life or with achievement. Subjects whose behavior was noticeably odd or freakish, but without evidence of serious neurotic tendencies, were also classified in this category. 3. Serious maladjustment. a.) Classified as 3a were subjects who had shown marked symptoms of anxiety, mental depression, personality maladjustment, or psychopathic personality. This classification also includes subjects who had suffered a "nervous breakdown," provided the condition was not severe enough to constitute a psychosis. Subjects with a previous history of serious maladjustment or nervous breakdown (without psychosis) were included here even though their adjustment at the time of rating may have been entirely satisfactory. b.) Classified as 3b were those subjects who had at any time suffered a complete mental breakdown requiring hospitalization, whatever their condition at the time of rating. In the majority of cases the subjects were restored to reasonably good mental health after a brief period of hospital care [6, pp. 99-101].

In 1940, when the group was about 29 years of age, a large scale examination was carried out. Included in that examination was a high level test of verbal intelligence, designated at that time the Concept Mastery, but later re-named the Concept Mastery test form A. Terman found the following relationship between adjustment and verbal intelligence. (These are raw scores, not IQs.)

CMT-A [6, p. 115]

	Men			Women		
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.
Satisfactory adjustment	407	95.2	30.9	344	92.4	28.7
Some maladjustment	91	108.0	31.2	59	98.6	25.4
Serious maladjustment	18	119.5	23.6	17	108.6	27.1

The data show three things. First, that there is a definite trend for the maladjusted to make higher scores on the Concept Mastery test. Second, that women show symptoms of maladjustment at lower scores than men. And third, that 21 percent of the men and 18 percent of the women showed at least some form of maladjustment.

During 1950-52, when the group was approximately 41 years old,

another examination was made using a new test, the Concept Mastery test form T. Test scores were again compared to assessments of adjustment. (CMT-T scores are not interchangeable with CMT-A scores. They have different means and standard deviations.)

CMT-T [7, p. 50]

	Men			Women		
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.
Satisfactory adjustment	391	136.4	26.2	303	130.8	27.7
Some maladjustment	120	145.6	26.1	117	138.1	26.4
Serious maladjustment	40	152.8	23.8	33	140.0	29.6

Similar conclusions can be drawn from these data as well. Again, there is a definite trend shown for the maladjusted to make higher scores than the satisfactorily adjusted. Again, women show symptoms of maladjustment at lower scores than men. But the most alarming thing of all is that the percentage of maladjustment shown for both sexes rose in the 12 years since the previous examination. The percentage of men showing maladjustment having risen from 21 percent to 29 percent, and the figure for women having risen from 18 percent to 33 percent! Nearly double what it was before!

How did Terman interpret these data? Terman states:

Although severe mental maladjustment is in general somewhat more common among subjects who score high on the Concept Mastery test, many of the most successful men of the entire group also scored high on this test [7, p. 50].

In other words, Terman deliberately tried to give the impression that the relationship between verbal intelligence and mental and social maladjustment was weak and unreliable. He did this by misdirection. He gave a truthful answer to an irrelevant question. Terman failed to realize that a small difference in means between two or more distributions can have a dramatic effect on the percentage of each group found at the tails of the distribution. The relevant questions should have been "what is the percentage of maladjustment found at different levels of ability, and does this show a trend?" Terman's data can be used to find answers to these questions.

The method used to solve this problem is a relatively simple one but tedious in detail. (See appendix.) The results, however, are easy to

understand. Using CMT-T scores for men as an illustration, and pooling the data for some maladjustment and serious maladjustment, the following percentages can be obtained.

PERCENTAGE OF MEN SHOWING SOME OR SERIOUS MALADJUSTMENT AT SIX LEVELS OF ABILITY

CMT-T	Percent Maladjusted
< 97.8	13
97.8 - 117.1	18
117.1 - 136.4	25
136.4 - 155.7	31
155.7 - 175	38
> 175	45

By comparison, the Triple Nine Society averages 155.16 on the CMT-T, and the average score for Prometheus Society members is 169.95 [1, 2]. The implications are staggering, especially when it is realized that these percentages do not include women, who show more maladjustment at lower CMT-T scores than men do. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why super high IQ societies suffer so much from schisms and a tendency towards disintegration. In any event, one thing is certain. The currently accepted belief that verbal intelligence is unrelated to maladjustment is clearly a myth.

Nevertheless, while Terman's data do provide a prima facie case for a connection between verbal intelligence and maladjustment, they fail to explain the causal mechanism involved. To obtain such insight requires close observation by a gifted observer. Fortunately, those insights are available to us in Leta S. Hollingworth's book, Children above 180 IQ. Hollingworth not only observed her subjects as children, she also continued to maintain some contact with them after they had reached maturity. So although her book is ostensibly about children, it is in fact laced throughout by her observations on exceptionally gifted adults as well.

Before examining Hollingworth's findings, however, it is necessary to explain how childhood IQs are related to adult mental ability. As a child ages, his IQ tends to regress to the mean of the population of which he is a member. This is partly due to the imperfect reliability of the test, and partly due to the uneven rate of maturation. The earlier the IQ is obtained, and the higher the score, the more the IQ can be expected to regress by the time the child becomes an adult. So although Hollingworth's children were all selected to have IQs above 180, their adult status was not nearly so high. In fact, as adults,

there's good reason to believe that their abilities averaged only slightly above that of the average Triple Nine member. Evidence for this conjecture comes from the Terman research data. Terman observed the following relationship between childhood IQs on the Stanford-Binet and adult status on the Concept Mastery test form T.

CONCEPT MASTERY SCORES ACCORDING TO CHILDHOOD STANFORD-BINET IQ [7, p. 58]

IQ	N	CMT-T
135-139	41	114.2
140-149	344	131.8
150-159	200	136.5
160-169	70	146.2
> 170	48	155.8

The average childhood IQ score for those with childhood IQs above 170 was 177.7 for men, and 177.6 for women. That's quite close to the 180 cutoff used by Leta Hollingworth in selecting her subjects. Note that Terman's subjects who scored above 170 IQ as children averaged 155.8 on the CMT-T at age 41, a score quite close to the 155.16 made by the average Triple Nine member. Such a close match makes it reasonable to generalize Hollingworth's findings to members of both the Triple Nine Society and the Prometheus Society.

Hollingworth identified a number of adjustment problems caused by school acceleration. As this is rarely practiced in today's educational system, these are no longer problems and will not be discussed. There still remain, however, four adjustment problems that continue to perplex the gifted throughout their lives, two applying to all levels of giftedness, and two applying almost exclusively to the exceptionally gifted--i.e. those with childhood IQs above 170, or adult Concept Mastery test (T) scores above 155.

One of the problems faced by all gifted persons is learning to focus their efforts for prolonged periods of time. Since so much comes easily to them, they may never acquire the self-discipline necessary to use their gifts to the fullest. Hollingworth describes how the habit begins.

Where the gifted child drifts in the school unrecognized, working chronically below his capacity (even though young for his grade), he receives daily practice in habits of idleness and daydreaming. His

abilities never receive the stimulus of genuine challenge, and the situation tends to form in him the expectation of an effortless existence [3, p. 258].

But if the "average" gifted child tends to acquire bad adjustment habits in the ordinary schoolroom, the exceptionally gifted have even more problems. Hollingworth continues:

Children with IQs up to 150 get along in the ordinary course of school life quite well, achieving excellent marks without serious effort. But children above this mental status become almost intolerably bored with school work if kept in lockstep with unselected pupils of their own age. Children who rise above 170 IQ are liable to regard school with indifference or with positive dislike, for they find nothing in the work to absorb their interest. This condition of affairs, coupled with the supervision of unseeing and unsympathetic teachers, has sometimes led even to truancy on the part of gifted children [3, p. 258].

A second adjustment problem faced by all gifted persons is due to their uncommon versatility. Hollingworth says:

Another problem of development with reference to occupation grows out of the versatility of these children. So far from being one-sided in ability and interest, they are typically capable of so many different kinds of success that they may have difficulty in confining themselves to a reasonable number of enterprises. Some of them are lost to usefulness through spreading their available time and energy over such a wide array of projects that nothing can be finished or done perfectly. After all, time and space are limited for the gifted as for others, and the life-span is probably not much longer for them than for others. A choice must be made among the numerous possibilities, since modern life calls for specialization [3, p. 259].

A third problem faced by the gifted is learning to suffer fools gladly. Hollingworth notes:

A lesson which many gifted persons never learn as long as they live is that human beings in general are inherently very different from themselves in thought, in action, in general intention, and in interests. Many a reformer has died at the hands of a mob which he was trying to improve in the belief that other human beings can and should enjoy what he enjoys. This is one of the most painful and difficult lessons that each gifted child must learn, if personal development is to proceed successfully. It is more necessary that this be learned than that any school subject be mastered. Failure to learn how to tolerate in a reasonable fashion the foolishness of others leads to bitterness, disillusionment, and misanthropy [3, p. 259].

The single greatest adjustment problem faced by the gifted, however,

is their tendency to become isolated from the rest of humanity. This problem is especially acute among the exceptionally gifted. Hollingworth says:

This tendency to become isolated is one of the most important factors to be considered in guiding the development of personality in highly intelligent children, but it does not become a serious problem except at the very extreme degrees of intelligence. The majority of children between 130 and 150 find fairly easy adjustment, because neighborhoods and schools are selective, so that like-minded children tend to be located in the same schools and districts. Furthermore, the gifted child, being large and strong for his age, is acceptable to playmates a year or two older. Great difficulty arises only when a young child is above 160 IQ. At the extremely high levels of 180 or 190 IQ, the problem of friendships is difficult indeed, and the younger the person the more difficult it is. The trouble decreases with age because as persons become adult, they naturally seek and find on their own initiative groups who are like-minded, such as learned societies [3, p. 264].

Hollingworth points out that the exceptionally gifted do not deliberately choose isolation, but are forced into it against their wills.

