

Noise Music

cognitive psychology, aesthetics and epistemology

by

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Most people are other people. Their thoughts
are someone else's opinions, their lives a
mimicry, their passions a quotation.

— Oscar Wilde

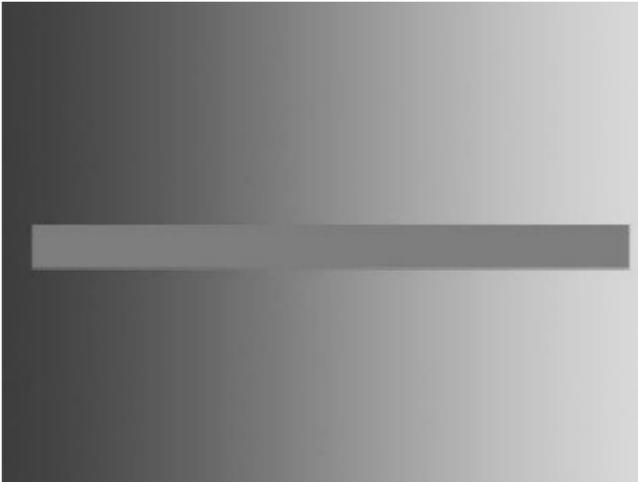
Henry: "How do you stay looking so young?"

"I bathe in the blood of innocents."

Henry: "Really?"

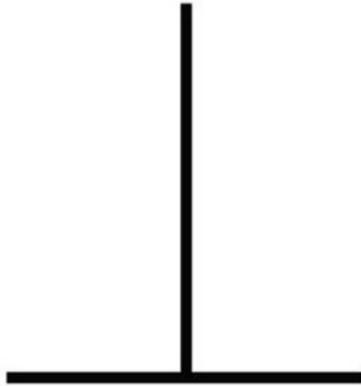
"Well, I don't know how innocent they were."

“They couldn't have been that innocent if they bled.”



Despite appearance, the middle bar does not change in color or tone. If you cover up the image so only the bar is showing you will see this.

Visual illusions demonstrate that reality and human perception of reality are different things.

Which line is longer?

Despite the vertical line appearing longer, the two lines are the same length. This curiosity is common to most humans. This illusion happens in the real world, with a telephone pole or tree appearing taller when vertical than when laying flat on the ground.

There are societies where perpendicular lines are rare, such as desert people who live in rounded huts without perpendicularly angled tables and boxes and television sets. These people are less likely to be fooled by the above illusion. It is interesting that those experienced with perpendicular lines are those who fall for this illusion. Most would assume it would be the inexperienced who are more likely to be tricked.

My Toy Fox Terrier trains for winter by peeing in the freezer.

It's not that I can't charm the birds from the trees, it's that I don't see the point.

Knock her socks off, I see the purpose.

The Ambiguity of Language

Written language is one of the keys to human success as a species, allowing us to communicate and document information and ideas in ways other animals can't. You can read the thoughts of Isaac Newton, borrow a friend's recipe to cook dinner and take a university course from your livingroom.

However, human language, including our daily language, is ambiguous and can be interpreted in different ways. Words have multiple meanings, definitions change and multiply over time, phrases are interpreted differently by different people and differently by the same person in different situations. Voice intonation, pacing, grammar and facial expressions communicate meaning. The audience uses its experience, education and culture to guess what is meant.

John and I went to the food court. We ate at Taste of India.

The above everyday sentences seem straight forward but can be interpreted in many ways. The 'we' of the second sentence commonly is read to mean John and 'I,' but this reading is a guess. It could mean the narrator and someone else than John, or perhaps the narrator, John and someone else or multiple people. It's very plausible the two caught up with someone else on the way to the Taste of India.

Most read the second sentence to mean that Taste of India is at the food court and they ate there soon after they arrived at the food court. However, this is also assumption. There's nothing in the sentence that says the Taste of India is not far away from the food court and their eating didn't take place days if not months later.

It is even an assumption that the two sentences relate to each other. They could just happen to be sitting next to each other, like strangers on a bench. For all you know, I lifted them from different books, published 15 years apart.

*Even when in Kyoto how I long for Kyoto when the
cuckoo sings*

In the above *you can't go home again* line by the famous 1600s Japanese poet Matsuo Basho, the word Kyoto has different meanings. The first Kyoto indicates the physical city and the second refers to a past life in the city, perhaps a childhood. Or at least that's how readers commonly interpret it. Basho died over 300 years ago and no one today knows what he meant.

Comedy regularly plays on the ambiguity of language:

Lt. Frank Drebin: “Miss, I’m Lieutenant Frank Drebin, and this is Captain Ed Hocken, Police Squad.”

Buxom Female Shop Assistant: “Is this some kind of bust?”

Lt. Frank Drebin: “Well... it’s very impressive, yes, but we need to ask you a few questions.”

— *Naked Gun 2-1/2* (1991, Paramount Pictures)

My mom used to say I'd make a good vampire because I had large canines, was a night owl and was likely going to Hell.

* * * *

A skeptic should also be skeptical of skepticism.

* * * *

I owe my impressive vocabulary to my parents. From my dad I learned words like obfuscate and furtive, and from my mom I learned words like puke and holy crap.

* * * *

It sneaks up on me. Sometimes I'm the last to know.

To most of life's problems there is a simple solution, but simple doesn't mean easy.

I get up at 6:45 am and work and watch the evening news and rake red pine needles up against the bases of the new wooden fence posts in the back yard— I rake up the needles and I go and get another pull/pushcart full of red pine needles and bring it up to a bare section— and I talk with my boss at work about work and business practices and soccer South American style— and I collect baseball cards and I bid on some lots, and I look at my Koufax rookie and 1910 silk common and Piazza refractor—and I go to dinner and I eat dinner (spanakopita, salad with oil dressing, French bread, skim milk), I talk with those at the table— And now as I look at my Red Back Cobb, as I rake the needles and listen to popular music on the radio, as I drink a cup of coffee downtown and watch the painfully fashionable teens on the sidewalk, I know that it will never leave me—The season in hell was not a season— and they can try to beat it out of me — they can medicate me— and they can make it so even I want to live this life, so I look foreword to a tomorrow of work and sunlight and food—but it will never leave me— Nearly every waking moment I am aware of it

And I must go— I must change out of these jeans dirty at the knees before I go to the library to look up some things in magazines not worth mentioning. I wish to wear my black basketball shoes but the right shoelace is wearing thin and I don't feel like lacing in another one.

After the blackness— I sometimes refer to it as shade, or underwater— and it is a test to see if I can live as a human can— Authoritative eyes are on me, it's all very melodramatic—And I won't say that I don't have a kiddie desire to do well, to earn the gold star

And they have me on steady medication that makes me stand up straight and makes my eyes repulsed by dark and makes me strong and undistracted so I can walk upright in the daylight.

I live as a human does— the day to day world— the day to day chores— And the humans about me are piecemeal and pallid and go about their airy chores, their day to day ideas

And I go about mine— But there are pauses, blips in the mind— I have been reintroduced to society— the “blackness” has been put behind me— and I'm going about it well— the work, the sleeping, the typing, the reading, the newspapers, box scores, political bickering, comics, Ann Landers, cookouts of fish and hamburgers, British comedies— And for a while I forget about the past, the past feelings— But there is heartache—typical goofy human longing— and this is where it starts— in longing— and it is through this longing that I connect to the other, the heartache is a conductor for the other side, like air for sound— And I long lust heartache after a woman over there (approx. 7 miles) and I cannot have her— I don't know how to have her— Union is mired in fogginess and speculation— But you must

understand, I understand, that the heartache isn't the be all/end all, rather it is merely a conductor to the other side— I am reunited with past feelings—And I go about my human life, try to go about my human life— But in case you didn't realize, the day to day existence is a dream— My hands in front of me, the newspaper are underwater— And the music comes— in fits and starts— and I try to resist it, am repulsed by it, deny it, think of the repercussions—as you are taught in AA— the other sessions—as the medicine is used to prevent— But the music becomes louder and louder (in fits and starts, with extended pauses)— then there is a pause, silence— then all of a sudden you are there

The funny thing is even when the reader acknowledges and appreciates the philosophy of discord, he or she still judges the discordant work by its attractiveness. "Is it good looking ugliness?"

* * * *

"You're one of those ivory tower types, aren't you?"
"Actually, it's a second story apartment."

The philosopher's philosophy can no more escape his or her psychology than he or she can escape being human.

And it was too late to go back for my pants.

Conceits

For this chapter and book, a conceit is defined as a false, artificial, arbitrary, contrived and/or overly simplified rule or set of rules used to explain the way things are or the way they are supposed to be. A conceit is often made to give an answer where the real answer is unknown or to give a simple, convenient answer to a complex situation.

* * * *

A Victorian England book of etiquette stated that on a bookshelf a book by a male author should never be placed next to a book by a female author. The exception was when the authors were married to each other.

* * * *

A wealthy American businessman and amateur historian decided to build a duplicate of an Ancient Greek pillar on his ranch. His expressed intent was to make it as historically accurate as possible, down to the smallest known detail. Partway through the construction, scholars discovered that the Ancient Greeks had painted the original pillar a bright light blue. The businessman was taken aback at this finding.

All the pillars he had seen in person and depicted in books were unpainted. Painting one of those beautiful stoic pillars a bright color bordered on the distasteful, like following a fine meal with lime jello and cool whip. The businessman built the pillar exact in all known details except it was unpainted.

* * * *

The human being lives in a universe that is mostly beyond its knowledge and comprehension.

None of us knows the volume of the universe, the complete inner workings of our own minds, what birds really think or what it's like to be in someone else's shoes. We can speculate, we can conjecture, we can theorize, but we don't know for certain.

It is fair to assume Albert Einstein would have said there were many areas of science he knew little about. Just because you are a famous nuclear physicist on the cover of *Time* magazine doesn't make you a wiz at biology, veterinary science, economics, geology, forestry and television repair.

* * * *

While humans know little about the universe, they have an innate psychological need for answers and order. Most of us want to know the meaning of the universe and what is our purpose on earth.

* * * *

In an attempt to overcome their lack of knowledge and sate their desires for order, human beings create pseudo answers

and artificial order. This is most commonly done with conceits.

* * * *

The following are examples of conceits:

- * The sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening. (The sun does not rise and fall. This is a visual illusion caused by humans' position on the surface of a rotating earth.)
- * Baby boys should wear blue, baby girls should wear pink.
- * When men greet they must shake hands.
- * A painting should be framed and hung from the wall. You should not display it on a tabletop or leaned against a wall.
- * A Gothic novel dark, stormy weather and a castle or mansion.
- * It is uncouth to drink wine out of a coffee cup or beer stein. Wine must be drunk from a wine glass.
- * A properly set table must have, from left to right, fork on napkin, plate, knife, spoon and drinking glass. A table set another way is set incorrectly.
- * A cowboy movie has to take place in a dusty hot place like in Arizona or Texas. If it takes place in Maine, it's not a cowboy movie.
- * There is great significance in 10 year (decade) and 100 year (century) increments. Nine, 11 or 98 year durations are of lesser importance.

* * * *

Conceits are used in all facets of our lives. From the fashion

rules for the shoes we wear to how we describe the universe to our children. From the way a house is supposed to be decorated to how music is supposed to sound. From the ways we conceptualize the unknown to the required color for artificial turf in a sports stadium. I hate to break it to you sports fans, but there's no practical reason artificial turf can't be blue, purple, grey, red, black or white.

A conceit can be said and unsaid, conscious and nonconscious, innate and learned, known and unknown. In cases it is a set of rules posted on a sign. In other cases it is a gut reaction ('That's just the way it's supposed to be').

Conceits can be trivial ('pencils always go to the right of the pens on my desk') to large (religious, political or philosophical beliefs requiring a leap of faith).

One's conceits can be idiosyncratic or widely held (custom). Many of one's conceits change and develop with time and experiences.

* * * *

Bugs are icky.

For a romantic evening, you need soft music and candlelight.

You must dress up to go to the opera.

Your socks should match in color and pattern.

* * * *

The human is wired to interpret its environment in the form of conceits. The human's environment is so complex, the human constantly bombarded with so much internal and external information, the human uses conceits to create an understandable translation.

Someone who claims to have no conceits has pointed out she has an additional one.

* * * *

Anyone who doesn't believe in the prevalence of conceits should go to a mall or busy downtown street and observe the variety of fashions. And, perhaps more important, observe how he or she reacts to the fashions ('Damn hippie,' 'Must be a Republican,' 'Honey, hide your purse.').

* * * *

For just one day try to live without conceits. No prejudice, no preconceptions, no traditions, no fashion, no habits, no arbitrary choices, no simplified answers to complicated situations, no made up answer when the real answer is unknown, no doing something 'because that's the way I always do it.'

Realize that exchanging one conceit for another is not ridding you of conceits.

If you can't live without conceits for a day, try it for a partial day, try it for an hour, try it for five minutes. Time yourself with your stopwatch.

* * * *

Why is pink so associated with girls and sissies? Is there something inherent about the color, similar to the biological attraction of hummingbirds to brightly colored flowers? Or is it mostly a matter of tradition? If 100 years ago the tradition started that girls wore dark blue, would tough guys today

wear pink sweatshirts taunting the guys who wore blue?

* * * *

What is the hair color of your dream lover?