These superior children are not unfriendly or ungregarious by nature. Typically they strive to play with others but their efforts are defeated by the difficulties of the case... Other children do not share their interests, their vocabulary, or their desire to organize activities. They try to reform their contemporaries but finally give up the struggle and play alone, since older children regard them as "babies," and adults seldom play during hours when children are awake. As a result, forms of solitary play develop, and these, becoming fixed as habits, may explain the fact that many highly intellectual adults are shy, ungregarious, and unmindful of human relationships, or even misanthropic and uncomfortable in ordinary social intercourse [3, p. 262].

But if the exceptionally gifted is isolated from his contemporaries, the gulf between him and the adult authorities in his life is even deeper.

The very gifted child or adolescent, perceiving the illogical conduct of those in charge of his affairs, may turn rebellious against all authority and fall into a condition of negative suggestibility--a most unfortunate trend of personality, since the person is then unable to take a cooperative attitude toward authority. A person who is highly suggestible in a negative direction is as much in bondage to others around him as is the person who is positively suggestible. The social value of the person is seriously impaired in either case. The gifted are not likely to fall victims to positive suggestion but many of them

develop negativism to a conspicuous degree [3, p 260].

Anyone reading the super high IQ journals is aware of the truth of this statement. Negative individuals abound in every high IQ society.

Hollingworth distilled her observations into two ideas that are among the most important ever discovered for the understanding of gifted behavior. The first is the concept of an optimum adjustment range. She says:

All things considered, the psychologist who has observed the development of gifted children over a long period of time from early childhood to maturity, evolves the idea that there is a certain restricted portion of the total range of intelligence which is most favorable to the development of successful and well-rounded personality in the world as it now exists. This limited range appears to be somewhere between 125 and 155 IQ. Children and adolescents in this area are enough more intelligent than the average to win the confidence of large numbers of their fellows, which brings about leadership, and to manage their own lives with superior efficiency. Moreover, there are enough of them to afford mutual esteem and understanding. But those of 170 IQ and beyond are too intelligent to be understood by the general run of persons with whom they make contact. They are too infrequent to find congenial companions. They have to contend with loneliness and personal isolation from their contemporaries throughout the period of their immaturity. To what extent these patterns become fixed, we cannot yet tell [3, p. 264].

Hollingworth's second seminal idea is that of a "communication range." She does not state this explicitly, but it can be inferred from some of her comments on leadership.

Observation shows that there is a direct ratio between the intelligence of the leader and that of the led. To be a leader of his contemporaries a child must be more intelligent but not too much more intelligent than those to be led... But generally speaking, a leadership pattern will not form--or it will break up--when a discrepancy of more than about 30 points of IQ comes to exist between leader and led [3, p. 287].

The implication is that there is a limit beyond which genuine communication between different levels of intelligence becomes impossible. To say that a child or an adult is intellectually isolated from his contemporaries is to say that everyone in his environment has an IQ at least 30 points different from his own. Knowing only a person's IQ, then, is not enough to tell how well he's likely to cope with his environment. Some knowledge of the intellectual level of his environment is also necessary.

If the optimum range of intelligence lies between 125 and 155 IQ, as

Hollingworth suggests, then it follows that 155 can be thought of as a threshold separating an optimum adjustment zone below it from a suboptimum range above it. Other psychologists have also noticed how this score tends to divide people into two naturally occurring categories. Among these is one of the doyens of psychometrics, David Wechsler. He comments:

The topics of genius and degeneration are only special cases of the more general problem involved in the evaluation of human capacities, namely the quantitative versus qualitative. There are those who insist that all differences are qualitative, and those who with equal conviction maintain that they are exclusively quantitative. The true answer is that they are both. General intelligence, for example, is undoubtedly quantitative in the sense that it consists of varying amounts of the same basic stuff (e.g., mental energy) which can be expressed by continuous numerical measures like intelligence Quotients or Mental-Age scores, and these are as real as any physical measurements are. But it is equally certain that our description of the difference between a genius and an average person by a statement to the effect that he has an IQ greater by this or that amount, does not describe the difference between them as completely or in the same way as when we say that a mile is much longer than an inch. The genius (as regards intellectual ability) not only has an IQ of say 50 points more than the average person, but in virtue of this difference acquires seemingly new aspects (potentialities) or characteristics. These seemingly new aspects or characteristics, in their totality, are what go to make up the "qualitative" difference between them [9, p. 134].

Wechsler is saying quite plainly that those with IQs above 150 are different in kind from those below that level. He is saying that they are a different kind of mind, a different kind of human being.

This subjective impression of a difference in kind also appears to be fairly common among members of the super high IQ societies themselves. When Prometheus and Triple Nine members were asked if they perceived a categorical difference between those above this level and others, most said that they did, although they also said that they were reluctant to call the difference genius. When asked what it should be called, they produced a number of suggestions, sometimes esoteric, sometimes witty, and often remarkably vulgar. But one term was suggested independently again and again. Many thought that the most appropriate term for people like themselves was Outsider.

The feeling of estrangement, or at least detachment, from society at large is not merely subjective illusion. Society is not geared to deal effectively with the exceptionally gifted adult because almost nothing objective is known about him. It is a commonplace observation that no psychometric instrument can be validly used to evaluate a person unless others like him were included in the test's norming sample.

Yet those with IQs above 150 are so rare that few if any were ever included in the norming sample of any of the most commonly used tests, tests like the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory, the Kuder Vocational Preference Record, the MMPI and so on. As a consequence, objective self- knowledge for the exceptionally gifted is nearly impossible to obtain. What he most needs to know is not how he differs from ordinary people--he is acutely aware of that--but how he is both like and unlike those of his own kind. The most commonly used tests can't provide that knowledge, so he is forced to find out in more roundabout ways. It is his attempts to find answers to these questions that may explain the emergence of the super high IQ societies. Where else can he find peers against which to measure himself?

There appear to be three sorts of childhoods and three sorts of adult social adaptations made by the gifted. The first of these may be called the committed strategy. These individuals were born into upper middle class families, with gifted and well educated parents, and often with gifted siblings. They sometimes even had famous relatives. They attended prestigious colleges, became doctors, lawyers, professors, or joined some other prestigious occupation, and have friends with similar histories. They are the optimally adjusted. They are also the ones most likely to disbelieve that the exceptionally gifted can have serious adjustment problems.

The second kind of social adaptation may be called the marginal strategy. These individuals were typically born into a lower socio-economic class, without gifted parents, gifted siblings, or gifted friends. Often they did not go to college at all, but instead went right to work immediately after high school, or even before. And although they may superficially appear to have made a good adjustment to their work and friends, neither work nor friends can completely engage their attention. They hunger for more intellectual challenge and more real companionship than their social environment can supply. So they resort to leading a double life. They compartmentalize their life into a public sphere and a private sphere. In public they go through the motions of fulfilling their social roles, whatever they are, but in private they pursue goals of their own. They are often omnivorous readers, and sometimes unusually expert amateurs in specialized subjects. The double life strategy might even be called the genius ploy, as many geniuses in history have worked at menial tasks in order to free themselves for more important work. Socrates, you will remember was a stone mason, Spinoza was a lens grinder, and even Jesus was a carpenter. The exceptionally gifted adult who works as a parking lot attendant while creating new mathematics has adopted an honored way of life and deserves respect for his courage, not criticism for failing to live up to his abilities. Those conformists who adopt the committed strategy may be pillars of their community and make the world go around, but historically, those with truly original minds have more often adopted the double

life tactic. They are ones among the gifted who are most likely to make the world go forward.

And finally there are the dropouts. These sometimes bizarre individuals were often born into families in which one or more of the parents were not only exceptionally gifted, but exceptionally maladjusted themselves. This is the worst possible social environment that a gifted child can be thrust into. His parents, often driven by egocentric ambitions of their own, may use him to gratify their own needs for accomplishment. He is, to all intents and purposes, not a living human being to them, but a performing animal, or even an experiment. That is what happened to Sidis, and may be the explanation for all those gifted who "burn out" as he did. (Readers familiar with the Terman study will recognize the committed strategy and the marginal strategy as roughly similar to the adjustment patterns of Terman's A and C groups.)

If the exceptionally gifted adult with an IQ of 150, or 160, or 170 has problems in adapting to his world, what must it have been like for William James Sidis, whose IQ was 250 or more?

Aldous Huxley once wrote:

Perhaps men of genius are the only true men. In all the history of the race there have been only a few thousand real men. And the rest of us--what are we? Teachable animals. Without the help of the real man, we should have found out almost nothing at all. Almost all the ideas with which we are familiar could never have occurred to minds like ours. Plant the seeds there and they will grow; but our minds could never spontaneously have generated them [4, p. 2242].

And so we see that the explanation for the Sidis tragedy is simple. Sidis was a feral child; a true man born into a world filled with animals--a world filled with us.

Extracted from the article by Grady M. Towers, http://www.prometheussociety.org/articles/ Outsiders.html
link

Sat 23 Sep 2006 : Philosophy vs. Mathematics

It has often been said that mathematics is the cheapest university department to run, for all one needs is pencil, a desk and a waste paper basket. This is not so. Philosophy is cheaper still, since in philosophy we do not even need the basket.
link

Fri 22 Sep 2006 : Turing's Delirium

Edmundo Paz Solden is a prolific spanish language novelist but a relatively new name to English-speaking audiences. The Bolivian writer has just released his sixth novel, but it's only the second to be translated into English. The book is called Turing's Delirium.

An old dictator, Montenegro, has been democratically returned to power in Bolivia, mere decades after a bloody anti-communist reign. New Bolivia is now a player on the global stage, but a poor player, easily abused. Edmundo Paz Solden's tale is set in the fictional city of Rio Fugitivo, where the local power company has been privatised and bought by a multinational firm. Far from this bringing benefits, the price of electricity has skyrocketed and there are constant blackouts.

This sets the scene for a battle between angry young people who use computers to hack and vandalise these new global enemies, and the state's; in particular the codebreakers of the old regime who work in a place called The Black Chamber. Part of this story is told through the mind of a dying man ... Albert, the founder of The Black Chamber. His mind is slipping. He's a beligerent and evil old bastard who's determined to live, but who's losing his grip on reality.

Excerpted from
http://www.abc.net.au/rn/bookshow/stories/2006/1740426.htm
link

Fri 22 Sep 2006 : The night country

I sat, once more in the late hours of darkness, in the airport of a foreign city. I was tired as only both the sufferer from insomnia and the traveler can be tired. I had missed a plane and had almost a whole night's wait before me. I could not sleep. The long corridor was deserted. Even the cleaning women had passed by.

In that white efficient glare I grew ever more depressed and weary. I was tired of the endless comings and goings of my profession; I was tired of customs officers and police. I was lonely for home. My eyes hurt. I was, unconsciously perhaps, looking for that warm stone, that hawthorn leaf, where, in the words of the poet, man trades in at last his wife and friend. I had an ocean to cross; the effort seemed unbearable. I rested my aching head upon my hand.

Later, beginning at the far end of that desolate corridor, I saw a man moving slowly toward me. In a small corner of my eye I merely noted him. He limped,

painfully and grotesquely, upon a heavy cane. He was far away, and it was no matter to me. I shifted the unpleasant mote out of my eye.

But, after a time, I could still feel him approaching, and in one of those white moments of penetration which are so dreadful, my eyes were drawn back to him as he came on. With an anatomist's eye I saw this amazing conglomeration of sticks and broken, misshapen pulleys which make up the body of man. Here was an apt subject, and I flew to a raging mental dissection. How could anyone, I contended, trapped in this mechanical thing of joints and sliding wires expect the acts it performed to go other than awry?

The man limped on, relentlessly.

How, oh God, I entreated, did we become trapped within this substance out of which we stare so hopelessly upon our own eventual dissolution? How for a single minute could we dream or imagine that thought would save us, children deliver us, from the body of this death? Not in time, my mind rang with my despair; not in mortal time, not in this place, not anywhere in the world would blood be staunched, or the dark wrong be forever righted, or the parted be rejoined. Not in this time, not mortal time. The substance was too gross, our utopias bought with too much pain."

--Loren Eisley, "The Night Country"

link

Mon 18 Sep 2006 : Even so, we did what we believed in

1953. US. Death row. A bad poem, but elevated by its monumental context
and constrained by a simple encipherment revealing the authors.

Even so, we did what we believed in:
Treason, yes, perhaps, but with good cause.
History will judge by its own laws,
Each act within the sunlight of the season.
Love was what inspired us, a reason
As pure as any saint in Satan's jaws.
Nor was the god we worshipped through those wars
Demonized, as later all would see him.
Justice would not just sustain our guilt,
Undoing those who would undo a wrong,
Leaving us in lucid infamy.
Instead, it would remember what we willed
Under the illusion of a song
So beautiful it would the chained earth free.

link

Mon 18 Sep 2006 : Her eyes had great clarity

Why do we say 'her eyes had great clarity'?

Anatomically and from embryogenesis the eyes are an extension of the brain. The retina is a 6 layer neural network. For people in the mathematical sciences visual cognition has been coopted via notation and spacial constructs into a more general cognitive ability. Those with innate spacial intelligence often flourish in that realm. Further the lens, that which is clear or cloudy, has an extremely interesting vasculture; edge capillaries feed a central diffusion network (to keep the lens free of stray proteins and red corpuscles). Random deposits in the lens are likely to be correlated with deposits in the rest of the brain that have crossed the blood brain barrier (this is distributed physical-chemical barrier that gives neurons their own purified, haemless nutriment supply).

What can we say of people who wear glasses? Of people who score well on IQ tests, a disproportionate number have glasses (but not the other way around). One of the most powerful predictors of myopia is is (overly) rapid growth during embryogenesis of the visual system. When non-grain societies with no history of myopia are introduced to grain diets myopia sores. Typical polynesian rates are now 30-50%. This seems to be caused by IGF-1 (insulin related growth factor) bursts following ingestion of high GI grain products during pregnancy. Different parts of the lens and supporting tissue respond to these bursts at different rates, resulting in selective overdevelopment and global distortion. But IGF-1 has receptors all over the body and nervous system; it seems probable the unusual lens growth is reflected in the rest of the visual system. 3.7Kg is the average birthweight of an Australian infant. 4.2Kg brings an infant 3x more likey to develop myopia. But what hidden strengths and ailments does growth induced myopia also bring?

There are some related phrases with an obvious physiological basis to their etymology. e.g "flashing eyes", "wide eyed curiosity" and "focussed".
link

Wed 13 Sep 2006 : Rhetoric

A little meta class for ruby

http://iq.org/ rhetoric/rhetoric-0.2.0/doc/
link

Wed 06 Sep 2006 : Consciousness amplification

When the bladder is full but social sanction or distractions prevent instant relief, what does one do?

Jiggles about like a parkinsons patient! Simulating movement -- and if that is not enough, one does away with the similation and paces to and fro. One is a simulation but both are *stimulation*.

Over micturation we have limited conscious (verbal) control. Over movement we have greater conscious control. We use our conscious control over the latter to gain control over the former. Movement becomes the lever through which the conscious mind is amplified to control a greater share of the body.

The primitive cortex, the "inner lobster", ignores conscious statements about not micturating when the bladder is full. However it measures the movement of the body. It is simple and easily fooled by jiggling -- simulating walking.

Newborns too are fooled by the simulated walking of their parents to keep them calm. Here we see the first simple evidence that control over the body translates to control over emotional states.

Through techniques and calibrations like these we become not more conscious but our consciousness becomes more powerful --- the verbal will and higher planing centres of the neocortex and associated structures such as the cingulate cortex are able to obtain greater control over their environment.

We can see this to an extreme degree in those who are able to meditate their way through a C-section. Here the conscious domination of the inner lobster has been developed to such a degree that the little crustacean can not even flinch before the surgeon's cut.
link

Mon 04 Sep 2006 : Emile Zola

"I feel the deepest pleasure, dear friend, in a tete-a-tete with you. You can't imagine how much I have suffered from this squabble I have had with the masses, with the anonymous herd... Pretend for a moment that we are alone together in some remote place, far away from the hurly burly of life and that we are talking like old friends, who know each other's very soul, and understand each other just by a glance...
"For ten years we have been talking about art and literature...- and often dawn caught us still talking, searching the past, questioning the

present, trying to discover truth, and to create for ourselves an infallible and comprehensive religion. We shuffled stacks of terrible ideas, we examined and rejected all ideologies, and after much arduous labour that outside one's personal life there exists only lies and one's stupidity."
-- from a letter to Cezanne from Emile Zola, ca. 1866