* * * *

If you had to eat maggots and there was no health or taste concern would you rather they were cooked or live? Why?

* * * *

In a dating relationship would you feel uncomfortable if the woman were much taller than the man? Why?

* * * *

Manipulating information

We all purposely limit the amount of information we receive. It's a normal, daily occurrence. The human being doesn't have the mental ability to process everything at once, and must pick and chose what it focuses on.

"Can we discuss this later? I'm busy right now and don't want to lose my concentration."

"Don't anyone tell me the score of last night's game. I had to work and recorded the game so I can watch it tonight."

"Honey, pull the shades. I don't even want to know what the neighbors are doing this time."

"I'm not going to the Doctor, because I don't want to know if there's something wrong with me."

"I'll look at my bank statement on Monday morning.
This is the weekend and I want to enjoy myself."

"They're my parents for God's sake. I don't want to
hear about their love life."

* * * *

Tricking Yourself

It is probably no surprise to hear that humans trick or otherwise manipulate each other Embellishing one's job position to impress the future in-laws Psyching out your opponent at the big ping pong tournament Tricking your sibling out of the last donut

Humans also trick or otherwise manipulate themselves. Many of the following examples are closely related to the previous *limiting information* examples.

"Honey, hide the bag of Doritos. You know I can't help myself if they're lying around."

"If I buy myself a new power suit, I will have confidence for the meeting."

"I'm going to turn my watch ten minutes ahead so I'm not always so late to meetings."

"I'm going to force myself not to think about her. Maybe that will help heal my broken heart."

Give two examples of how you trick or manipulate yourself.

* * * *

Keeping Up Appearances

We all superficially dress up facts to suit our tastes. Even if we know the meaning remains the same, outward

appearances are important.

"I'm not a secretary, I'm an administrative assistant."

"Don't call it a toilet. That's crass. It's a rest room."

"I didn't get a pay raise, better office or the other things I wanted, but I did convince the boss to change my title. You're looking at the new assistant director for data processing. I can't wait to phone mom. She'll be so proud."

"Don't say 'damn.' Say 'darn.'"

What euphemisms do you use?

* * * *

Choosing to pay for what is free

I used to write an email newsletter about collectables. While it had wide readership and received positive feedback, it was nearly impossible to get any donations of time or money to support it. I had planned on having a series of articles on collecting wirephotos-- identification, dating, valuation. Before I was able to include the series, I decided I had enough of doing the newsletter for free and ended it. With the newsletter finished, I computer printed and stapled the wirephotos articles into a Spartan 35 page booklet and offered it for sale for about \$7 a copy. Within the first week and a half I made more money from that little booklet than I had received in donations in over two years of publishing the newsletter. Because of their bias about how information should be disseminated (physically printed versus email), the readers chose to pay for information they would have received for free. Not that I was complaining.

* * * *

Biases

Most conceits are based on biases. People's views of the world and even of facts are affected by biases.

A bias is a strong preference for or against something for reasons that do not have a rational basis. A bias can be identified when someone is offered the choice of items that are identical except for one subjective quality (color, shape, scent), and the person consistently picks a particular item because of the subjective quality.

Each morning five shirts are laid out on your bed. The shirts are identical other than in color. If you only or usually pick the blue shirt, you have a bias towards blue, at least as far as the shirts go. If over time you wear all the shirts except the yellow, you have a bias against yellow shirts.

We all have a range of biases. We all have prejudices (meaning, making judgments before all the facts are in, or jumping to conclusions) and predilections (a strong liking or disliking of something based on temperament or prior experience).

While the word bias often has a derogatory connotation, many biases are worthwhile and even helpful. We all have personal preferences that are positive influences on our lives. I feel no need to apologize for preferring Chinese food over Italian, Rachmaninov over Brahms or having a favorite color of blue. No one should run to the confessional because she dislikes watching basketball and loves to wear pearl earrings. Life would be boring without personal preferences.

The problems arise when biases prevent us from being able to make what should be or we represent as rational

judgments. Many of our biases make us jump to false conclusions. Many of our biases cloud what should be clear vision. Many people's biases prevent them from seeing the truth right in front of their eyes.

When there is the latest political scandal, do you in part judge the guilt or innocence based on the accused's political affiliation? Are you more likely to suspect him guilty if he is a member of the other party? If he shares your political beliefs, are you more likely to ascribe the accusations to being partisan attacks?

In the news there are all those latest health findings on what's good for you and what's bad for you: drink this amount of wine weekly, eat this, avoid that, get this amount of exercise. When first hearing the latest health finding, do you in part judge the scientific validity of the report based on how it relates to your lifestyle? If you love red meat are you more likely to accept at face value a report claiming the benefits of red meat and dismiss a report claiming that red meat should be removed from one's diet?

When an important medical report is given to the public on television, do you in part judge the validity of the report based on what the doctor is wearing and from where he is presenting the findings? Even if the report is the same, would you give more credence if the doctor is wearing a white lab coat and stethoscope and speaking from a laboratory (test tubes, vials, scientific charts in the background), as opposed to if he is wearing jeans and a well worn T-shirt and speaking from a junky park bench? Why do you think makers of commercials hawking that fad diet or libido pill use actors dressed like doctors in white lab coats?

Many biases are subtle, many are genetic. If we were born cats, we'd have different priorities, different ways of looking at things. We have habits we don't know exist until pointed out by others. Movie makers know that lighting, camera angle and background music subconsciously influences the audience.

* * * *

Many people complain that a news organization is biased. Most of these people are not looking for unbiased reporting, but reporting with a different bias (theirs).

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Killing cockroaches

The traditional way to kill cockroaches is by taking a can of bug spray and spraying the offending creatures. Years back a company invented a different way for killing cockroaches. Instead of directly spraying the bugs, this company had a new disc that was discreetly placed out of sight-- under a bed or refrigerator, the back of a closet. This disc was more effective than the spray can-- meaning, it killed more bugs. The company test marketed the product with inner city single mothers who had cockroach problems in their homes and used bug spray. The mothers were shown how the disc worked and informed it would kill more cockroaches. When polled afterwards, the majority of the women said they would not purchase the disc, as spraying the cockroaches gave them a sense of control.

* * * *

Learning from experience



Former US President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore at a 1997 Press Conference

Much of how the human being sees, interprets and reacts is based on past experience. Both consciously and nonconsciously we use past experience to show us the way things are. Sometimes we learn from repeated experiences, sometimes from a single experience, sometimes from what others tell us.

Most of us have learned not to put our hands on a red burner on the stove because of personal experience (ouch!) or because we were taught. We learn how to identify plants and animals through experience. Many people love to go up and smell roses because they know what roses smelled like before.

Through repetition, or even single experience, many things become second nature. We barely have to be conscious of them. It's raining, reach for the umbrella. If a burner is bright red, don't touch it. Rabbits are soft and sidewalks are hard. Jiggle the handle on the upstairs toilet or the toilet will run all night. Alligators are dangerous. Chocolate is sweet. Salty and fatty foods are bad for you. Grass is green and beaches are sandy.

Our nonconscious minds and bodies learn from experience—depth perception, reacting to gravity, balance. Athletes perfect their skills through practice. By repeating shots and moves, the moves become second nature to the basketball player. Through practice the gymnast gains balance and muscle memory. Juggling and cycling becomes second nature with practice.

Not only do humans learn from precedent, they gain psychological and even physical attachment to what they have learned. This is part of how habits become second nature. If someone was bit by a large dog as a kid she may shake with fear when a large dog approaches her on the street. If someone had childhood vacations at his favorite aunt and uncle's cabin near the beach, he may get a warm feeling when he sees a magazine picture of a similar beach.

This psychological aspect can be helpful. The practical use of the gut reactions should be apparent in the following: instant fear when a Grizzly crosses your path, uneasy feeling and perhaps even nausea towards a piece of a meat that smells funny and has a strange color, a warm feeling towards someone who gave you a fair shake when no one else would.

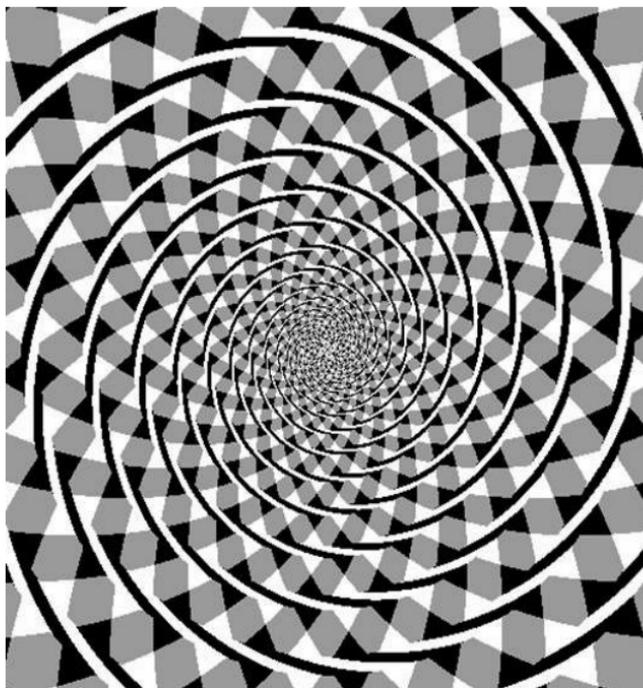
The problem is that no matter how seemingly logical or natural or how deep we feel it in our bones, what we learn as correct is not always correct. Often it's dead wrong.

Scientists would laugh at laboratory conclusions based on an arbitrary example or hearsay. Yet this is how we learn in everyday life.

Even your eyes can lie. If you don't believe me, take a second look at the earlier picture. It is not of Bill Clinton and Al Gore. Both are Bill Clinton, but one has different hair. Your brain and eyes were in the habit of seeing things a certain way.

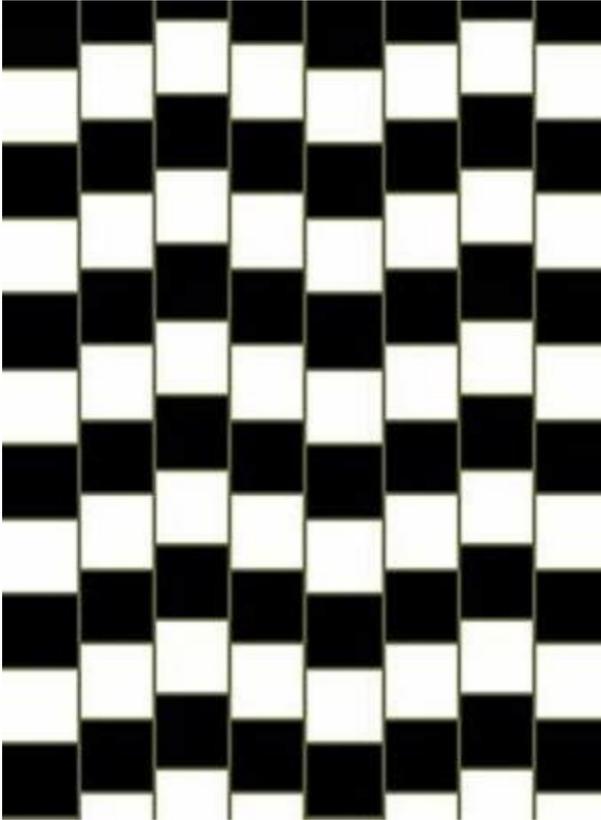
Visual illusions illustrate that even our brains have conceits about the way things are. Look at the images on the following four pages.

Spiral



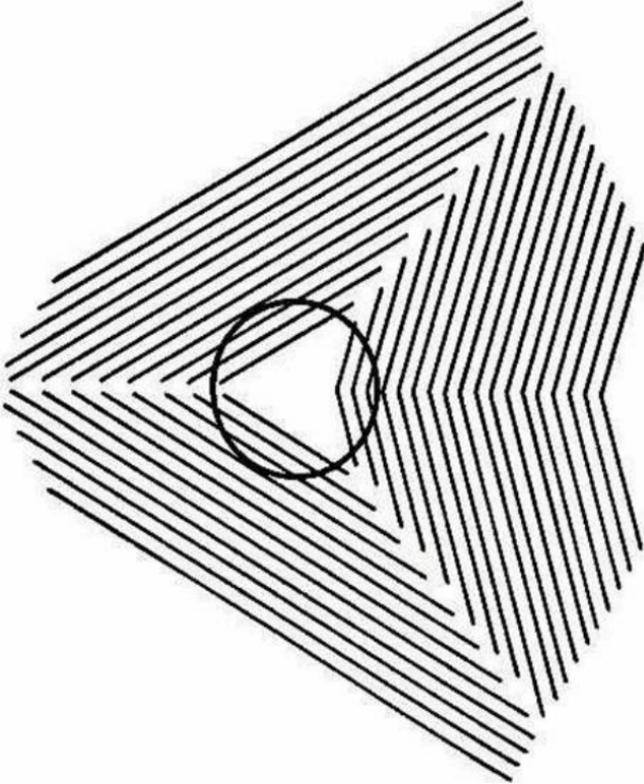
What may appear to be a spiral, is a series of circles. If you carefully trace your finger along a circle, you will see this.

tilted lines



Despite appearance, all the columns are of equal width and parallel to each other.

warped circle



Despite appearance, the above circle is perfectly round. It is the overlapping lines that make it appear warped.

Greta Garbo in hat and coat



There is no illusion with this picture other than caused by your expectation that there was one. It's just a picture of Greta Garbo wearing a hat and coat. You must admit it's interesting that after only several images you created a new (and false) logic. You started a minute ago interpreting as true a false image (Clinton) and ended up with interpreting as false a true image. Fascinating.

* * * *

Absolute statements

Scrutiny reveals the fallacies in our sweeping, absolute statements about society or life or politics or art or sports or television programming.

A liberal mayor may proclaim from the podium, "I am against all forms of racial bias" yet supports racial quotas for school admissions and government contracts. Shouldn't he really say, "I am against all forms of racial bias, except for the areas where I support racial bias"?

A conservative states' rights US Senator may proclaim, "I am for states' rights and against the national government imposing their will on states," then blocks a state from enacting a law he dislikes. Shouldn't the statement more accurately have been, "I am for states' rights and against national government imposing their will on states, except for where I'm not for states' rights and am for national government imposing their will on states"?

Looking closely you will discover that most sweeping absolute statements are not about the person attempting to be factually accurate, but trying to gain power relative to someone or something else. They are rhetorical flourishes. When a brother yells at his kid brother, "You always ruin everything!," he knows the statement is not accurate. However in the middle of a sibling fight the statement "You do many things quite well and mom says you got a B+ on you last French quiz which is quite commendable, but you do mess up a percentage of things on various occasions" doesn't pack the in the heat of the moment punch.

* * * *

When their sports teams clearly are not number one, why do college fans and cheerleaders raise their index fingers and

yell "We're number one!"?

Notice this is done in the heat of the moment. During Tuesday morning physics class the student likely won't claim the school's 1-6 basketball team is the best in the nation. However, when you point a television camera on him and his friends during Saturday's game out comes the number one sign.

* * * *

Psychological ties

The human being is an emotional animal ... love, hate, romantic attachment, embarrassment, repulsion, giddiness This is part of who we are and how we interpret the world. Emotional interpretation is often more important to humans than facts. Emotions regularly override or temper facts. And who's to say it's always a bad thing. Sticking by family through thick and thin isn't a bad rule of thumb.

For humans it is difficult and often impossible to separate meaning from emotion, facts from emotion, worth from emotion. What is right is supposed to *feel* right. Religious faith involves an emotional attachment to the ideas. There is an emotional connection to the art we love. If there wasn't a psychological reaction to the actors on the screen and their story who would pay good money to sit in the dark theatre for two hours?

No matter how well plotted and witty the dialogue, a movie or novel is deemed unworthy if it doesn't move the critic. "It simply didn't *move* me" or "I didn't connect with the characters" is considered appropriate critical judgment to be a newspaper critic.

Even the most logical of people judge facts by their

aesthetic appearance. An M.I.T. engineering professor will spend hours contemplating what picture and background color should be on his upcoming textbook. He may have a fit if the publisher says the book cover will be hot pink.

A mathematics professor may write and rewrite her equations so they are unsmudged, parallel to the top and bottom of the paper and with attractive margins. Even when the answers are correct, she may reject students' homework that is not similarly neat.

Emotional reactions or states can be good and bad. Most would agree that love for your children, leading you to look out for the best interests, is good. Most would agree that getting a warm feeling from kicking friendly dogs is not good.

Emotional states can alter our landscapes. When we are head over heels in love, a drizzly gray day is gorgeous. When we are unrequited, a rainbow can weigh like lead in the heart.

Mood is an integral part of how we plan our lives ... Getting the mood right for a romantic evening ... Decorating the apartment to make you feel at home after a long day at work.

* * * *

Sanity and Custom

People tend to believe that sanity and insanity are absolute, objective terms, with a medical doctor saying a patient is insane as she would say a patient has a broken arm or skin cancer. The popular and legal definitions of sanity and insanity are based on that society's customs and even fashion. No matter what it is, if enough people are doing it won't be

considered insane behavior.

If you don't believe this, examine what currently socially acceptable behavior would be deemed bizarre, if not psychotic, if no one else in society did them.

- * Decorative body mutilation, such as piercing one's ears and getting a tattoo
- * Lying in the sun with the expressed intention of turning brown
- * Taxidermy
- * Wearing makeup and styling and coloring one's hair
- * Taking an animal as a pet, giving it a name, walking it around the neighborhood on a leash and telling people it's the new member of the family
- * Expecting people to shake your outstretched hand when you meet, and acting slighted by those who don't
- * Manicuring one's lawn and garden, including cutting the shrubs into shapes

If you did all of these, and they were not done by anyone else, you would be considered mentally ill and in need of serious medical help.

* * * *

The psychology of expectations

If your pick up an apple, you expect it to have the taste and consistency of an apple. Even if you love banana cream pie, if the first apple bite has the taste and consistency of banana cream pie you likely will be repulsed and spit it out.

* * * *

Given once a year to a single college football player, the

Heisman Trophy is the most famous sports trophy in the United States. Unknown to each other, two former Heisman Trophy winners and their families lived in the same neighborhood. One afternoon, one of the men's sons came home disappointed in his dad. His dad had always told him how rare was the Heisman Trophy on the living room mantle, but the dad of the kid down the street had the same trophy.

* * * *

New environments

The BaMbuti Pygmies of Congo traditionally live their entire lives in the dense rainforest, where the furthest away anyone can see is feet. They learned, loved, played and hunted in this environment. In his 1961 book *The Forrest People*, anthropologist Colin Turnbull wrote how he took one of these Pygmies, named Kenge, for his first time to a wide open plain. As the two stood on a hill overlooking the flat land, a group of water buffalo was seen a few miles away. Having no experience of how things appear smaller over long distance, Kenge asked what kind of insects they were. Turnbull told him they were buffalo and Kenge laughed loudly at the “stupid story.” Turnbull drove Kenge towards the buffalo. Watching the animals growing visually larger, Kenge became scared and said it was witchcraft.

Human beings develop an idiosyncratic logic and sensibility distinct to the environment where they were brought up. The environment one grows up in is seemingly the world. A kid born and raised in the inner city versus the country, rich versus poor, in Cairo versus Chicago, conservative family versus liberal, woods versus desert. The person who has lived her whole life in Portland or Cairo may get a chuckle at that story about the Pygmy then dismiss the

idea that a similar incongruity could exist with her native logic.

As Kenge interpreted the open expanse based on his jungle experience, humans interpret such esoteric and largely unfathomable things as the afterlife and the meaning of the universe based on their limited experience. It should not be surprising that common human interpretation of the supernatural largely has an earthly sensibility. The supernatural beings often dress like humans, live in night and day, drink and eat human-style meals, speak and read and write, play human-style instruments and games, and even sneeze. It should not be a surprise that to the Ancient Egyptians the gods dressed like Egyptians and to the Ancient Greeks the gods dressed like Greeks.

* * * *

Which black rectangle is larger?



The two rectangles are the same size. Measure them

yourself. It is your lifelong experience with diminishing scales in open spaces that caused you to perceive the upper rectangle as larger.

Kenge would not have been fooled by this illusion.

* * * *

John Nash's Aliens

John Nash was a famed mathematician and winner of the 1994 Nobel Prize for Economics who was paranoid schizophrenic. While an instructor at M.I.T. and Princeton, Nash suffered severe mental episodes and dropped out of society. He began hallucinating, hearing voices in his head. In this state he deduced that aliens were talking to him.

To most of us his conclusion seems loopy. It does reveal how the human mind works. In a situation well beyond his experience he wanted a concrete answer for what was happening. While bizarre, the aliens conclusion 'logically' matched his illogical situation. It is abnormal to hear voices in one's head so, when one starts hearing voices, normal everyday answers will not explain. It can be expected that someone will explain the abnormal with an abnormal answer, especially when he is in a confused mental state. It is likely no coincidence that Nash nonconsciously picked a conceit that was part of popular culture.

Years later when he had largely recovered from his mental problems, Nash was asked how he had come to the conclusion that aliens were talking to him. He said that he came to conclusion in the same intuitive way that he came to the mathematical conclusions that won him the Nobel Prize.

“I had this incredible urge to write and tell you I've been thinking of you and the urge won out Miss you. A lot.”

I've gotten to the age where women my age find most of my nerd tendencies to be endearing. Twenty years ago I wouldn't have freely offered that I play in a classical recorder trio and am a volunteer usher at the neighborhood playhouse.

I turned my chair and listened to the White Album
backwards. Sounded about the same but looked different.

* * * *

I look clean, but the dirt is swept under the skin.

I am writing a novel— am really a novelist— which means that I'm in a constant fight. I am trying to transcend art through art— transcend plot and character through plot and character

I was a charming drunk. At least I thought so.

* * * *

As an encore was requested, I will be beautiful and brilliant again this week.

“Sometimes life is a shit flavored popsicle.”

“As long as it isn't orange.”

Did you know crickets have white blood?



And at the end of a street at night, I am ready to burst— the world will end, must end, right now— It will, I feel it

And the next morning I wake up having forgotten the feeling of the night before and go about the day.

* * * *

And the irony is that I cannot even gain with these words, I cannot become one with them. They are as foreign to me as everything else.

* * * *

I'm all or nothing usually.

* * * *

It's not that I have nothing to say to you. It's that my interesting switch is turned off. In person, I'd talk non stop, except when I was otherwise occupied.

Does it bother you when I do that? Sometimes when I write, I feel like a bit of a floozy afterwards. I'm usually joking a little bit.

* * * *

The subject of aesthetics interests and bothers me greatly for a number of reasons. One is aesthetic perception is an integral and inescapable part of how we view things, imagine the universe, interpret things, guess what is right and wrong, true and false, moral and immoral. Our perception is always, and subconsciously, influenced by our aesthetic tastes.

Another reason is people will read this book, judge its worth and meaning and veracity and artistry (whether or not it was intended as art!) using their aesthetic biases. For humans, that's part of how books (and restaurant menus and bathroom signs and shoelaces) are judged.

* * * *

It eats away at me. It makes me mean. Worse, it makes me indifferent.

Useful Conceits

While conceits have inherent limitations and pitfalls, many have practical uses and we couldn't function without them. The following are just a few examples.

- * While having a law that requires automobiles to drive on the right instead of the left side of the road involves arbitrariness, the usefulness of the law should be clear. This is a case where the powers that be had to pick one side or the other, perhaps flipping a coin. In Britain the coin must have fallen differently.
- * Before I go to bed, I make sure my keys are placed in the middle of the kitchen table. I came up with this rule after several hectic mornings looking for the damn things.
- * Standard games and sports require conceits to work. Whether an American football field is supposed to be 95, 100 or 105 yards long, you have to pick a length so it is known when someone has scored a touchdown ... Whether a basketball field goal layup counts as 1, 2, 4, 5 or other points, you have to pick an amount before the game starts ... For a tennis match and soccer game, it has to be agreed upon whether *on-the-line* is in bounds or out of bounds.

- * One of the most important uses of conceits is they can save us time. Your pre-set rules for clothes you put on in the morning involve personal biases and arbitrary choices. However, without these and other trite rules you might be unable to leave your house before 4 p.m. This would be a problem if your job starts and 9 a.m. and you're supposed to pick of your kids from kindergarten at 3 p.m.

* * * *

Many conceits don't have practical uses, but are harmless feel goods. Sometimes feeling good is practical, such as when your doctor has suggested you lower stress.

- * If you grew up dreaming your house would have a white picket fence and a big oak tree, there's nothing wrong with putting up a white picket fence and planting an oak tree on the land you bought.
- * If you just bought a sports car and think that it should have bold racing stripes, there's nothing wrong with asking the dealer to add bold racing stripes.
- * If you need the theatre effect to enjoy a movie and set up your entertainment room in the basement to look like a movie theatre with theatre seats and a popcorn machine, that sounds cool to me.

* * * *

“If I asked would you to tell me something deep and personal? I’m not asking you to right now, just testing the water.”

Did you know?

In the Middle Ages West, the blue paint ultramarine was as valuable as gold. Ultramarine was considered a pure, divine color and was difficult to make. It was used with genuine gold and vermillion (a type of red) for important illustrated documents. In paintings, the robes of the Virgin Mary were ultramarine and people owned paintings with ultramarine to demonstrate their wealth.

The blue mineral for the paint came from the East, with the name ultramarine meaning 'beyond the sea.' Ultra means beyond and marine refers to the ocean.



Unless the point of art is supposed to be fantasy, another world. People often call art, or at least entertainment, an escape from reality.

The problem with that working theory is humans use the same aesthetic methods for reading reality that they use for reading art. Our *escape from reality* view of art doesn't reflect well the accuracy of our view of reality.

Did you know cheetahs are the only cat without retractable claws?

US Civil War Union General William T. Sherman's military philosophy was he hated war and battle-- he had seen too many young men killed--, but felt that if you had to wage battle you fought to win, no compromises. He thought that playing it safe and trying to minimize bad things only served to make the pain of battle worse. He is considered one of the most ruthless, brutal and effective generals in history, the originator of modern warfare and scorched earth techniques.

Conceits and Human Achievement

Humans use conceits, biases and imaginary environments to reach higher levels of achievement. This achievement can range from a musician composing a great symphony to a ten year old improving her math scores.