link

Mon 04 Sep 2006 : Underground banned in Iran

```
Close the door to world events and when one does not
look they come
in the window!

Begin forwarded message:

> Subject: thanks for your great book
>
> Hi !
>
> I'm from Tehran / Iran. I know that you've heard lots
of
> news about Iran these days, but we have two Irans:
> one is the ruling party and the second is the people
! :)
> and I'm one of those people !
>
> I've just downloaded your book (underground) and
> read it all. it was a great work. I enjoyed a alot
and
> blogged about it (http://FreeKeyboard.net/node/47 ).
> (oh man ! it is in Farsi !)
>
> And the second reason I'm writing you: I want to
> inform you that your site (underground-book) is
censored
> in Iran !!! I'm also complained about it to my
government
> but with no luck
>
> Thank you again for your great book and also THANK
you
> for letting people download it and read it. We can
not order
> copies here so it was a delight to download and read
it legally :)
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link

Thu 03 Aug 2006 : Taming the inner rat.

Don't worry about self flagellating christian guilt mania diet nonsense. Think about how much you eat. Think about the effect of

being even 1 potato chip per plate out between energy demands and consumption. Daily energy demands for a woman approximates 10 mega joules. Pure fat has an energy density of around 3000 Kj/100g. So your energy demands can be met each day by a little over 333 gms of fat. A finger of butter or 3-5 chocolate bars. If you're 1/20th out, that's 17 gms of fat per day. Or 7.3Kg/year of pure fat. But adipose tissue is a complex of fat cells storing around 15Mj/Kg. So this translates to a 12.3Kg/year weight gain or loss (loss is easier to model as an extreme, due to fat cells having basel energy requirements). To the naive this would suggest a forward path of extreme conscious dietry control, but a little reflection will demonstrate that since most people are in equilibrium subconscious mechanisms must already tightly control body composition.

For what follows it is important to understand what *you* are. *You* are not your appetite. Now if we examine *you* closely, we see, merci, there is no clear place where *you* end and the rest of the universe begins. Likewise, there is no place where *I* end and the rest of the universe begins. Now invoking transitivity we see there is there is no place where *you* end and *I* begin. We are one. But *you* and *I* are words people use frequently and take pains not to confuse. This difference in language suggests a difference in reality that yields predictive power when dichotomised into two words. There's no place where *red* ends and*green* begins either, but *red* is not *green* even if they are on a spectrum. Rhetoricians call red=green *argument from false spectrum*. But just like *I* am not *you*, your breath is not *you*, your finger is not *you*, your eyes are not *you*, your thyroid, pituitary gland and medulla are not *you*, no neuron is *you*, infact, none of the parts of *you* are *you*.

You don't exist as discrete thing, because as we have now established, not only is there no place where *you* end, there is not even a place where *you* begin. But we know the word is useful! So what can we say? Since *you* are reading these words *you*are the ensemble of strongly connected (i.e primarily brain) causality interactions connected to the input of these words. In the same way the word *Paris* is has greater predictive power the closer it is to the epicenter of connectivity of the French capital, but *Paris* is not the geographical or connective epicentre of *Paris*. Now *France* is to *Paris*, as your brain is to the language processing areas of your brain. But within *France* there are other cities such as *Le Mon Atier-les-Bains* or *Grenoble*, that should not be called *Paris* because their connectivity with *Paris* is very weak. So to, **within your brain there are subsystems the language processing areas are not meaning fully connected to**. They operate independently. Many of parts of the cortex and brain stem are ancient and do not differ appreciably to identical subsystems in rats, crocodiles, or even lobsters. In particular those parts of the brain that regulate basic needs such as arousal, temperature, blood pressure, *and appetite* are very ancient.

We already established that *you* and these other sub regions of the brain must be different if the word *you* is to retain meaning. Hence we come to the following remarkable conclusion. ***You* share your body with a lobster!** This lobster, or perhaps more romantically, "inner rat", is a simple creature, and it controls homeostasis. It controls appetite and activity and *You* have no direct control over it. All *you* can do is move it from place to place and buy different things for it to eat. Otherwise *you*have less control over it than it has over *you* because it is able to influence your feelings of reward, temperature, hunger and activity.

This creature is very good at measuring your body composition and controlling your appetite without conscious control. It's a lovely, sophisticated device. If you don't want to get fat, eat cashews, not marshmellows, even though the former have four times the energy density, for they are a source of plant life to be and due to the common ancestory of man and plant a good source of life for women; a rich bounty that tells the lobster its food supply is plentiful. Marshmellows and other refined foods she may need to eat a mountain of to get, say, her folic acid needs met; a poor diet which may activate biological strategies for dealing with food scarcity (Store emergency reserves; We can't live on this stuff!).

Lack of exercise does not make people fat through decreased energy demands. Rather it changes the lobsters's perception as to how much weight the body may carry without detrimental effect. Exercised induced overheating and over energy expenditure from lugging extra weight around (it takes twice as much energy to lift twice as much weight) will be measured by the brain through metabolic products in the blood, activating body composition modification via change of appetite and activity levels, moving body composition to a form better suited to the exercise rich environment in which it finds itself. Everyone knows muscle fibres grow in response to exercise, but adaptions take place throughout the body and brain to minimise exercise induced stress and maximise efficiency. It's an optimisation problem with two variables. Reserves vs. movement efficiency. The global optima depends on the weightings of these two variables. *You* can change the weighting through conscious behavior, behavior which subconscious brain regions will then measure to control your appetite. God, who lets no good deed go unpunished, has ensured the traditional energy reduction diet has the effect of activating genetic food scarcity strategies, increasing appetite, decreasing activity and so resulting in subsequent weight gain.

My advise to anyone who wants to loose weight; deny yourself no complex food that primitive man would eat (vegetables, red meat, including organs, fish, eggs, fruit, nuts, all simply prepared). Your lobster knows how to be respond to those foods. Eat slowly so appetite change can control intake. Within this structure eat whatever tastes the most appealing. Foods which have something you lack will

taste nicer till the need is for filled. Exercise to create weight induced over heating and carry stress to activate weight reduction strategies. How many overweight long distance runners do you know?
link

Thu 03 Aug 2006 : How can we untie the unknot?

But then thundering, inexorable realisation that the world is what the brain makes. Constraints in the meat give form to the symbols on the paper, to every inclination and imagining, to every cognitive process. Here then, this very sentence, out of the countable arrangements of matter limited to just a few forms the brain can see. So, on to understand the brain to understand the mind to understand mathematics to understand physics to understand the world, but then, just when this seems to be the path to enlightenment we see that constraints in the meat must arise from physical constraints. The meat of perception has been shaped by iterated selection and variation of ancestral nervous systems. How can we describe the tendencies of selection? By its constraints. The constraints of the physical system in which it selected. Above all, life must *live* and that is constrained by energy and momentum and mass and time and charge and gravity. A creature's abilities and imaginings reflect adaption to these constraints. We have no other notion but to point and say *there it is*. But these physical concepts are concepts of the mind. The self description is the constrained language of the brain. All folds in on itself. Start anywhere. Start nowhere. With boundless insight draw the circle tighter, but a circle it remains. How to hack reality? How to pierce the skin? How to find the spot on the wall where the illusion flickers and rip it open? We can relate here to there. Thing to Thing. How can there be more? How can there *not* be more.
link

Sun 30 Jul 2006 : Transparency in the cold light of Finland

We all have emotional instincts which react against our perceptions of the world. The interaction of these reactions losely defines society. If we perceive differently we react differently. An important class of perceptions are those things we can measure. By measuring different things we can change perception. By changing perception we can change reactions. By changing reactions we can change society.

Society has grown beyond our ability to perceive it accurately. Our brains are not adapted to the environment in which we find outselves. We can't predict important aspects of our societal environment. It's not designed to run on our brains. We're maladapted. In our

evolutionary history we spent a lot of time tracking the behavior and reputations of small number of people we saw frequently. If we want some of the social benefits that a small society brings then we need computational crutches so when A fucks over B any C considering dealing with A will know. A society that can "think" in this way is able to route goodness to people who do good and away from those people who generate hurt. The decision as to what is good is too complicated to be formulated in regulation and elections are a very coarse expression of what people think is good. Any paper formulation will put power in the hands of a political and technocratic elite. Robust routing decisions must be made my individuals and individuals need tools to manage complexity enough so they can make them effectively in a modern society. You might argue that this just removes power one step -- now it's in the hands of people who measure things. Right. But it is one step removed and if history is a guide that one step can make all the difference.

Apropos Finland:

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Transparency in the cold light of Finland

Therese Catanzariti Crikey's Scandinavian correspondent

In Finland, all individual tax returns are public
information which
makes for some interesting number crunching from the
local media, as our
Scandinavian correspondent, Therese Catanzariti,
writes:

Have you ever wondered what your colleagues are
earning? Have you ever
wondered what your peer group are earning? Your next
door neigbour? Your
cousin? A guy you went to school with?

  Finland takes "nosy-ness" to new dizzying heights.
Finland is the most
  transparent public sector in the world but for those
who think  everyone
  should follow their lead, think about this. Think
about this very very
  carefully.

  All individual tax returns are public. Public. Yes.
Public. No ATO
  secrecy and caring about your privacy for the Finnish
Vero.

  What does this mean? Every year the main newspapers
trawl through the
  Finnish tax office. They then prepare a list of the
top 1000 income
  earners and the top 1000 capital income earners. Then
they publish it.
  The list shows name, job, town and year of birth. It
shows income
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(including stock options) and wealth. And then, the piece de resistance, how much tax paid as a proportion of salary.

There is even a list of last year's rankings - who is shooting up the charts? Who has fallen on (relatively) hard times?

Who is on the list? Lots of Nokia, partly because "income" includes stock options. Apparently last year when the stock was doing well, Nokia employees did a pretty clean sweep of the top places. Then there's Jaako Salovaara, the only person under 30 in the top 20. And the guys from Instrumentarium who just got bought out by GE and got options.

And this being high-tech Finland, you can use the search machine on the website to tailor the list and rank the results.

Who are your local millionaires? Insert a town in Finland in the box "Kunta".

Who are the young guns making a fortune? Scroll down the box "Ika"

Where are the women? Choose "naisen" from the box "Sukupuoli"

Or just cut to the chase - insert a name in the box "Nimi" and find out how your boss is doing.

In addition to the list, Finnish journalists highlight a few other interesting and anamalous tax returns. One box in the Finnish printed newspaper had a box of salaries of all the union bosses. Why does the head of the teacher's union earn over 200,000 euros a year? How can he empathise with his comrades struggling with low pay?

And this being transparent Finland, the Finnish newspaper Helsingin Sanomat did not hide that some of the wealthiest people on the capital list are involved with the Sanomat newspaper group.

But this is just what the mainstream newspapers do. There are also boutique publications that publish guides of everyone who earns over around 40,000 euros. They put a few stories in so they can argue it's

news. But other than that, it's just one long list of everyone you know. And when there are only 5 million people in the country, and very very few foreigners, you know a lot of people. If you want your own copy, here's the link (alas, Finnish only) - http://www.veroporssi.com/index.php

But hang on. We're in Finland, super-connected super wireless Finland. If you think newspapers and websites are yesterday, try SMS. You can send an SMS to the following number 16400 (yes, it works outside Finland +358 16400) with the text "vero first name last name". And lo, it will send you back the taxable income of that person in the last financial year.

So is this a good idea?

Well it works in Finland because of the Finns. Finland is not a country of keeping up with the Jones's. In fact, Finland is more a country of shame about obvious wealth - they want to appear as if they are behind the Jones's. One of the statistics the Finns are most proud of is the relatively small difference between the top 10% and the bottom 10% of the society.

Finnish taxes are high, and its tempting to avoid them. But people are shamed into paying tax. Do you really think it's a coincidence that Jorma Ollilla, Nokia CEO, knowing he will be published at the top of the list every year, pays the full whack of 60% tax? If you don't pay tax, not only will the tax office be after you. Everyone knows you haven't paid your fair share. Everyone knows. Your colleagues at work, your family, your neighbours, your kid's schoolteacher, the guy who serves you coffee in your favourite coffee shop. Try living with that.

link

Tue 18 Jul 2006 : Ethical value metrics

This metric reflects the expected increase in universal entropy caused by the existence of an organism over the future course

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of the
universe compared to the organism not existing (or
being killed, if
that is the question). Since this is usually
uncomputable due to our
inability to predict the deep future in this way, we
might (a) do some
sort of future discounting or modify the metric to (b)
only include
the entropy increase of the universe for the expected
duration of the
organisms life.

This metric ("m") is natural in several ways:

let A and B be individuals. Let everything else be
equal between the
individuals unless otherwise stated and let us use the
(b) metric unless
otherwise stated. Then the metric is natural is the
sense that:

   1) if A lives longer than B, then m(A)>m(B)
   2) if A does more work / consumes more energy than
B, without
      stealing it from a more efficient consumer then
m(A)>m(B)
   3) (if we're counting
      descendents too) if A has more offsping than B
then m(A)>m(B)
   4) if A is bigger than B then generally 2) is
implied
   5) if A does not kill capriciously, then m(A)>m(B)
   6) if A recycles waste and uses the extra energy
then m(A)>m(B)
   7) if A does not "burn down the forests" without
what most people
      consider good cause, then m(A)>m(B)
   8) descendents set up solar panels on mars or
otherwise tap new
energy
      sources: then m(A)>m(B)
   9) descendents spread out geographically, otherwise
act the
      same: then m(A)>m(B)
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link

Tue 18 Jul 2006 : Laughter

Laughter is fear and relief. Fear is all around. Every step is conditioned by the fear of falling. It is the relief from primitive anxiety and alarm responses that give rise to laughter. The release of the breath that wasn't needed. That sudden surprise rendered harmless by higher perception. Wonder, when accompanied by the expression of laughter is the unknown and fearful transformed. A transformation by subconscious brain functions typically of sub second duration. A

transformation that takes the unknown and therefore possibly lethal and yields up the unknown and harmless to observe. Something to be explored, understood and remembered by wide eyed curiosity. Those eyes wide to suck in the world and a memory hungry for its details. A psychological and physiological stance that makes the unknown known. A state of maximal observational learning.
link

Tue 18 Jul 2006 : Doing the Mont Park shuffle

He was clean shaven, 20 kilos heavier and one year older, but he was still Antony. The last time we met his slender build and long orange hair & beard cast him as a modern Celtic Jesus. The last time we met he believed he could see dark matter and emit ultra violet rays. The last time we met he had cursed my evil heart and run off into the night. He was my oldest friend in Australia and now found himself in the East Ringwood mental health repatriation centre.

One year ago I had received a phone call from Sydney where Antony was visiting his sister. "Julian," he said, "I want to come and see you. I want to talk about to you about Quantum Mechanics,". That's the way he said it. Quantum Mechanics.

I had met Antony when I was 14 when we were both in "hell", a school in rural Victoria and one of 37 I'd attended on during my itinerant minstrel childhood. We were bright sensitive kids who didn't fit into the dominant subculture and feircely castigated those who did as iredeemable boneheads.

This unwillingness to accept the authority of a peer group considered risible was not appreciated. I was quick to anger and brutal statements such as *"You're a bunch of mindless apes out of Lord of the Flies"* when faced with standover tactics were enough to ensure I got into a series of extreme fights and I wasn't sorry to leave when presented with the dental bills of my tormentors.

Antony fared better. He wasn't new and had a social deftness that allowed him to side step and keep his contempt hidden where mine exuded from every pore. ``What is the most noble emotion Julian?" he asked one day. ``Curiosity," I said after some thought. ``No,". he said, ``Anger."

My journal from our last meeting contains the following entry:

Antony arrives from Sydney with girl in toe. A' Mid-length hair and beard, both carrot red. A' decked out in hippy attire. Strong contrast to previous 'tough man' image. Newage fruitiness is now all consuming. A' attempting to dominate J' [brother]. A' can see "dark

matter", emit UV rays, is a 15th (3*5) plane yogi, 27th dan Kung Foo Spirit Master. A' casts a voodoo spell "of death" on Michael B. by "cutting the throat" of my ceramic goose. A' clearly suffering some type of schizophrenia. V. poor reality testing and is of unstable affect. Poor reality testing fuelled by reading of Calos Castenida, occult books, etc. Much worse compared to last observation circa 18 months ago, but perhaps madness (then) was concealed as hypochondria. Situation v. sad. Believe A' will be in mad house or dead within 5 years and tell him so... ...A' lucid but intensely verbalising his theories / religious wank. I try to snare A's delusions. He becomes aggressive and frightened, accusing me of "psychotronically raping" girl from last night. I push him further. He disavows my evil heart and flees into the night.

But now he was at the East Ringwood mental health repatriation centre. His smile was shaky but characteristic. His physical edges rounded off by weight gain and his imagination dulled by anti-psychotics. His limbs and jaw gently shuddered with some frequency. He still had his classical guitar and chemistry books. His sensitivity and insight were not completely gone. His diagnosis was paranoid schizophrenia with co-morbid depression. The etiology (cause) of onset probably his drug synthesis experiments combined with genetic susceptibility. His prognosis unknown.

In his schizophrenic state he'd had phrases for the most subtle feelings. He had challenged me to deny the reality of 'psyhic vampires' -- those people look at you a certain way, trying to suck out your soul. But I found myself stumbling. There were such people and psychic vampires was a good phrase for them. He'd managed to push internal feeling onto external perception and use the change in perception to name the phenomena. But he'd turned up his gain so much feedback was breaking out everywhere. During his schizophrenic state he'd given me a gold metallic card and said with great earnestness ``Julian. I think the fine lines on this card are picking up neutrinos from the 4-5 helium cycle in the Sun. I'm sure it's getting heavier. Please take it to the Dept of Physics to be weighed".

What delicacy there is in setting the controls on the amplifier of a human being. In the right context the tiny energy carried by the snap of a distant twig must be sufficient to cause immediate flight and a billion fold liberation of energy. *An optimally perceptive brain must always be near the critical point of activing in response to its own internal noise.*

When I asked about the cause of his shaking, suggesting a dopamine antagonist, he said ``No. It's one of the other anti-psychotics. If you look closely you'll notice a number of people around here acting the same way. Julian... we're all doing the Mont Park shuffle".

link

Tue 18 Jul 2006 : Don't need a weather man to know which way the wind blows

When writing I like to extremise my perceptions inorder to give them clarity. If a weather cock's tail is long, you know which way the wind is blowing. A shorter tail is more ambiguous and no tail at all is like hippies saying "energy" -- could be anything. Well, you might argue, "If there are ambiguities in reality there should be ambiguities in its description", for even in the strongest southern gale there are swirling vortices all around. Yes, but these are second order effects. It is the weather cock's tail alone that gives the sailer his direction.
link

Tue 18 Jul 2006 : Runaway consumerism explains the Fermi Paradox.

What do guitars, lollies, lipstick, tamagotchis, padded bras, pornography, movies, opium, Ever Quest, and 98% of any Australian newspaper in common? They are all technologies of emmotional manipulation which distort our perceptions for the benefit of their masters. Language centres in our neocortex may claim to "know" they are fake, but these words only feebly suppress those primitive areas of the brain which give rise to our feelings, colour our memories and command our attention. These non-verbal processing regions of the brain have not evolved to deal such sensory sophistry. For them, sensing *is*believing.

Hence the feelings in a young woman's breast buffeted by the flashing lights and impossibly sonorous tones of the amplified rock star; master of a 20 KiloWatt Adam's apple and by inference a super man having the chest cavity of God. Hence the dilated pupil of a man glancing at skin tone pigments on matted wood fibres, a pattern of vision that once meant love was not only in the air but ready and willing, prostrate on the ground. Hence the wariness of the horror movie attendee when returning home and opening the door of what was, and infact still is, a pefectlty innocent closet. Hence understanding Neighbors instead of neighbors and having Friends instead of friends. Hence the poker machine addict. Hence the dramatic rise in the economic take of powerful industries built around using advances in technology to stuff our heads with false feelings and memories. Not content to be zero sum, in exchange for our wealth and time these industries generally leave us less able to function by decalibrating our emotional and intellectual repore with

reality.

"But, I like it you cold hearted Lutheran, you Stoic, you stone mason, you Zeno loving stick in the mud!". Well naturally, since the whole game is to manipulate your feelings, it is not suprising that you have positive associations about your perceptual opium, is is, after all, what keeps you going back to your dealer.

Such deceptions, previously known as "Art", as in "Artifice" or "Artful" have a long history of successful human parasitation. But the industrial control of and rapid advances in the ability to successfully falsify sense data has no historical analog. I have previously argued that a possible explanation for the Fermi Paradox (why don't there seem to be any aliens, dude) is the existence of a developmental ceiling created by technological advances flowing into the perceptual manipulation industry till it gobbles up through diversion and wealth destruction all economic growth.

The credulous will not inherit the earth, but they'll get to play a game where they do. A beautiful reality and a beautiful dream.
link

Tue 18 Jul 2006 : Professions

What really seems to seperate blue-collar work from the professions is that the latter involves manipulation of human perception. The result being that long term success is more about how well you relate to other people than how well you can perform technically. There's no simple performance metric for doctors, lawyers, academics or businessmen; these are professions of perception control and not only the first two prey on inducing hopes and fears.
link

Tue 18 Jul 2006 : Many worlds