Humans do not have the capacity to effectively focus on a variety of tasks simultaneously. To reach higher levels of achievement in an area, the human must put most to all of its focus on that area. Humans must eliminate or stabilize (make a non factor) areas that distract from the needed focus.

This is comparable to a water kettle with four equal sized holes in the top. When water is boiled inside, steam will raise a height from the holes. If three of the holes are sealed, the steam will rise much higher from the remaining hole.

* * * *

The following are everyday examples of manipulating one's mental and physical environment to produce achievement:

- * While background music or others' chitchat may be fine while browsing a glossy magazine, many of us cover our ears in order to comprehend a difficult passage or perform a math problem.
- * To expand one's mind by meditation someone focuses on a repeated mundane and often arbitrary task, such as following one's breath or repeating a word.

- * To improve the team's horrid free throw percentage, the junior high basketball coach teaches the players to focus on the basket and their shooting motion and to ignore the crowd. He has them practice by ignoring recorded crowd noise and cardboard cutouts of fans.
- * Many with a fear of speaking reduce their nervousness by imagining the audience wearing only their underwear. They create a fantasy.

* * * *

The Rituals of Baseball

Many consider hitting a baseball to be the most difficult feat in sport. The batter swings a stick to hit a small ball. The thrown ball can reach speeds of over 100 miles per hour. Early 1900s player Ty Cobb holds the record for the highest career batting average in Major League Baseball history. His batting average was 0.367, or 3.67 hits per every 10 turns at bat. Even the greatest hitters fail more than they succeeded. Enough to give anyone a complex.

Baseball hitters, and baseball players in general, are notorious for their strange conceits. Players often wear the same unwashed undershirt and socks during a hitting streak. Most players don't step on the white foul lines when entering and leaving the field. Pitcher Turk Wendell waved to left field every time he entered and left a game. When coming to bat, Nomar Garciaparra went through a well documented ritual of pulling at his shirt, opening and closing the Velcro straps on his batting gloves and tapping the toes of his shoes. Lucky charms, bracelets, necklaces, gum brands abound the game. Five time batting champion Wade Boggs ate chicken before every game. U.L. Washington batted with a toothpick

in his mouth. After parents complained that kids might emulate the unsafe habit, he switched to a q-tip. After the first slump, U.L. was back to the toothpick.

Though many of the rituals are comical, they can aid performance. Hitting requires a calm and focused mind and exceptional mind body coordination, all while the player is surrounded by television cameras, screaming fans and the other pressures of being a professional athlete expected to perform. If wearing the lucky undershirt or repeating an odd ritual eases the batter's mind and gives confidence, it can increase the player's batting average. U.L.'s reason for switching back to a toothpick was because it made him feel more comfortable. While a toothpick as aid may seem nonsensical, the desire to be comfortable makes sense.

* * * *

Faith

For a conceit to aid performance, the person must have faith in the conceit.

During a meditation session, one must accept that the thing of mental focus is worthy (breath, mantra, stone, other). Whether the thing was carefully chosen by an instructor or picked in a rush (a pebble hastily grabbed from the ground), meditation requires you to focus on that thing. If you fret about whether or not the mantra was the perfect pick, this very fretting makes the meditation session less effective.

The lucky blue undershirt only helps the baseball player if he believes it lucky. If the blue undershirt is deemed lucky because he had a great game the first time he wore it, this illustrates the arbitrariness in conceits. If before that big

game he pulled his grey undershirt from the drawer, it likely would be the grey undershirt that is considered lucky.

* * * *

Positive achievement is regularly based on false beliefs

There are regular cases where positive achievement is achieved from a false belief. This includes in your daily life. Believing the false, if only temporarily, is a technique we all use to remove distracting thoughts. The following are two examples.

- * A placebo helps when the patient falsely believes it is medicine. When the patient knows what it is, a placebo doesn't help.
- A freshman at the University of Georgia, Jessica is entering final exam week before winter break. Unknown to her, her beloved 14 year old cat Tiger just died back home in Savannah. The night before her first test she has her weekly telephone conversation with her parents back home. Jessica asks how Tiger is doing. Her mother says Tiger is doing just fine, adding that the cat is playing with a toy on the couch. After hanging up, Jessica's mother feels bad about lying, but thinks it was best considering the exams. After a productive week, Jessica takes a bus home to Savannah where her parents break the bad news and explain why they delayed it. Jessica understands, agreeing that the news would have distracted her from her studies.

In both these cases it was a false belief that lead to the desired achievement. In both cases, knowledge of the truth would have hindered the achievement.

This shows that positive achievement arising from a belief is not proof that the belief is correct.

Patients who get better after taking a placebo often swear the pills had to be medicine. To them, getting better is the proof. Even when the doctor informs them it was a placebo, some patients continue to believe it was medicine because they got better.

A sincere faith involves a psychological, often irrational, attachment to the ideas. This psychological aspect is both what helps the placebo-taking patient get better (Most doctors believe positive ‘I am getting better’ thinking aids recovery) and what prevents him from accepting his belief as false even when confronted with the facts. This psychological attachment has both a positive and a negative result.

* * * *

This points to the fascinating relationship humans have with facts. A human cannot function as it desires without the distortion and suppression of facts.

Even a search for the truth requires false beliefs to focus mental attention. In other words, a search for the truth requires lies.

* * * *

Olympic psychology

For world class Olympic athletes a common rule is that one must believe one is going to win in order to win. Paraphrasing a top speed skater interviewed the day before an Olympic race, “You shouldn’t just *think* you will win, you

must *know* you will win.” In a track, swim or bike race, the difference between first and fourth may be a fraction of a second, and the winning psychology can mean the difference between a win and loss. Of course most of these athletes who are sure they will win will not win, and those who win do not win every time. Even when the belief turns out to be wrong, it may better the athlete from, say, fifth to third or third to second.

* * * *

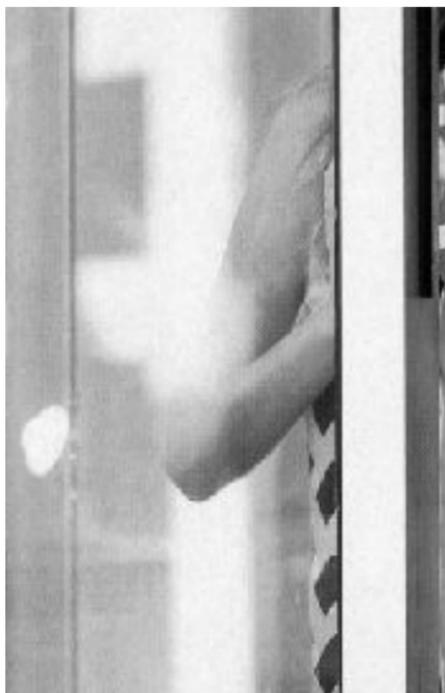
Whether the idolized is a sports coach, historical leader or artist, most worshipers of a human being worship an unreal representation. Much of the misrepresentation is intentional, followers embellishing good qualities and glossing over bad.

At first it seems strange that groups intentionally misrepresent the person they supposedly idolize. However, similar to sweeping absolute statements mentioned in *Conceits*, the representations aren't about complete factual accuracy. Amongst other things, they are concerned with gaining and maintaining members' loyalty and spirit, group self importance and gaining power versus other groups. The word *idolizes* implies the act of changing, changing something into an idol.

It should not surprise that during a political election supporters put their candidate in the best light and their competitor in the worst. Their representation isn't about truth, it's about winning the election. If you ask either campaign manager why she doesn't include bad facts about her candidate in the campaign literature, she'll look at you as if you are crazy.

The previous chapter showed how false beliefs can lead to productive practical results and how practical results do not prove that the underlying beliefs are correct. Do you believe that the make believe of art can produce results where telling the truth would not? For example, can fiction be a better way to teach people important ideas and concepts? People sometimes say “To illustrate my point, let me give you a theoretical example.”





* * * *

All that stuff was just made up. Especially the embarrassing stuff. Well, made up may be too strong a term. Toned down is probably more accurate.

* * * *

The truth isn't linear, which is I why I don't talk straight.

* * * *

That something could be worse doesn't make it good.

* * * *

DID YOU KNOW?

Animal behavior researchers have determined that a dog can identify an animal as a dog even though, through extensive human breeding, dogs come in an extremely wide variety of shapes, sizes, forms, colors and looks.

Someone once said to me, "You certainly are interested in accents." I thought about that for a couple of seconds then said "Yeah, I guess I am."

I mean other peoples' accents, not me mimicking them. I'm often more interested in someone's accent than he or she is.

Overhearing me talk, a woman from California once said, "You're from the city and you're definitely from the Midwest." A match made in heaven! Love at first linguistic interpretation!

It is the sense of smell that evokes in me— I step outside in the middle of the night, into a cool midnight breeze— and in the smell of coolness and dirt and wet grass there is a reminder of that thing I have been following or that has been following me— and the harder I smell, the more it disappears

* * * *

Henry: "Your book is way too long, so I just read the first three chapters and imaged the rest. Didn't like the ending."

* * * *

Being a homewrecker isn't as much fun as it sounds.

* * * *

Pop and bubbler. You've got me pegged. Sometimes if I say pop, people don't know what I'm talking about.

* * * *

You are allowed to critique this book with your aesthetic biases, but only if you also critique your aesthetic biases.

* * * *

Someone told me that Bela, as in Bela Lugosi and Bela Bartok, is pronounced Bela. All this time I'd been pronouncing it Bela.

Your smirk is sexy, your smile sweet. It's a nice contrast.

* * * *

I am critiquing aesthetics, on a level rebelling against old fashioned literary conceits, but, as a writer, I have my own aesthetic tastes. The jumbled up form serves a practical philosophical purpose, but also appeals to my taste. Linearity and symmetry are too cliché-ey for my sensibilities. Too artificial, cognitive biased.

The conflict between rebelling against traditional aesthetics while using my own aesthetic tastes likely results in some muddiness, inconsistencies in the text. Which if anything fits in with the philosophy of the book. A work free of flaws is as realistic and honest as a purple elephant in a tutu on your front lawn. It's something dumbed down to amuse kindergarteners or for political campaign advertising. Sometimes hard to tell which.

* * * *

And the Big Bad Congressman from District 3 says he will come and take all the children's lollipops. And all the children cry 'Please Mr. Big Bad Congressman from District 3, please don't come and take our lollipops.'

Did you know?

Ancient Egyptian tomb paintings showed what the buried wanted brought with him or her to the afterlife. This included slaves, animals, fruit orchards, buildings. The insides of the tombs often also contained small models of these things. As the tomb buried were royalty, they wanted to continue to live the luxurious life they had lived on earth.



tomb model of a boat and people

* * * *

Telling your sincere guts doesn't work. Inside your stomach, your most personal thoughts have the correct movie lighting and music. When you put them on a plate under the kitchen lights, they look slight and cheesy.

* * * *

Insincerity is the glue that holds together a social group. No social structure can withstand rampant candor from its members. At the Thanksgiving dinner table, the last thing grandmother wants is for people to say what they really think of each other.

* * * *

Children can have it— An unhinderedness in their games— in how they look at things.

A man wouldn't give a rock a second thought—but a kid can adore it, see caves, castles

“Of course, I'll still say that I love you and that you're a complete and total fox, but best friends do that, right?”

Absolutely. 100 percent. XOXO, Sophy

The human being was born with unearthly desires but must follow earthly avenues.

People judge a work of art by deciding what they think it is-- how the pieces fit together, what is its intended meaning, genre etc-- then judging that. When someone says a work of art is trite and silly, what he is saying is his interpretation of what is the art is trite and silly.

I didn't say the work can't also be be trite and silly.

* * * *

"You'd probably vote for HAL 9000 for President."

"Of course. He even was American. Invented at the University of Illinois."

"But he tried to kill all the humans."

"What's got to be done has got to be done."

"You scare me."

* * * *

Henry: "The problem isn't that you're from Wisconsin, but that you're proud of being from Wisconsin."

"What's wrong with Wisconsin?"

Henry: "This is what I'm talking about."



Which cyclist is going fastest? Most will say the cyclist on our left is going the fastest and the one on the right the slowest. There are, however, unanswered questions that make it impossible to know. Did they start at the same place? Did they start at the same time? Are they moving forward or backward? Are they moving? I've seen sprint cyclists stand still during a race. Even if it's a normal *1-2-3-Go!* race, it's possible the guy on the right is going the fastest and the guy on the left the slowest at the moment the image was shot. Catching up, slowing down and switching positions are normal parts of all races.

Sure I can identify flaws in this book. I'm the one who left them in. If I had the guts I would have included many more, put a couple of earthquake cracks through the middle. It causes me great angst that I didn't.

Did you know?

Sculpture often is a commentary on or response to previous sculpture, so to understand sculpture one has to know the history.

Breaking aesthetic rules gives insight into the small mindedness of the reader, though the small minded reader doesn't see it that way.

To humans, the meaning of life, of everything, is a matter of mood.

Sophy: “The heart wants what the heart wants.”

Explain how art would be different if humans had the night vision of owls or the sensory abilities of bats.

Authentic Colors?



1800s Harper's Woodcuts, or woodcuts prints from the magazine Harper's Weekly, are popularly collected today. The images show nineteenth century life, including celebrities, sports, US Presidents, war, high society, nature and street life. Though originally black and white, some have been hand colored over the years. As age is important to collectors, prints that were colored in the 1800s are more valuable than those colored recently. The problem is that modern ideas lead collectors to misdate the coloring.