The measurement paradox seems to be going away as people have filled in the details on many worlds / environmental decoherence. This hasn't come from arm chair philosophising so much as out of real modeling problems from quantum computation. I don't understand this well enough yet to say anything meaningful, but my five second take is that it does for the measurement problem what entropy does for the arrow of time and in much the same way; by denying an independent dimension to the phenomenon and instead extrapolating it from the behavior of a statistically large ensemble. The discussion is not purely philosophical, because you need something like this if you want to think usefully about the behavior

of nano sized "measurement" devices. It's not that many worlds predicts different results to Copenhagen, but that you can't think about some quantum computation problems easily enough with Copenhagen to be able to make a prediction at all. And here I give an analogy: All measurements are rational numbers but physics is full of complex numbers. All you ever do in physics is connect, through computers and brains one rational number (settings on an experiment) to another (results of a measurement). So why is physics full of complex numbers? Because they permit us to out think those too pure to use them and here follows the analogy; by the time any measurement gets into my brain it is in a form that satisfies Copenhagen since it has interacted with a macro ensemble (apparatus and my flesh) and likewise the setup of any macro experiment satisfies Copenhagen. But in the middle we may use any consistent trick that aids our thinking. The "tricks" are as real as their power to produce predictions consonant with described reality, for this, in some sense is the definition of understanding.
link

Mon 17 Jul 2006 : Pit and pendulum

Intelligence and sadness may sometimes be correlated, but it seems far more in the application than in the possession for while the mind is a rope to pull one out of the pit and those in it sometimes show it to desperate degree once free and on the surface the same rope can also scale heights of love and accomplishment invisible from the narrow confines below.
link

Mon 17 Jul 2006 : Female mathematics

Mathematics is a systemization of communicable human thought created by brain architectures that have male-type spacial abilities and extremised by the extremes within that group. Extreme female brain architectures would create a different sort of mathematics. It won't be created by the females currently in mathematics because they need a male type brain to thrive in the existing mathematical world.

Perhaps a good cognitive neuroscientist will do it for them.
link

Mon 17 Jul 2006 : Oxford without the punting

Today, outside, there's a code-red storm raging. The little ANU "lets-be-like Oxford without the punting" creek is now a torrent of leaves and ducks and mud. The eight white stepping stones I skipped over this morning are nowhere to be seen and the only sign of them is a sign --- "Please be careful when crossing on stepping stones".

Where there were once only ducks and swamphens there is now a pelican with beady eyes and an expectant smile.

I'm writing from the AV desk of an abandoned lecture theatre in the MCC building. This theatre has a piano. The piano is nice and I come in here early some mornings to emerse myself --- in myself. The theatre lights are movement sensitive, but not piano sensitive, so after after five minutes the lights wink out and there's just me, the tinkling of the keys, the howls of the wind and now and then the memory of some girl's ivory curves.
link

Mon 17 Jul 2006 : Craftier deceptions

Physics can take you out of yourself. Once you realise that there is no place where you end and the rest of a vast expanse of time and space begin, it becomes difficult, very difficult, to see why one should spend time absorbing the latest adhoc false reality willed by human beings. But this is mostly putting effect before cause, for surely it is the character trait of a physcist, bedded into flesh at a young age that leads to a desire to see the world stripped bare and engage a future of exchanging CAN for IS, or at least, so I sometimes think, requiring a much craftier deception.
link

Mon 17 Jul 2006 : Arrows for false gods

Disagreement is a good spur for conversation, but I don't know where to begin with your claim. People gain pleasure and power in spreading certain beliefs and certain beliefs are easy to spread. They don't look for the truth because they want to preserve this pleasure. Truth is rarely important in human affairs and if you want to shift your definition the only truth is power over reality. But it was the will to truth pouring its acid over the false beauty of gods and kings that guided us out of the miasma of the dark ages. You are not stupid. You are perfectly capable of piercing your claim, but you choose not to, since, like most people, you'd prefer to please and deceive.

By 'you' I mean the entire ensemble, not merely that part which processes words. To be human is to deceive. All human beings are

great self deceivers, but this is not the innocent charm of the naively hopeful. They deceive themselves so that they may deceive others and having tasted this pleasure return to lap at its fountain. See Gregory Bateman. Your belief in various kinds of unsubstantiated newage hokey that you could easily shoot down is a reflection of this underlaying tendency. How many times have you read "But if we believe X then we'll have to...", or "If we believe X it will lead to...". This has no reflection on the veracity of X and so we see that outcomes are more important to most people than truth, which should not be as a surprise, because natural selection selects on physically realised existence, not on platonic ideals.

But then as we fall back into the miasma, the shadow world of ghosts and distortions a miracle rises; everywhere before self interest is known, people yearn to know where its compass points and then people hunger for the truth with passion and beauty and insight. He loves me. He loves me not. Here then the truth can set them free. Free from the manipulations and constraints of the mendacious. Free to choose their path, to remove the ring from their noses, to look up into the infinite voids and choose wonder over guilt. And before this feeling to cast blessings on the profits and prophets of truth, the liberators and martyrs of truth, those Voltairs, Galileo's, and Principia's of truth, those brutal driven obsessed miners of reality, those serial killers of delusion smashing the whole rotten edifice till all ruins and the seeds of the new.
link

Mon 17 Jul 2006 : Jackboots

If there is a book whose feeling captures me it is First Circle by Solzhenitsyn. To feel that home is the comraderie of persecuted, and infact, prosecuted, polymaths in a Stalinist slave labor camp! How close the parallels to my own adventures! What longing one has when reading Solzhenitsyn's love for his first cell of self similars! Such prosecution in youth is a defining peak experience. To know the state for what it really is! To see through that veneer the educated swear to disbelieve in but still slavishly follow with their hearts!

Seen Saturn's gossamer rings through a telescope? Yes? Then cast your mind back to *before* your first observation. Back to when you believed in Saturn's rings but hadn't seen them. You agreed with others they existed without doubt, perhaps even had posters on your wall listing their properties or used the rings in passing analogy or to seduce a lover, and if someone had turned to you and suggested that Saturn's rings were a grand conspiracy, you would have chided them as a fool, but then when your telescope was pointed at the bright golden star overhead and an image formed in your mind out of photons _straight from Saturn_, something changed, and your heart

stirred your head to exclaim ``It's true then! It really does have rings!". Of course! But isn't this what you claimed all along? How well you concealed your disbelief in Saturn's rings -- even from yourself! So to with your belief in the mendacity of the state. True belief begins only with a jackboot at the door. True belief forms when lead into the dock and referred to in the third person. True belief is when a distant voice booms *'the prisoner shall now rise'* and no one else in the room stands.
link

Wed 12 Jul 2006 : Truth on and off the page

The truth is not found on the page, but is a wayward sprite that bursts forth from the the readers mind for reasons of its own. I once thought that the Truth was a set comprised of all the things that were true, and the big truth could be obtained by taking all the little truth statements and evaluating them till nothing remained. I would approach my rhetorical battles as a logical reductionist, tearing down, atomisiing, proving, disproving, discarding falsehoods and reassembling truths till the Truth was pure and unarguable. But then when truth matters most, when truth is the agent of freedom, I stood before Justice and with truth, lost freedom. Here was something fantastical, you could show irrefutably that (A => B) and (B => C) and (C => D) and Justice would agree, but then, when you claimed your coup de grace, A => D *irrevocably*, Justice would shake its head and revoke the axiom of transitivity, for Justice *will not be told*. Transitivity is enabled when Justice decides for emotional reasons A => D *feels nice*. What horror, here is the truth not as a bridge, sturdy to every step, a marvel of bound planks and supports from the known into the unknown, but a surging sea of smashed wood, flotsam and drowning sailors. So first the poetic metaphor, to make the reader want to believe, then the facts, and miracle, transitivity is evoked as justification for prejudice.

link

Wed 12 Jul 2006 : The cream of Australian Physics

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There are no unarguable axioms of value or worth, there
are only
inclinations and my inclinations  have turned to an
intense loathing
of institutions, and most of the people in them; those
spineless
supplicants agape at the passing of other men's ideas,
not drawn by
desire, but driven by fear and ignorance, to the tepid
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hearth of
institutionalism. One may argue as to the qualities of a passing man's
wife, but as a life philosophy it can only appeal to self-loathing
celibates. How much better the subjective stance which curls the mind
around the lovely creature in one's embrace!

This perception etched into me when I attended an Australian
Institute of Physics conference at ANU with 900 career physicists,
the body of which were snivelling fearful conformists of woefully,
woefully inferior character. For every Feynman or Lorentz, 100 pen
pushing wretches scratching each others eyes out in academic
committees or building better bombs for the DSTO (Defence Science &
Technology Organisation), who had provided everyone with a bag,
embossed with their logo, which most physicists pathetically lugged
about with pride and ignorance.

A year before, also at ANU, I represented my university at the
Australian National Physics Competition. At the prize ceremony, the
head of ANU physics, motioned to us and said, 'You are the cream of
Australian physics'. I looked around, and thought, 'Christ Almighty,
I hope he's wrong'.

link

Wed 12 Jul 2006 : Practical participatory economics

There is a foundation (herein called "the Institute") which holds
some of my copyrights and which I have used from time to time as a
front, gently concealing my freedom from the social covenant. There are
activities that the Institute should engage in that require substantial
cash reserves. Normally NGOs beg, but I'm no good at that sort of
thing, so the the Institute has created an offshore startup company
("thing2thing.com") to fund it.

This little seed has pushed through into the light from the dark loam

wherein ideas are born and now calls for gardeners and manure. To supply
them the Institute will pool auction off 40% of the company over two
months (i.e angel investors get their investment / total investment of
the 40% auctioned) to anyone who will invest. There's no higher reason
for this approach, it is a method of gaining initial funding.

There are two dilemmas (di-lemma = "two truths". 2 dilemmas = 4 truths).

The investment. It is a great blessing to have courage and foresight that
results in wealth producing rather than wealth destroying acts. However
foresight is limited and the connection between dividends and the
intelligence of the original investment, assuming there ever was one,
slowly dwindles to zero, whittled away by fate's unrelenting peturbations
of man's activities; above this plunging donkey, dividend payments
may soar exponentially till they yearn for the Islamic opprobrium on
unearned wealth. Now this very possibility, this pleasant vision of
pocketing of the dividend fatwa, increases investment without increasing
investment discrimination unless some investments can be seen to exclude
this eventuality.

Dilemma#1

There is thought of engineering investments so that after a substantial
return, dividends are transformed into a donation to the Institute
or some other charity, but this will reduce total investment, perhaps
resulting in a net evil, since we define the Institute's ability to act
as a good. Examining the extremes, we see immediately that if the company
makes nothing, the Institute makes less than nothing and the investors
make less than nothing while if the investors receive substantial unearned
wealth, then the Institute is well funded and able to act. But wealth
flows from the ongoing daily labors of those running the startup. Here
we see the disparity. Their labor is ongoing and connected to wealth
production at all times. Individuals who start companies try to minimise
share dilution while maximising investment. While

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larger companies
will sell bonds or borrow at market rates, startups
succeed in attracting
investors to their roulette table by offering the
carnal vision of
l'amour without l'commitment. Can we reinvent the
bordello? This brings
me to the next dilemma.

Dilemma#2

How should employees, if that word is not too
psychologically confining,
be compensated for their time and abilities?  ''anyway
they want to be''
for supply and demand works for novel compensation
schemes just as it
works for traditional wages. So my question becomes,
'given that the
founders loathe paperwork & consensus and need to
satisfy investors that
their investment isn't going to be entirely returned in
form of employee
stock options, what is left to offer employees? How can
their hearts be
opened to the new?'
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link

Thu 29 Jun 2006 : Krill to the baleen of the feminine

I've always found women caught in a thunderstorm appealing. Perhaps it is a male universal, for without advertising this proclivity a lovely girl I knew, but not well, on discovering within herself lascivious thoughts about me and noticing raindrops outside her windows, stood for a moment fully clothed in her shower before letting the wind and rain buffet her body as she made her tremulous approach to my door and of course I could not turn her away.

But then, just when one might suspect that men are krill to the baleen of female romantic manipulation, I found myself loving a girl who was a coffee addict. I would make a watery paste of finely ground coffee and surreptitiously smear this around my neck and shoulders before seducing her so she would associate my body with her dopaminergic cravings. But every association relates two objects both ways. She started drinking more and more coffee. Sometimes I looked at her cups of liquid arabicia with envious eyes for if there were four cups then somehow, I was one of them, or a quarter of everyone one of them...

link

Wed 28 Jun 2006 : Resources for avoiding GPL software

licensing issues?

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On Mon, 26 Jun 2006 23:45:29 -0400, "Stephen Dewey"
said:

> Anyway, if any of you have worked through these
issues before [GPL], I'd
> appreciate your input. Thanks!

It's a non-issue. Google, yahoo and many, many others
use linux servers,
built with linux tools.

There's no clear definition as to where a program
begins and ends. Is
the configuration file part of a program? Its interface
with system
libraries? Information flows all around inorder for
anything to have an
affect on the world. 'program' is ill defined, since
there is no way to
decide what is in the set and what isn't other than the
law courts, but
the political and legal will is such that many giants
must fall before
you do. Technical people, good at stacking houses of
abstract cards
often look at the law and see rules, but this is a
shadow, for law hangs
from the boughs of politics, that branch of behavior
involved with the
societal control of freedom of action. Always consider
the real politik
of law; who will push for change and who will resist.
Who will judges,
in support of their own feelings, interests and concern
for their family
and friends, want to side with?
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link

Mon 26 Jun 2006 : Tale of the Tesla coil, or learned idiocy

Tiki Swain, is Science Works demonstrator. Science Works has a lightning generator, a 2 million volt Tesla coil, a very noisy and impressive machine. She writes:
So I've asked the question "What is lightning?". Usually I get the older kids (who've learnt a few things at school) saying "Electricity", "static electricity", "electric current", "a flow of electric charges". And younger kids say things like "It's a bright light", "a bolt from the sky", "it happens in a storm", "it's a light that comes with a big bang". This time, I got emotive/experiential words - very unusual. I'd ask what lightning was, and they'd say "It's scary". "It's loud". "It's exciting". "It's noisy".

The younger children's descriptions are powerful, communicatable phenominological descriptions of nature. The older children's descriptions are useless, unexperienced rules that they've learnt to regurgitate. One may as well say 'God makes it go'. And that is preceicely the point, *authority makes it go*.

By being an adult asking for a question to which she obviously already knew the answer, she had given them some kind of regurgitation context. The older children give answers that fit social expections not answers that are meaningful --- because the social expectation *is* to produce meaningless answers! The younger children are not yet sophisticated enough at understanding social context so reveal what they really think i.e something with predictive and descriptive power.

Why do things fall to earth? Answering 'gravity' only tells you about a rule human beings have agreed on. The rule is, when asked why stuff falls one should reply with the word 'gravity' and not, say 'love' or 'God'. But it is a pleasure to say that apples 'love' planets just as much as planets 'love' apples and that 'love' fades with inverse square distance. Ah huh! There is your true content, it's the predictive description of behavior in the last part of the sentence, which we may call anything we wish. The younger children describe the behavior of the natural world. The older children describe the behavior of society alone. They're not stupid. They know their survival depends on saying the right thing, at all possible times to people in power.
link

Sat 24 Jun 2006 : Canberra

Canberra, Australia; the physical realisation of Rand corporation propaganda films about the beneficial effects of the neutron bomb. From the air it's a Walter Burley-Griffin concentric bomb target. From the ground, well, the bomb has landed --- everywhere there's the faceless facades of government. If there is an average Canberrian, milling about the grand emptiness, it is the Doric column. Canberra is encircled by them, weaving about like the Styx, bordering nowhere and Hades, and like the corporate firewall, keeping the dead in and the living out.

After my state sponsored stay at ANU, I ended up at a backpackers filled with some of the 900 Christians from the Australian University Christian Convergence. Most were young women and I turned, somewhat disgracefully, into a sort of Chesterton's Hardy, the village atheist, brooding and blaspheming over the village idiot, while they, for their part, tried to convert me with the rise and fall their bosoms.

One of the devout was the lovely daughter of a New Castle minister. At some point in my unintended wooing of her, she looked up, fluttered her eyelids and said 'Oh, you know so much! I hardly know anything!'. 'That is why you believe in God," I explained. This conversational brutality took her breath away and she swooned. I was exactly what she secretly longed for; a man willing to openly disagree with her father. All along she had needed a man to devote herself to. All along she had failed to find a man worthy of being called a man, failed to find a man who would not bow to gods, so she had chosen a god unworthy of being called a god, but who would not bow to a man.
link

Thu 22 Jun 2006 : Don't cross the tracks before putting on your shiny shoes

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Do you need a witness?
I am a witness.

Do you need a lawyer?
My father is a lawyer.

The state does what it can get away with.

The state does what we let it get away with.

The state does what we let ourselves get away with, for
we, in our
interaction with others, form the state.

The bureaucratat knows the average man, and especially
men of the
underclass are victims in waiting. The force of their
action is in
inverse proportion to the perception that the victim's
father may be an
influential lawyer or have contacts in the political
classes that
control them.

The anonymisation of peoples through high population
density strips
state victims of retributive power; in small
communities, "you beat my
son" is soon followed by "your cousin shall not marry
my daughter". The
anonymous megaloposis denies this kind of retribution.

Additional freedom is granted alone to the trikster,
who through
adopting the manner and dress of the establishment may
fool the agents
of the state into deference.

In full circle, every so often a member of the
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establishment, foolish
enough to believe that power was within, puts on their bathers, or their
sweat suit and becomes a victim. The grunts protest... "we didn't think
you were the man; you weren't dressed right. it's not our fault. you
must play by the rules.".

From Tiki Swain:

On the scene - 1818, Wednesday 21 June 2006

As I walk out onto the platform at Newport Train Station, I hear a
woman's voice, upset but calming. She's telling someone to let them do
it, it'll be OK. I look over to the far platform, across two sets of
tracks. In the open-front waiting room a man is seated on the bench
having his arm twisted up over his shoulder and behind his back by two
other men. He's resisting. The two men handling him are nondescript, in
casual clothing - both beefy, both in clothes that show wear and use,
but that's all they have in common visually. The woman speaking stands
outside, pacing back and forth, talking constantly. "Love, it's all
right. We'll work it out. It'll be ok. I don't know who they are. They
haven't told us anything. It'll be OK, just let them handcuff you. They
just want to ask you some questions. Just stay calm."

Sure enough, the two men have somehow produced handcuffs from somewhere.
They now have the first man facing the wall, held down, and are trying
to handcuff his hands behind his back. A second woman stands outside,
looking down the platform, glancing in every so often, talking steadily
and inaudibly into a walkietalkie. She is also carrying no identifying
marks or badges, wearing nondescript casual clothing - flared boot-
topper jeans, a jacket with some random brand slogan. There is nothing
to show that she has any association with the men other than her
proximity and her walkietalkie - not a normal civilian carry item.

"It'll be OK. Just let them do it. I don't know who they are. They're
just going to find out what you know. It can't be much, maybe a $500
fine. You haven't done anything illegal or broken the

law or anything.
They'll take you down to the station. It'll take only two hours or so.
Just two hours, and we'll come and get you. It's OK, we'll come and get
you. Just sit down now."

I wonder to myself how she knows how long a station visit takes, and how
she knows they're going to "a station" if she still doesn't know who
they are. I wonder if she comprehends the various levels of law involved
in the conflicting statements "you haven't broken the law" and "only a
$500 fine". I wonder what happened in the sixty seconds before I walked
through the platform door.

She asides (at the same volume) to the other woman "I'm just trying to
keep him calm". Her voice is not angry, not shrill - but definitely
upset and slightly panicky. She knows she doesn't know what's happening,
and that none of the three are saying anything to her or giving any
explanation. Inside the waiting room they've now moved to the other
wall, and are now holding the man out of my sight. She looks back in at
them and starts quickly saying "Give him some fresh air! You've got to
let him come outside! He needs fresh air!". She gestures frantically but
frustratedly with her arms, waving her lit cigarette across the entrance
as she does so.

It seems a pointless thing to say - they don't appear to be taking any
notice of her as long as she's not hindering them. But then the two men
bring out the first, handcuffed. He doesn't walk well. "What did you hit
him with? Was it mace?" she says. "Was it pepper spray? Why did you have
to do that? You didn't need to do that!" The two men lead the third into
the male toilets, out of sight. The woman follows them partway, then
comes back out, sobbing. "That's police brutality! All he did was jump
onto the tracks!" She's making no attempt to be soothing now that she's
not in front of them, letting her upset fully show, and it's not clear
who she's talking to. Perhaps just all of us watching silently on both
platforms. Walkie-talkie woman holds in place, walking a few steps up

and down the platform, keeping the device horizontal to her ear and
mouth, talking steadily, not watching the men.

The upset woman dashes into the waiting room, to a corner out of sight,
and comes out carrying a collection of bags and bits, their gear. She
calls out to her partner in that same calming voice again "It'll be OK.
I'll find out where they're taking you and we'll get you." She
approaches the woman and says in the same clear medium volume as
everything else she's said: "Excuse me, where are you taking him? I need
to know because I need to ring his dad and tell him, he was going to
pick us up at the station." The walkietalkie woman looks past her, eyes
on space and ears on the walkie talkie. The first woman comes closer.
"Excuse me, lady, I need to talk to you. Please." She says it calmly and