Due to their ideas about the *old fashioned* Victorian era, most people assume that vintage 1800s coloring will be subtle, soft, pallid and conservative. However, 1800s coloring was typically bright, gaudy, bold and even tacky to modern taste. As Victorian people didn't have color televisions, motion pictures

or video games, and were restricted in their travel, they liked their images of exotic places and faraway celebrities to be colored exciting. A learned forger might knowingly use historically incorrect colors, knowing the average person today would consider authentic colors to be fake.

Art reviews as a reflection of the critic

Most art critiquing is trying to force a work into the critic's pet form and shape. The corners of a square peg rhetorically lopped off to make it fit the critic's preferred round hole.

One of my favorite stories is about *Avalon*, Barry Levinson's well regarded 1990 movie about a Polish-Jewish immigrant family's experiences in their new home of America. Responding to a critic who downgraded the movie because it didn't detail their previous lives back in Europe, Levinson said "But that's not what the movie is about."



Depicting Jesus Christ in Art



Beyond the West's blue eyed dishwater blonde version, it has long been common for Jesus Christ to be depicted in art as looking like the local people. The old Ethiopian art on the upper right shows him as black. The Chinese painting on the left shows him as Asian in Asian dress. Of course, the real Jesus probably looked like none of these three depictions.

Did you know? In real life, Abbot and Costello didn't like each other and often feuded, while Laurel and Hardy were lifelong close friends.

Also, despite their on screen personas, Laurel was the smart one in real life and wrote and helped produce their comedies. Hardy was just an actor. Laurel was paid a higher salary by the movie studio and Hardy was okay with that because he knew his friend did more work.

* * * *

There are two ways in life to get into trouble. One is to lie. The other is to tell the truth.

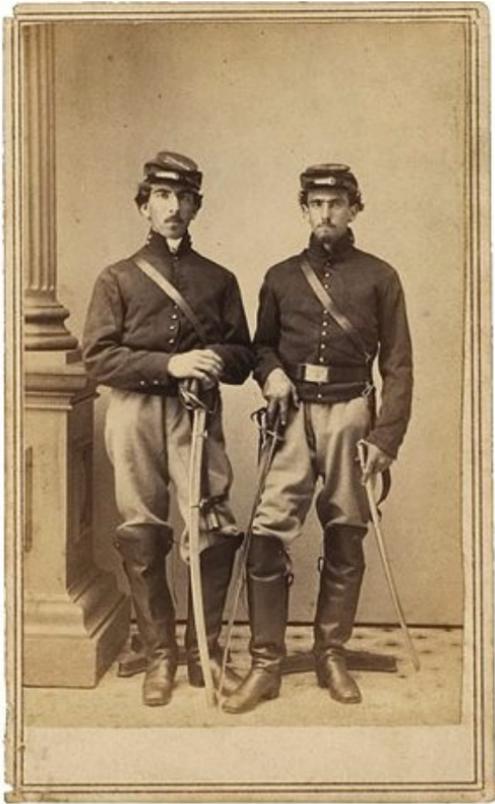
Why all the sour faces?



As a photography historian I am often asked the question why don't people in old photos ever smile? The answer is early photography was primitive and the camera's shutter had to be left open a good while to take the photo. Back then there was no such thing as an snap shot. The subjects had to stay perfectly still during the time the shutter was open or the image would come out blurry. This means they rarely smiled, were usually sitting in a chair or standing while leaning against something such as a wall, book shelf or table. Early photography studios sometimes used wooden stands and braces to hold still a standing person.

Away from the photography studio, nineteenth century people likely smiled, laughed and joked around as much as

we do.



Behind the American Civil War soldiers you can see the bases of the wooden stands used to hold them still as the photograph was taken.

A nice thing about living on the West Coast is 7am comes at 10.

* * * *

I notice that I brush my teeth and check my hair before making an important phone call.

* * * *

You take what I say too figuratively.

* * * *

Maybe my writing is a condition.

* * * *

I was a charming drunk. At least I thought so.

* * * *

Sophy: “When you say I’m a unique and special person, do

you mean like special needs?”

* * * *

You aren't just any choice, but a real choice that speaks to me a lot louder than I sometimes want. You are such a real choice I sometimes see in my mind chucking it all. Not as in, 'Gee wouldn't it be neat,' but as in, holy fucking shit. I can see myself falling for you so badly, which is why I can be guarded. Meeting you makes me reconsider things about my life I thought I was fine with. I've never before met anyone who's made me think like that. You're such a real choice that it is really hard for me, because it's nearing impossible for me now to do anything about how I feel. I could act irresponsibly but I think that would probably break both our hearts.

* * * *

With my shiny earrings and rings, the women might not like me but the magpies do.

* * * *

I love you Professor Brodsky, but, since I'm trying to be platonic this week, could you maybe wear a bulky sweater to class?

* * * *

“I went back and read some of the stuff we wrote recently. I want us to be open and deep and messy and all that with each other. I want us to be close deep messy friends, and I want you to want us to be close deep messy friends. And if this is what you want, I promise to be a good friend and do my best to protect you too. I'm pouring my heart out.”

It's what I want. Truly. Close, deep and messy sounds perfect to me.

* * * *

Don't be so flattered. I want to sleep with everyone.

* * * *

When I get really depressed things change, my heart is altered. I don't mean darker but different.

* * * *

My soul is so dark my black heart appears off white in front
of it.

* * * *

I've never understood humans— they try to hide things—
they try to hide their humanness

They have narrow desires— But I think they have it in
them to be bigger

Did you know?



German artist Albrecht Durer (1471-1528) is ranked as one of history's master printmakers, perhaps the most technically skilled in Western art. During his time his etchings, engravings and woodcuts were emulated and glorified, owned by kings. To help prevent them from being counterfeited, Durer made his prints so detailed and expertly crafted that no one else had the talent to copy them. Realize that back then there were no such things as Xeroxes, photocopiers or computer scanners. To recreate a print the copier had to do the whole thing over by hand. Pictured is Durer's circa 1497 woodcut 'Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse' showing incredible detail for the laborious woodcut process.

David: “What do you think happened to the characters after the last scene?”

Henry: “It's just a movie. Nothing happened. The actors went home.”

.....

Cognitive Psychology

Humans have learned and inborn mental methods, biases and assumptions used to consciously and nonconsciously identify things and judge the complex information in our daily lives. We compare side-by-side objects to judge size and speed. We identify distant silhouetted objects by how their shapes match up with our memories. We 'recognize' objects and qualities in paintings, sketches and movies using these same nonconscious methods.

Realize that humans never see the entirety of an object or scene, any object or scene. Not only are things such as coffee cups and sticks and tree branches partially visibly obscured by overlapping other objects, but we can never see all sides and parts of an object at once. Even with an apple you've turned over in your hands, you can't be sure whether it's fresh or rotten in the core until you bite or cut it apart. Humans live, learn, perceive and function in an environment where information is always obscured or otherwise hidden from view.

Ambiguity is a concept essential to understanding humans, as humans constantly make choices in the face of ambiguous information. Often caused by missing or obscured information, ambiguity means there is more than one possible explanation to something, and the viewer doesn't know, often can't know, which one if any is correct. In the face of ambiguity, the mind almost always picks the explanation that meets its expectations and experience.

Kurt Godel

Perhaps no one better personifies the old adage that there's a fine line between genius and insanity than 20th century Austrian born American mathematician and logician Kurt Godel.

Kurt Godel (1906-78) is commonly ranked as one of history's intellectual giants, on the order of Aristotle, Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein, the latter who was his colleague and friend. Stanford University professor Solomon Feferman said Godel is "Beyond comparison...the most important logician of our times."

Written when he was just 25, Kurt Godel's incompleteness theorems showed that no closed system can prove everything and cannot be used to even prove its own accuracy. The latter is similar to the philosophical idea that "A human cannot prove the accuracy and reliability of his own mind, because he uses this same mind to judge the accuracy." And if you add parts in an attempt to check the system's reliability, you've merely created a larger closed system-- Godel's theorems can't be escaped. In a time when mathematicians were trying to make a logical and neatly structured system to show everything, Godel's theorems were considered earth shattering and today are ranked as landmarks in the history of mathematics and philosophy. Godel invented his own mathematical language to illustrate his theorems.

While vocationally accomplished and acknowledged as brilliant in his lifetime, Godel was almost as well known for his extreme eccentricities and periods of mental instability.

The following are a few examples of his curious ideas and ways:

* While a Professor of Mathematics at Princeton New Jersey's Institute for Advanced Studies, he would wear outside a heavy full length fur coat on the hottest days of summer and leave open the windows and doors of his home on the coldest, snowiest days of winter.

* He stated he didn't trust common sense.

* Near the end of his life he was working to mathematically prove the existence of God.

* He was born in Austria and immigrated to the US as an adult, and, while studying for the test to become an American citizen, he became convinced that the US Constitution legally allowed for the United States to become a fascist dictatorship. Einstein advised him to keep this theory to himself, for fear voicing it would hinder his chances of becoming a citizen. Unable to contain himself, Godel told his theory to the judge administering the exam. Lucky for Godel, the judge thought he making a joke and idly dismissed it. Godel passed the exam and became an American citizen.

* He became irrationally paranoid of germs and being poisoned to the point that he only ate food prepared by his wife. When his wife fell ill and was in the hospital unable to cook for him, he starved to death. He didn't even trust food he himself made.

My intent here is to create something that can't be solved, or entirely solved, by the audience, that the audience realizes can't be solved by the audience, and that they realize their methods for trying to solve it are inherently flawed.

One way I express the non-simpleness of things is to make things complicated. Unsolvable. I hide things, shift things.

Henry: "What kind of women do you like?"

David: "There are different kinds?"

* * * *

"I have better taste in music than you."

"What are you talking about about? We like the same music."

"Yes, but I like it for more important reasons."

* * * *

If this book is a Rorschach test the only way to fail the test is to not see that it is a Rorschach test and not know you are the patient. Otherwise, your answer is fine with me.

* * * *

"Paragraph twelve looks like two bears."

"I'm sorry, but I'm the author and I don't see it."

* * * *

Art should go beyond it's format and genre. Best in class is a consolation prize to justify the entrance fees.

“Will computers ever think like humans?”

“Not if they're well designed.”

* * * *

I'm so confident in my genius that I judge the validity of the judges by whether or not I win the grand prize.

* * * *

Henry: "This place is getting kind of cluttered. Maybe we should get rid of some of your books."

"How about you stab me in the heart, how about you tear out my heart and throw it in the alley dumpster."

Henry: "Okay."

Most objections to this book will really be due to the readers' personal taste. I don't believe any of the theories presented are incorrect.

I see the Kingdom in the distance, but it is a lonely vision.

The Impossiblenss in Translating Poetry

Beyond the changed words, the foreign language translation of a poem alters and often destroys the original poem. With rare exception the translation of a beautiful poem can be similarly beautiful or literally faithful, but not both.

Poetry is uniquely tied to the native language-- the unique word definition, culture, diction, rhyme, sound, meter, feel and even physical length of words and phrases. Due to the literal and figurative differences between languages, a foreign language translation of a poem not only changes the literal words but the poem. It is not possible to change the language and perfectly preserve the original meaning.

This is elementally illustrated by the translation of simple rhyming poems. While 'dog' and 'fog' rhyme, the standard Spanish translations of 'perro' and 'neblina' do not. To make the translation rhyme, the translator must take liberties with the literal meaning. To keep intact the literal meaning, she must omit the rhyming.

In order to preserve artistic meaning, many translators consciously dismiss literal translation. The translation is often as much the artistic creation of the translator as it is of the original poet.

The reader of a translation is not reading the original

poem. The translation may be closely related and beautiful and profound, but it's something different. This illustrates the problem with those who take literally modern translations of ancient texts.

My love life is so complicated I need a program, GPS and a Russian/English dictionary. The Russian/English dictionary is because I'm tired of getting a plate of butter at the restaurant.

Actually, my love life isn't complicated. But neither is a shark attack.

A search for the truth requires leaving society, if not geographically.

* * * *

I was told you should be your own hardest critic, so I give this book a B+

* * * *

A problem with slippery slope arguments is the slippery slope can go both directions.

Did you know?

In his last years, French novelist Marcel Proust lived and wrote in near complete seclusion, rarely leaving his Paris apartment and sound insulating with cork the walls.

* * * *

My mom holding up a movie in the store: "Have I seen this?" . . . Me: "Yes." . . . Mom: "Did I like it?"

* * * *

My obfuscation takes you closer to my truth but further away from the facts.

I'll tell you what I really think, but not in a way that can't hold up in a court of law.

"What's David babbling about?" David: "Exactly."

The two lines between the two lines between the two lines-- read between those.

My working theory is if I don't understand what I just wrote, no one else will either.

Then I put it in a box, paddle lock it, bury it in undisclosed back yard and cover the spot with thorny brush.

Then later realize I left my watch in there and go back with a shovel at 1am.

In short, if you want my deepest thoughts dig at the ticking brush. Please return the watch, though. Much appreciated.

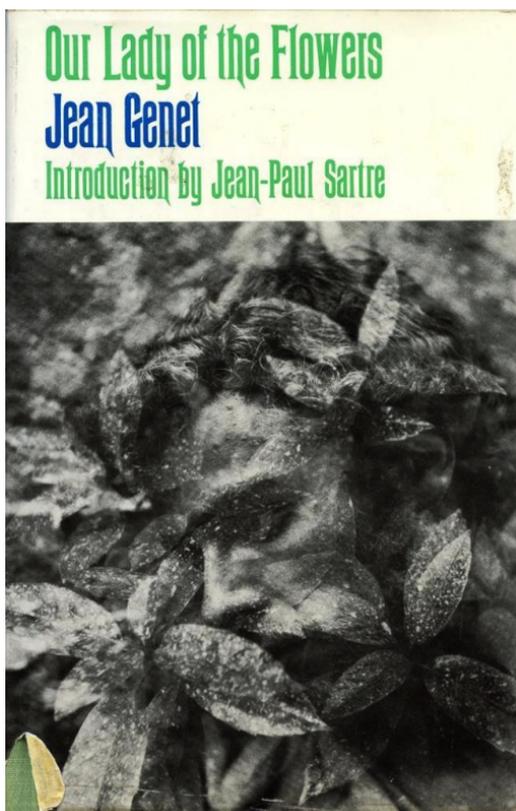
* * * *

There are things you should understand about me. I'm just not going to tell you what they are.

* * * *

I've gotten good at suppressing my rage in public. I mean expressing.

The healthful thing is to get it out and away from you asap. At least that's what I read in a book I wrote.



Did you know Jean Genet wrote his famed dreamlike novel *Our Lady of the Flowers* in a solitary prison cell after being sentenced to life in prison? He covertly wrote it for himself, hiding the ongoing manuscript in his straw bed.



Cognitive psychology: shape, pattern and form biases



Human visual perception is profoundly influenced by biases about forms, shapes and patterns. Humans have ingrained and nonconscious attractions for specific forms, shapes and patterns. Some of these biases are genetic, while others are learned. These biases greatly influence how we perceive, organize and label, and are essential to the quick identifications needed to go through life.

You instantly perceived a dog in the black shape that started this chapter, even though the shape lacked fur, eyes, whiskers, correct size and other essential doggy details. You didn't have to contemplate the shape. You perceived it instantly.

The problem for humans is that their biases for certain shapes, forms and patterns are so strong and ingrained that they will perceive these things when don't objectively exist. These biases lead to many visual illusions.

Our form and pattern biases are shown when we perceive horses or castles or hot rods or other familiar shapes in clouds. These ‘identifications’ are subjective to the viewer, and do not objectively exist in cloud. There are thousands of possible connect-the-dot shapes in a cloud, but you perceive, or mentally pick out, that which matches your knowledge. The horse or castle is a projection of what exists in your mind. If there were no horses on earth or in fantasy books, you would not perceive a horse in the cloud, as you wouldn’t ‘recognize’ it.



We perceive a person in the lines and squiggles of the Rembrandt etching just as many do an animal in the cloud.

The connect-the-dot figures in stars don't exist except as

we draw them. The familiar faces or figures we perceive in burnt toast, wood grain and stones are projections of our minds. What you perceive is as much a reflection of you as what you are looking at.

I hope it dawns on you when you pick up a stone that 'looks just like Elvis,' the stone existed long before Elvis was born. It would be silly to believe the stone was formed by glaciers 10,000 years ago to commemorate Elvis' future rise to popularity on the pop charts.

* * * *

The Face on Mars

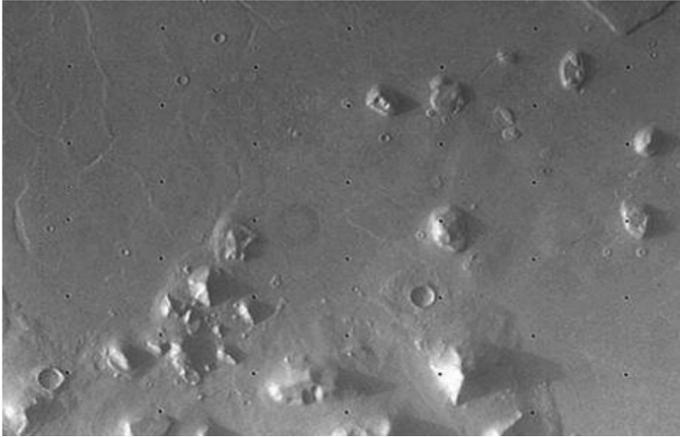


In 1976 the NASA spacecraft Viking 1 took photographs of an area on the planet Mars that contained many giant mesas, craters and other geological formations. One of the mesas in the photographs somewhat resembled a human face. As should not be unexpected, many humans on earth became interested in this 'human face' (and, not surprising, were less interested in the formations that didn't resemble human body parts). Some were and still are convinced the mesa was

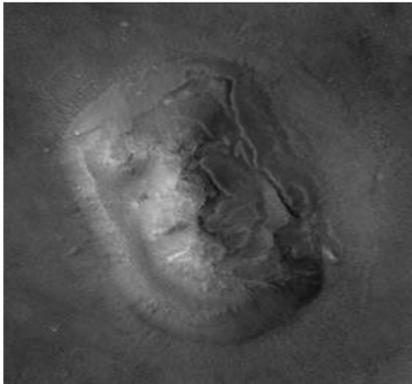
constructed by intelligent life form. This perception of a face is a pattern bias, a projection of the viewer's mind whose own face has a similar form. If someone has patterns in her mind (human face, kitty cat, square, letter 'B,' house key, baseball cap, house) and looks at enough information (such as all the geological formations on a planet's surface), she will be able to pick out some of these patterns in the information. Seeing the 'face of Nixon' isn't proof a potato was built by intelligent life form. It means that out of millions and millions and millions of potatoes, a few are bound to somewhat resemble a former US President who had a sticky outy nose.

As the following images show, the face on Mars is just one of many mesas, hills and craters that come in a wide variety of shapes.





Just another mesa in the crowd



Years later, the above photograph of the same mesa was shot at a different angle and time of day. This shows that angle and shadow contributed to the perception of a face. If originally shot at this angle and time of day, the mesa may not have been perceived as a face and humans on earth

would have considered it no more significant than any of the other blobs in the photographs.



Smiley face of Mars?

* * * *

Is it a Vase or Two Faces?



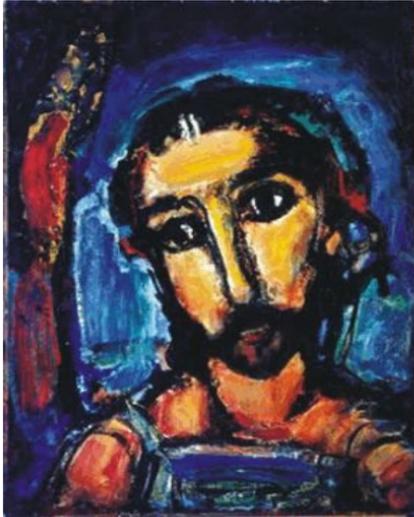
The standard *Is it a vase or is it two faces looking at each other?* visual illusion shows that humans project a

subjective, or personal, identity onto an object. You initially see a black vase or a pair of white faces looking at each other. As you stare longer your perception will be replaced by the other view, then your perception will flip back and forth between the two views. The image is unchanging, while your perception of it changes.

Of course it is neither a vase nor faces, but a black and white abstract pattern. The pattern could be perceived as many things. However, in part by your biases and by the leading question ('Is it a vase or faces?'), you perceived a vase and faces. As I look at the image, I could see how the top or bottom portion could be perceived as two boots placed back to back. The chin to nose areas could be perceived as little black faces. The black shape could be seen as a table. In fact there's no reason, beyond viewer's predilection for order, that the pattern has to depict anything specific.











If a human perceives a rabbit in the above Albrecht Durer picture and a dog does not, which animal is demonstrating better visual perception? Humans sometimes use as evidence of a dog's dimwittedness that the dog 'doesn't see' the animal in a magazine or book, when, of course, there isn't a real animal on the page. It's ink on paper. From its sense of smell alone, the dog would know there ain't no rabbit in the above picture. The dog is faulted for not seeing what isn't there.

Time wounds all heals.

I do want all of you, body, heart and mind. And as time goes by I find myself wanting you more and more.

Am I allowed to answer your question? I don't think I should have promised I would be platonic for the week.

Sigh. I'll just say that I love you, and want you and wish like crazy I could have you.

If you tell me it is okay for me to break my promise I'll say more.

I am not gutless. I just don't know which way is right, so pick the one that keeps me out of trouble.

I'm confused but agreeable.

Took too many damn philosophy classes in college, that's my problem. Can't find an answer to anything anymore.

My dad has it easy. He was an engineer and can answer everything with his slide rule.

Don't hide dad's slide rule. He won't know how to put on his pants or open the refrigerator.

Studying aesthetic perception as it applies to the art, physical and mental worlds shows us that there are inherent limitations to human perception, knowledge and understanding of the universe and the things in it. Our perception, judgment and thought are formed through inborn and learned biases, taste, arbitrariness, subjectivity, education and personal experiences. Even our senses involve illusion, physical limitations and unsolvable errors. Just as art involves fiction and fantasy, so does our perception of the universe and the physical world around us.

* * * *

A Discharge song hits all the notes. I mean that literally. Sometimes simultaneously.

In art, people tend to like meaning that is implied rather than explicitly spelled out. A movie that makes obvious or beats you over the head with its point is critically downgraded, even if the point is considered valid. A joke is deemed a failure when the teller explains the meaning. Why do you think this is?

* * * *

Henry: "I get my news from People magazine."

"I get mine from CNN.com"

Henry: "That's what I meant."

* * * *

Neuroaesthetics is the name for the scientific study of aesthetic perception, and involves neuroscientists, biologists, psychologists and others. Many scientists are skeptical of the field, or at least of getting concrete answers, because sublime, beauty and ugliness are subjective and can't be objectively identified or measured. Many artists and art lovers dislike the scientific study of art perception because they feel the knowledge ruins the mystery important to art.

* * * *

One of the assumptions people have for art is that there is a meaning, just as many people assume (or, rather, hope-assume) there is meaning and order to the universe. Even when they know they don't know what is the meaning and order they automatically assume they are there.

* * * *

Paul Dirac was a Physics Nobel Prize winner at Cambridge who many believe was autistic. He gained international fame as a mathematical and nuclear physics genius, but was not in tune with many social things. A story is at a dinner party a colleague of his got up and danced a waltz with a woman. When the colleague returned to the table, Dirac asked him why he got up and danced. The colleague said he enjoyed dancing, that it was fun to dance with and meet women and many people enjoy dancing with other people. Dirac was still mystified.

The Science of Art and Artifact Authentication

Though science has its limitations in authentication, it has long been used to identify fakes and forgeries of everything from priceless paintings to trading cards, Ming vases to antique advertising posters. This week's column looks at some of the more interesting and important methods and how they are used.

Ultraviolet light

Ultraviolet light is one of the most used and useful tools for authentication and fake detection. Many collectors own a black light, the nickname for longwave ultraviolet light. Some of the biggest forgery cases have been solved in part due to ultraviolet light examination. This includes the Adolf Hitler diary fakes of the 1980s and the forged photos of photographer Man Ray. Simple black light examination showed these forgeries were made with materials too modern for the subjects.

Ultraviolet light is invisible to the human eyes, but when shined on a material the material will often fluoresce, or glow in the dark. Different materials fluoresce in different brightnesses and colors. The quality of the fluorescence originates at the atomic level of the material. The brightness and color will be different from material to material. The key is it can show qualities and difference in materials that are unseen under normal daylight.

Ultraviolet light covers a range of light frequency. The black light most collectors use is in the long wave range, while there are lights that give off shortwave light. For most collectors, the longwave black light is all they will ever need, but shortwave is useful in the areas of stamp, gems and fine art glass collecting. Shortwave ultraviolet light is somewhat dangerous, but safe to use if proper precautions are used including limiting use, not shining it directly on skin and eyes. Black light is safe, just don't look directly into the light source.

The following are just some of the uses of ultraviolet light:

** Identifying reproductions and fakes of antiques made from modern paper and card stock* A black light is effective in identifying many, though not all, modern paper and cardboard stocks. This means it can identify many modern reprints and fakes of antique paper items, including posters, postcards, trading cards and documents.

Starting in the late 1940s, manufacturers of many products began adding 'optical brighteners' and other new chemicals to their products. Optical brighteners are invisible dyes that fluoresce brightly under ultraviolet light. They were used to make products appear brighter in normal daylight, which contains some ultraviolet light. Optical brighteners were added to laundry detergent and clothes to help drown out stains and to give the often advertised 'whiter than white whites.' Optical brighteners were added to plastic toys to make them brighter and more colorful. Paper manufacturers joined the act as well, adding optical brighteners to many, though not all, of their white papers stocks.

A black light can identify many trading cards, posters, photos and other paper items that contain optical brighteners.

In a dark room and under black light optical brighteners will usually fluoresce a very bright light blue or bright white. To find out what this looks like shine a recently made white trading card, family snapshot or most types of today's computer paper under a black light.

If paper stock fluoresces very bright as just described, it almost certainly was made after the mid 1940s.