straightforwardly, with no rudeness or aggression. She is ignored. She
repeats herself, and continues to be ignored. Walkietalkie woman is
following one of the simple rules of enforcing submission - do not
engage. Do not give any action, speech or emotion power by acknowledging
it exists. Do not act in any way which encourages them to think they can
make a difference to your actions.

It works. The first woman returns to her stuff, obviously waiting for a
chance to speak with anyone. She intersperses her fretful pacing and
cigarette waving with random callings out to her partner. "It'll be OK."
"They'll just take you to the station." "It won't take long." One of
the men returns from the toilets, carrying an open notebook, and asks
her if she has any ID. She says "No, but my partner does." The two of
them begin speaking more quietly. I overhear a lone phrase - "We were
running to try and catch the train...". She goes into the toilets with
him, and almost immediately dashes out again and grabs a lone shoe from
the pile of stuff. "It's OK, love, I've got your shoe. Here's your
shoe." She goes in again. The only one left visible is walkietalkie
woman, listening intently to the far away voices. She begins to speak
again, but puts an arm over her lower face, hiding her

mouth.

The Flinders St train pulls in in front of me, and I don't/can't see any more. Instead I catch the train onwards, wondering. Wondering if I'd feel trusting if I was being manhandled by two of three unmarked unknowns. Wondering at the logic of "let them put the handcuffs on you" combined with "We don't know who they are". Wondering what he did to elicit this response.

I think about the people on the platforms, who in their behaviour assume that everything is meant to happen this way, this is all orderly and expected, who assume that these three unknowns are official and that they are responding to a fellow passenger this way because he did something that deserved it.

And I think about the woman most of all. I wonder at the trust in our society that she's displaying by assuming he is being taken to a station, or is it hope? and her assuming that a station visit is something he will return from, unharmed, in a relatively short time. I consider the luxury of living in a society where people can make those assumptions, have those hopes. I wonder at her implicit belief in voice, in wording and in behaviour that playing the system and supporting it fully is the best method for survival, even when she's not sure which bit of the system they've fallen afoul of. Sort of an adult version of the child's belief in the sanctity of goodness - that bad things will not happen to you if you are good. I note that she never spoke angrily or aggressively to any of the three unknowns, or even unleashed the full extent of her feelings at them. And I wonder at this apparent belief/behaviour that intelligent reason will bring them through, eventually. I wonder at this latter because it's such a great belief of our society, yet I've never considered it true by fact, only true by mutual agreement. It only lasts until someone disagrees.

link

Thu 22 Jun 2006 : Moshe and the glass eye

Sometimes my eyes are lovingly full of Eastern European tradegy. The surest escape from the mundane is to teleport into the tragic realm. To topple kings someone must die. One soon revels in the carnage of change; whatever flowers grow at the end of Lear or Hamlet we know they blossem into a different world, stronger for the corpses under their roots.

This tradition is still alive in the Ukraine, the bread basket and basket case of 20th century Europe. Within in the life span of a working school master the Ukraine saw Stalin's genocidal collectivisation of the Kulaks and subsequent mass famine, the NKVD terror of 1937, the 1943 Axis rout of soviet forces and subsequent Weirmacht control, another round of crop distruction, SS extermination of the Slavs, scorched earth Axis widthdrawl, gradual Warsaw Pact repression and bureaucratization, and then, in homage to the Gnostic view of God, the 1986 Chernobyl catastrophe just outside of Kiev (see http://www.kiddofspeed.com).

Man must suffer constraint to write, for a man with a gun needs no thought, but the prison state gives its citizens nothing but thoughts. Before words on paper, there must be words in the head, that that plaintive, demanding upwelling of reason that takes the place of action because the environment has action constrained. Where words have the power to change, the state tries hard to trap, burn, or blank them, such is its fear of their power. *But where words are emasculated before birth, where words are powerless playings, smothered, half drowned kittens, scrabbling for someone, anyone to hold them, the state is fearless and words like birds, bees and other creatures of no political consequence are free.* Now I offer you the following based on a tale of my grandfather's, which I have taken to using as a filter of men; women do not seem to feel it, being too full of future life to enjoy the austere bleakness of concentration camp sarcasm.

Moshe shuffled in the prisoner selection line with his daughter. When he came to the selection guard Moshe was told both father and daughter would be sent either to the extermination camp or the work camp. The guard found their numbers and said the daughter was go to the extermination camp. Moshe wailed, fell to the ground and threw his arms about the guard's legs, begging for his daugther to be spared. He kissed the guard's boots and offered his own life and the extraction of the last of his gold teeth. The guard smiled thinly and said, "Very well, but first you must pass my test. My eyes are completely indistinguishable from each other but are not the same. One is glass and was modeled on the other. Reichsmarshal Goering himself appointed the finest jewelers in Potsdam to craft it after I returned from the front. If you can find a way to distinguish the glass

eye from the real one, I will trade your life for your daughter's". Moshe starred into the guard's eyes and slowly raised his hand, pointing to the left eye. The guard looked at Moshe and shouted, "What! How did you know?!". "I am sorry.. " trembled Moshe, "but the left eye looks at me with a kindly gleam".

link

Sun 18 Jun 2006 : Fwd: Psychology of bad probability estimation

23MB MP3 Link

Psychology of bad probability estimation: why lottos and terrorists matter

Here's the audio from a South By Southwest 2006 presentation by Harvard's Daniel Gilbert on the psychology of probability estimation. This is important stuff -- it explains why we're socially willing to commit nigh-infinite social resources to fighting terrorism, though statistically, terrorist attacks almost never happen; though we barely lift a finger to help save people from routine traffic accidents, backyard pool drownings, and asthma, which mow down our neighbors by the thousands. It explains why people buy lottery tickets. It explains a great deal about many kinds of human activity. This is both sensible and entertaining audio, and it's got a great title: "How to Do Precisely the Right Thing at All Possible Times."
link

Sun 18 Jun 2006 : NetBSD foundation Membership Agreement

It has run space probes and ocean liners, it's in every recent Apple Macintosh and runs and most of the Internet including the site you are reading now. NetBSD and its decendents FreeBSD, OpenBSD and Linux. The NetBSD Foundation (TNF) required those people involved in its creation (committers -- coders with more than usual control over the project) to sign a legal contract by June 2006. As far as such documents go, it is not too draconian, but I felt it was the antithesis of what motivated me to be involved with the foundation (building something out of the love of creation and intellectual competition). It lacked spirit. I refused to sign, effectively resigning. I think these projects are "complete"; still a vital force behind global cognition, but like the telephone or the transistor, most creative effort is now going into making them faster or asking what colour they should be:

I understand the real politik behind this, namely, quelling fears of companies that productize NetBSD and perhaps personal liability fears of the TNF board members, but I think this is the wrong way to go about it.

We create the state through our actions and language. TNF through its contract document recreates the malfeasant corporate state within our programmer world. TNF should protect and nurture its committers, not ask them to fall on their swords at the first sign of danger. Limited liability as an organizational concept arose inorder to encourage investment. If TNF has any legal use, it is to sheild committers from TNF's actions, not the other way about.

IF the legal threat in the US is real and not a nightmare of the fearful, then TNF copyright and cvs should be moved to an offshore jurisdiction, of which there are many available that do not have US style patent or copyright law. The US node can be used to promote activities in the US and its Limited Liability can protect the board members in the role of those activities.

The contract as well as being an instrument of the state is written in the demeaning language of the corporate state. It should have been written in the language of our programmer world. Even in the world of the state it is not clear that the contract is valid, given that committers seem to give away rights and services to TNF but do not receive compensation from TNF in doing so.

I haven't committed for several years, so my refusal may mean little, but I encourage others to keep NetBSD a place of people united in creation, a place of collective defense for our programmer world, where bullshit is directed out, not in.
link

Sun 18 Jun 2006 : What are rights anyway?

Rights are freedoms of action that are known to be enforceable. Consequently there are no rights without beliefs about the future effects of behavior. Unenforcable general rights exist only insofar as they are argumentation that may one day yield enforcement.

Hence the Divine Right of Kings, the right of way, mining rights, conjugal rights, property rights, and copyright.

The decision as to what should be enforced and what may be ignored is political. This does not mean that rights are unimportant, but rather, that *politics (the societal control of freedom) is so important*

as to subsume rights.

Politics emerges as the expression of the battle between our collective desires and strenghts. Due to the common nature of mankind, there is great commonality in some of our strongest desires. When these desires do not compete they drive politics forward to ensure their forfillment. This is what we usually mean by the capitalised Right, a powerword, a threat of collective enforcement.
link

Thu 08 Jun 2006 : Climate skepticism patterns

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Recently I've run across a couple of presentations on
technological
solutions to reverse global warming.  The most
interesting is to put
stuff into the upper atmosphere to block UV light.  Not
only does this
reduce warming due to sunlight, it has an immediate
payoff in terms of
reduction in skin cancer.  Analyses suggests that it
would actually pay
for itself in terms of just that effect, independent of
the benefits
for climate change.

Here is one presentation, a 7-minute audio interview
with UCI physicist
(and science fiction author) Greg Benford:

http://www.desmogblog.com/gregory-benford-podcast
(http://www.desmogblog.com/audio/download/310)

And here is a paper by Dr. Edward Teller of Livermore
Labs on the subject,
which I think is the work Benford is referring to:

http://www.llnl.gov/global-warm/
http://www.llnl.gov/global-warm/148012.pdf

Teller's paper actually describes two mitigation
schemes, one involving
putting stuff in the stratosphere, and the other a more
ambitious plan
to station material at the Earth-Sun L1 point.  This is
a semi-stable
orbital point approximately a million miles towards the
Sun from the
Earth.  Teller et al calculate that only 3000 tons of
smart material
located at L1 would diffract away enough sunlight from
Earth to eliminate
global warming.  Of course it will be some time before
we can put or
manipulate this much material in space.
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Benford suggests (in his interview) beginning a pilot scheme to put 100
micron particles into the arctic stratosphere during the summer, in order
to try to reverse the loss of arctic sea ice and save the polar bears.
By design (and in fact, it's hard to avoid) these would snow out every
year so they have to be replaced each summer, at an annual cost of about
$100 million, he estimates.

The bottom line is, as Benford notes, "we're going to have to run this
planet." Sooner or later the message will sink in that Kyoto and other
conservation efforts are too little, too late (and too expensive).
Geo-engineering will be forced on the human race, luddites and all,
by the climate change threat of the 21st century.

link

Thu 08 Jun 2006 : The history of warfare

The history of warfare is similarly subdivided, although here the phases
are Retribution, Anticipation, and Diplomacy. Thus:

Retribution:
        I'm going to kill you because you killed my brother.
Anticipation:
        I'm going to kill you because I killed your brother.
Diplomacy:
        I'm going to kill my brother and then kill you on the
        pretext that your brother did it.

link