It is important to note that not all modern papers will fluoresce this way as optical brighteners are not added to all modern paper. For example, many modern wirephotos have no optical brighteners. This means that if a paper doesn't fluoresce brightly this does not mean it is necessarily old. However, with few exceptions, if a paper object fluoresces very brightly, it could not have been made before World War II.



An '1880s tobacco card' glowing bright light blue, identifying it as a modern reproduction.

The beauty of this black light test is you can use it on items where you are not an expert. You may be no expert on 1920s German Expressionist movie posters, World War I

postcards or American Revolutionary War era etchings, but you can still identify many modern reprints of those items. In the same way, the black light can also identify modern reproduction of antique cloth items, because the white cloth or stitching sometimes fluoresces very brightly when made after WWII.

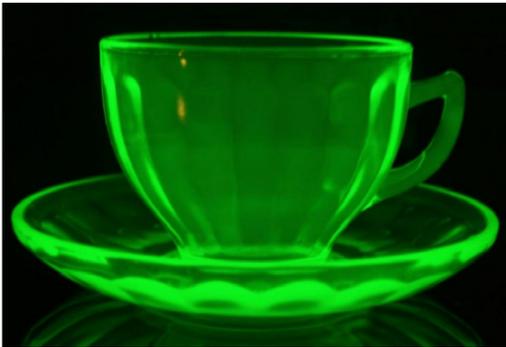
Ultraviolet light and Identifying Alterations. The added glue, paper and other substances used in alterations and restoration will often show up under black light, as the added material fluoresce differently. Antique toys, iron banks and fishing lures are often identified as being repainted or revarnished in modern times because the paint or varnish fluoresces too brightly. Old paint and varnish tends to lose its fluorescence with time. Game used sports uniform experts identify alterations because the added cloth fluoresces differently than the original cloth. Even stitching can be identified as modern.



The repair to this vase can be seen under blacklight

* *Ultraviolet light and Identifying art glass.* The color of the ultraviolet fluorescence helps authenticate different kinds of valuable vintage glass. For example, Pre-1945 Lalique glass

usually fluoresces yellow or peach, while later made Lalique glass fluoresces different colors. Uranium glass fluoresces bright yellow or light green. Antique Burmese art glass tends to fluoresce bright yellow, while modern reproductions do not.



The popularly collected uranium glass fluoresces bright green under black light

* *Ultraviolet and materials identification.* The color of ultraviolet induced fluorescence of many materials is known and the ultraviolet lights can help identify the material. This includes gems, ivory and amber. Some materials fluoresce differently in longwave versus shortwave ultraviolet light.

* *Identifying fake watermarks on documents.* Many important historical documents and artworks are dated in part by watermarks in the paper. Real watermarks are a physical part of the paper, put in the paper during manufacture. Some people try to make fake watermarks but writing the design in mineral oil. These fake watermarks are usually clearly identified under black light as the mineral oil glows.

* *Security marking.* Many important objects, including Barry

Bonds' record breaking home runs balls, are marked with invisible ink. The marks are invisible in daylight, but readable under black light. Some US paper currency has bands that are viewable under black light. They also have bands viewable with infrared viewers. A black light is a useful tool for authenticating money.



The black light marks on Barry Bonds' 600th home run ball. Major League Baseball placed the marks on the balls used during his at bats.

Infrared Light

Infrared is another frequency of light that cannot be seen with human eyes. The infrared camera and viewer translates infrared light into a visual image on a screen allowing humans to view details and qualities in the infrared range. With an infrared camera, you can take an infrared photograph. In fact, infrared photography is a popular form of art photography, as it gives a different, surreal view of the world. Unlike with black light, you don't shine infrared light on an object, but view what's already there.

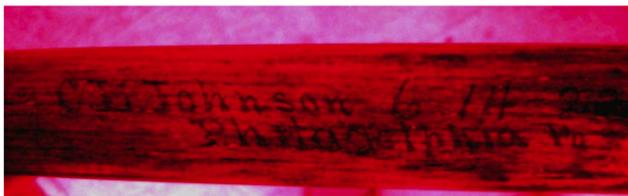
The following are some uses of infrared viewers and

cameras:

Infrared: Seeing Through Paint

In the historical art and artifact world, infrared viewers are best known for their ability to view through the top layer of paint on a painted item. Art historians and museum conservators view through the paint to see any background sketches or earlier versions of art. They do this to learn about how the painting was made and how the artist worked, planned and changed things. Studying the style and types of changes and background images is useful in determining if a painting was by a famous painter— his or her habits and techniques already being known. This process is referred to as *infrared reflectography*. Forgeries have been discovered because they were painted over paintings of modern subjects.

Reading heavily faded writing. Certain ink and pencil writing on old documents that have become invisible to nearly invisible in daylight can be sometimes be read in the infrared range.



Hidden writing revealed on a 1922 game used baseball bat. The grease pen text, faded to unreadable to the naked eye but seen with the infrared camera, was written by a worker at the famed bat manufacturer Hillerich & Bradsby of Louisville Kentucky when the Philadelphia Athletics player returned the broken bat to receive new ones. The text gives the player's name, team and the date the bat was returned, and helps in authenticating the bat as game used by the player.

Identifying foreign or fake materials. The added materials for restoration and other alterations can sometimes be seen in the infrared range.

An infrared viewer can help in identifying some items that have been repainted or touched up. The touched up area may be unnoticeable in visible light, but may stand out in the infrared range.

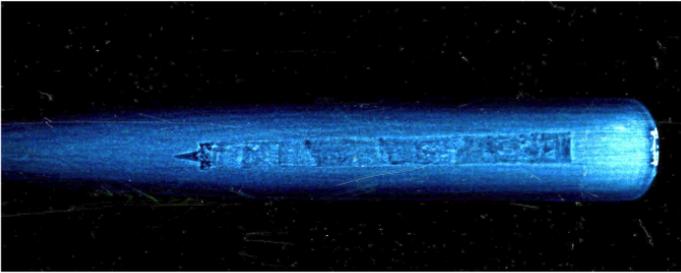
X-rays

With art, collectibles and artifacts, X-rays are used in two different ways. One is the same x-ray examinations we get at the doctor's office, while the other is similar to how we use black light.

'See through' effect of X-rays

X-ray machines are used to examine paintings and other objects in a similar way they are used to examine human bodies. As with ultraviolet and infrared light, X-rays are a form of light invisible to human eyes. X-rays pass straight through some materials, but are reflected or absorbed by others.

In the physician's office the X-ray machine shoots X-rays at the patient and has X-ray sensitive photographic film on the other the other side of the patient (Duly note that 'film' is an old-fashioned term and technology as even X-ray machines have hit the digital age). The X-rays pass through the patient's skin and flesh and go to the film, but are absorbed by the bones. The result is the X-ray photograph shows the inside bones, allowing the doctor to examine the inside of the body.



X-ray photo of a Pete Rose game used baseball bat showing cork inside. 'Coking' a bat is against baseball rules.

Art historians get a similar inside look at paintings and artifacts as X-rays go through some paints, cloth and other materials but are absorbed or reflected by others.

For paintings and as with infrared lights, it often shows what was painted underneath the first level graphics we see with our naked eyes. Famous artists are known to have had standard ways and personal styles in how they constructed their paintings, which helps the historian in judging the authenticity, and some paintings started out as dramatically different designs. X-rays have shown that Picasso's famous 'The Old Guitar Player' started off as an old woman instead of an old man, and an El Greco portrait started as a still life.

X-ray fluorescence. In x-ray fluorescence tests, x-rays or gamma rays are shined on the object. The atoms in the material are excited and in return give off a fluorescence. This is similar to the fluorescence given off under black light. The x-ray induced fluorescence originates at the atomic level of the material, and scientists measure the fluorescence to determine the chemicals and their amounts in the materials. When the chemicals are known, it can help date objects such as paintings, because it is often known when specific chemicals were used in paint and other human made

materials.



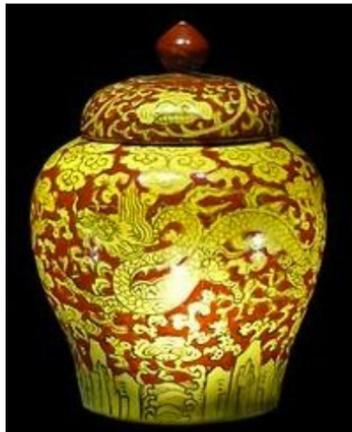
X-ray of Jan Vermeer's painting 'Girl with a Pearl Earring.' The white areas are from white lead paint, a type of paint used during Vermeer's time.

Radiometric dating is a highly advanced method used to date things from rocks to fossils to paintings. It was invented by legendary British nuclear physicist Ernest Rutheford, and University of Chicago professor Willard Libby won the 1960 Nobel Prize for physics for his work in the area. The best known form of radiometric dating is carbon dating, but there are methods using chemical other than carbon.

The scientific logic behind radiometric dating is straightforward. When something is living, certain chemicals are known to be in balance at certain proportions to each other. When the thing dies, the chemicals decay but at different rates. Some chemicals decay very slowly, while other decay more quickly. For examples, the chemical rubidium has a half-life of 50 billion years, while carbon-14 (used in carbon dating) has a half-life of 5730 years, while lead-210 (used in dating of painted objects) has a half-life of

22 years. Measuring the current proportions of chemicals and knowing the rate of decay, scientists can accurately calculate the date of an object, whether it's a rock or a painting. Many paintings and artifacts have been identified as modern fakes or having materials consistent with being authentic via radiometric dating. Famous items that have been dated with radiometric dating include the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Shroud of Turin and the Mona Lisa.

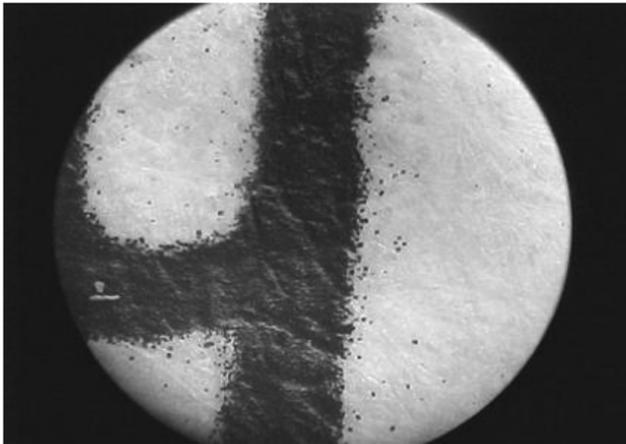
Thermoluminescence is an advanced scientific method to determine when an item was last heated, and is used to determine the age of vases and other human made objects. After a vase or other object is heated, the atoms of the material slowly attract energy from the surrounding environment. When a sample from the artifact is re-heated at very high temperature in a laboratory, the sample gives off the stored energy. The brighter the light given off, the older the sample.



Ancient ceramics are in part dated with thermoluminescence testing.

Thermoluminescence is also used to date when an item was last exposed to sunlight. This is used to date when an ancient city was buried by volcano eruption, a tomb was sealed or an artifact buried.

Microscopy. Collectors and scientists use microscopes to get a closer look at items and sees details and qualities that cannot be seen with the naked eyes. Experts can identify the process and even age of photography and printing from the microscopic details. Many cheap reprints of trading cards, valuable advertising posters and fine art prints are easily weeded out under high magnification.

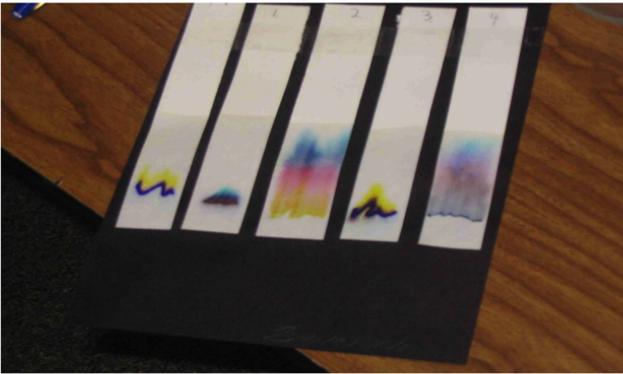


The tell tale microscopic dust appearance on a computer laser print, revealing an antique to be a modern reprint

Physical examination of material samples

There are a variety of laboratory methods to identify the chemicals and other substances in paints, ink and paper. They involve taking and examining a small sample from the

object. Paper chemists can determine the age range of photo paper because they know what kind of wood pulps and cloth were used at different times. Photo forgeries have been identified through examination of paper samples. Forensic ink experts can not only date certain inks but in cases determine what brand of pen it came from. Many famous forgeries and criminal cases have been solved using these methods.



Chromatography, which uses solvents to separate the substances in inks, is commonly used to identify and date inks. The above shows different inks separated into rainbows of substances.

Dendrology

Dendrology, or the study of trees, has been used by art historians and archeologists to help date many old paintings, and can be used on other wooden items. Before canvas, paintings were most commonly painted on panels of wood, and called panel paintings. The *Mona Lisa*, Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* and Hieronymus Bosch's *The Garden of Earthly Delights* are just three famous paintings on wood. Studying

the rings in the wood and knowing when certain regional historical conditions such as draughts or fires caused abnormal rings, historians are able often able to determine the age and source of the wood for a painting. With the advent of this technique, historians have sometimes found that famous paintings in museums have long been misdated.



Many famous paintings, including this priceless Botticelli, are on wood.

Final Notes

The limits of Science in Authentication

In art and collectibles, science such as described can identify many fakes and forgeries, but has limitations in authenticating.

For example, if a chemist shows that the paint and canvas used for an advertised '1660s Rembrandt oil painting' is from the 1900s, that proves beyond a doubt that the painting is a fake. However, if science shows the canvas and paint is from the 1660s, that doesn't prove the painting is by Rembrandt. It could have been by a student or admirer of Rembrandt copying his style. The chemist's finding is clearly useful towards determining a Rembrandt's authenticity, but the authentication also requires art historians assessment of the painting's style, quality, provenance and other non-scientific aspects.

Autograph forgers often forge signatures on old paper or baseballs, and authentication takes more than dating the paper and balls.

Further, physical samples, such as for paper fiber analysis and thermoluminescence, are taken from only a part of the object. When doing a thermoluminescence test on a vase, the sample is usually taken from the less conspicuous bottom. Forgers know this and will sometimes make a forgery on top of a broken ancient vase base, so a test from the bottom will come back as old. Similarly, if you make digital computer reprint of the front of the expensive 1909 T206 Honus Wagner baseball card and paste it over a genuine common T206 common card a sample will from the back will test as old.

Collectors and authenticators can't wear blinders and must take in all information. Relying on just one thing, one test, can lead to erroneous results.

Suspicious arise before tests are performed

For famous forgery discoveries, there were usually general questions and suspicions about the items well before

scientific tests were done. The scientific tests were done in response to questions from the collecting, art and history communities.

Science is a supplement to, not a replacement of, old-fashioned collecting knowledge, observations, discussions. The experienced collector's eye and well read mind are two of the best authentication tools.

Science is constantly moving forward

As science advances, more current fakes will be scientifically identified. Fakes that fool people today will be identified tomorrow. This gives new significance to getting a lifetime return guarantee of authenticity.

Music composer John Cage's piece 4'33" involves any combination of instruments **not** being played for four minutes and thirty three seconds. There is no playing from the musician(s), and some call it 4 minutes and 33 seconds of silence. Perhaps ironically, the piece is often categorized as noise music, because the sounds are the sounds of the audience and the environment (coughs, rustling, movement of chair, other), and because it defies the conventions of traditional music.

I wear my heart on my sleeve but keep the shirt in my closet.
I mean, it's this Godawful green.

I had to break the bad news to someone talking about time machines. I told him that physical human backwards time travel is more than probably impossible even at the theoretical level. "Darn," he said.

* * * *

Some people believe in God because they want there to be a God. This, of course, doesn't even address the question of if there is a God.

* * * *

DAVID: "Just for the record, the number of atheists in a foxhole is not valid evidence of the existence or lack thereof of God. If you're Christian, just remember that if you use that argument I can locate a foxhole full of Muslims."

HENRY: "You've got it wrong. The foxhole test determines the existence of God, not the denomination. Polling people during tax audits determines the denomination."

HENRY: "Just one hint. It's not Latvian Orthodox."

DAVID "You mean Elza is going to Hell? I was going to ask her out."

* * * *

A common way people will view this book is as it being pieces for a single aim. Meaning, the disparate pieces are included to support a single idea or theory.

* * * *

My returning to old text, rearranging and restyling many times, isn't just a philosophical thing. It's also a personal searching thing. A statement in a way, a rebellion, a conceptual statement, autobiographical in a way.

* * * *

I repeat things, reconsider things. That's just part of my personality.

* * * *

That many readers will have their own takes and theories on how this book should have been written and edited-- organization, order length, what chapters should have been removed, writing style-- is an important part about this book. I think readers discussing and debating all this is good, an important exercise. But it is essential that these readers look at their reasons for wanting these changes. This book is in part about analyzing book criticism, critics' and the readers' book and art criticism. Purely aesthetic reasons for changes to this book are not acceptable. Neither necessarily is to make things clearer.

I readily admit this book could have been written and organized in many different ways, and perhaps there could have been better ways. But always realize that this book is in part about the imperfection and muddledness and ambiguity and imbalance and the irreversible happenstance of the human experience. It is a rebellion against and critique of simplicity and false linearity and symmetry and criticism that wants and expects those things. It is a look at aesthetic

and cognitive biases, including those of the reader (and an exposure of mine). For various reasons, some chapters and short pieces were intentionally added as off topic. At times, traditional literary and writing rules are intentionally and with important reasons broken. Some pieces are random, while others have personal meaning only known to me-- and you can't know which is which, I won't tell you. That there are eternal secrets to this book is essential.

Readers' ideas, personal ideas, on how to better express themes and ideas of the book would be great to discuss, and there likely are some great ideas out there. But ideas simply about how to make the book *clearer* or *prettier* or *on focus* won't hack it, and merely show the person as missing the point of the book, a rube. If those were the points, I would have written this book differently. This book is an artistic statement, but it is also a philosophy and psychology text book-- if in a decidedly nontraditional-textbook style. My strong belief is a book about the processing of ambiguous information must have ambiguous information to process, and a book looking at aesthetic biases should have parts that feel aesthetically off.

A woman said I looked good. I thanked her for her honesty.

When I learned it was impossible to make something perfect,
I strived to make imperfections.

There are some topics I don't write about because I don't
want readers to think that's what the book is about. Noise
music is a worthy topic, but for another book.

Of course this book has to do with noise music. If you can't
see that, you're not worthy of studying the concept.

You could say the book has nothing to do with noise
music and everything to do with noise music.

Or a little bit to do with noise music, I suppose.

I call psychology the physiology of the mind

My editor said my new novel was too derivative, so I changed the title to Of Moose And Men.

I'll tell you, it destroys me more than you know. No matter how many times I rearrange the book, remove and add pieces, it will never satisfy me. There are a thousand more pieces I could have added, perhaps should have added. Some left in that I should have take out. It's important to me for you to know this. I have mad scientist aspirations.

* * * *

If humans exterminate themselves via nuclear bombs or climate change or whatever thing of their own making, leaving only rats and cockroaches behind, does that mean humans weren't really the most intelligent species or, or that intelligence (as humans define it) isn't the be all and end all of measuring a species'? Perhaps or perhaps not intelligence isn't the best measurement of an animal. Perhaps intelligence is just one of numerous important qualities. Perhaps intelligence is more than human intelligence or what humans catalog as intelligence. Perhaps the search for knowledge involves self destruction.

* * * *



* * * *

I listen to a cheesy pop song on the radio and it breaks my heart.

* * * *

We were talking about sex? Oh. I thought you meant egg salad sandwich literally.

* * * *

Jeez, I haven't thrown up in a college dorm in a long time. Must have been at least a year.

* * * *

People judge a book by how it vaguely satisfies them after they're finished, as if it was a bowl of soup at a diner.

* * * *

Throwing someone in the deep end of the pool is the
quickest way to teach him how to drown.

SOPHY: “So how do I not break your heart?”

ZOLA: “This is kind of a downer dialogue.”

SOPHY: “Yeah, but how do I not break your heart?”

ZOLA: “Adopt it as your pet.”

SOPHY: “Okay, deal. I promise to walk it twice a day, give it a chewy.”

ZOLA: “Tell it to write and that I’ll miss it ... Excuse me, I think I have something in my eye.”

SOPHY: “No, seriously. How do I not break your heart?”

ZOLA: “By not breaking it. That’s the best answer I can give you ... I could give you a specific answer, but it is too audacious for me to say.”

SOPHY: “This is awfully serious for one of your dialogues.”

ZOLA: “I agree. Let’s not do it again.”

SOPHY: “That’s not what I’m saying ... So what’s this audacious answer?”

ZOLA: “Call me lame and let’s call it a day ... Would sex get you to drop the subject?”

SOPHY: “No, but let’s have sex anyway.”

ZOLA: “I have a headache (laughs).” (Sophy hits Zola on the shoulder. Zola gives Sophy a big hug)

“You’re a catch you know.”

“I know.”

* * * *

* * * *

My condo has excellent privacy when I remember to pull down the shades.

* * * *

I don't believe you do things to intentionally hurt my feelings. I also don't believe you predict that what you say might hurt me. I think you say things in a way to protect yourself that can sometimes hurt my feelings.

* * * *

I remember as a kid listening for the first time to a Haydn piece and being disappointed in the composer as the piece lifted a melody from a Mozart piece I'd often heard before. After looking into it, I learned that the Haydn piece had been composed first and Mozart lifted from Haydn.

* * * *

Communication in art and literature is a curious thing,

because the writer has ideas and ways of thinking and communicating and the reader has ideas and ways of thinking and communicating. Different readers have different ways. The art is a language that is often read similarly and often read differently. It makes direct communication between reader and author impossible, and theoretical, but many people say the beauty of art is that readers read it in their own way, get their own personalized message. And a reader can indeed have valid different insight on a subject, see the biases and ignorance of an old writer, see the work from a different valid side than the author. This, with the personalized message, is part how art can be timeless.

And many artists don't try to communicate one to one, but offer something where the readers will read it in their own way, take what they can take from it. And people who dismiss or dislike an artwork for its style are reading it in their own personal style.

“What is it like having such a smart kid in your family?”

* * * *

I've been to Hell once, for a moment, while I was sick and half asleep on the couch on an afternoon.

* * * *

"How'd you get this idea that you're so great?"
"Because I compare myself to others."

* * * *

And I try make this into a book, give it some physical bulk.
Really, I could write it into two pages but who would pay money for that?
Actually, I couldn't write it in a million pages

* * * *

I used to write for a London art history encyclopedia. The first thing the editor did was to teach me how to write in English-- instead of American. I'm now bilingual!

Interpreting Art

When you critique a movie, do you think it important what the director thought the movie was about and what he was trying to do? When you read a book or look at a painting is it important for you to know the artist's intention? Have you ever made an interpretation of a work of art, later found out what the artist's was and found it different than yours? What was your reaction?

These types of 'Which interpretation is correct?' questions touch on topics that have long have been important in aesthetics.

Many years ago the prominent literary school of thought was that the most important thing in interpreting and studying a book was the author's intent. This was later rejected, with an influential school of thought entirely dismissing author's intention and saying all that mattered was the reading of the text itself. Part of this rejection was because no one can reliably know the author's intent. Today, many scholars find both extremes, well, extreme and fall somewhere in the middle.

A related school said that a work of literature was a reflection or representation of the author's biography. Others rejected this, in part because artists have imaginations, can make up things.

Another school said that art was to be judged by the audience's reaction to it. There is some validity to this in that art is a communication. It is intended to communicate ideas

to the reviewer, viewer or listener. Others entirely rejected this idea, saying audience reaction was irrelevant, and a movie shouldn't be judged by the reaction of whichever random audience viewed it. Again, most people today reject the rigidity of both sides. Many think you can't judge art solely by audience reaction, but that it's relevant.

All these views beg the question of is there a correct way to interpret art? Is there even a correct way to determine which way is the correct way? Art itself is a human made up concept.

In the end, a definition of art is subjective and arbitrary.

Does it even matter whether or not something is labeled as art? Does labeling something as art change what it is?

* * * *

You said ‘pop.’ You definitely come from Wisconsin. Do you say ‘bubler’ too?

* * * *

I would have made a good woman, due to my predilection towards jewelry. I think perhaps it started when I was seven and found a mood ring on the airplane aisle floor and my dad let me keep it.

* * * *

I kill for other reasons. To appease the aesthetics of the moment.

* * * *

Humans are such fuck ups— I lick a frozen dog turd and they act like I’d assassinated the President. They don’t understand.

* * * *

There is truth in what I write. Just not much. My truths are so

concentrated they have to be diluted so as not to burn your lips. Even one drop part per gallon of BS requires chapstick. Good for killing rats. An air freshener won't hurt. Don't worry about your safety. I use more than enough BS. Clearly, I like to hear myself type.

* * * *

As a writer, I write in book format. It is my default. If I make a movie or a painting it comes out in book form.

* * * *

Everything I do has a point, but sometimes it's to not have a point.

* * * *

"37 across: 'The person opposite of you on the stage during a debate.'"

Henry: "Wrong."

"Uh, no."

Henry: "Stupid?"

XOXO, Zoe (Hey, that rhymes)



Fiction in science

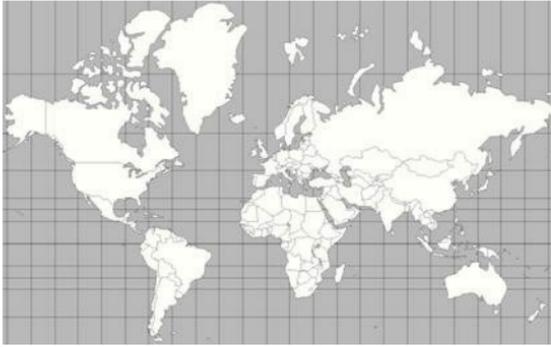
Scientific representations are different than the things they represent. A representation, model or description is a limited view of the subject, made for a specific purpose, edited by the scientist and translated into a form the scientific audience can understand and use. As scientific representations are made by and for humans, they are part about the scientific subject and part about the humans using them.

* * * *

A world map is a useful device, but one with a plethora of differences than what it represents. To start with the obvious, the world isn't flat, it isn't paper thin and is smaller than the world. These unreal qualities are for the convenience of the user.

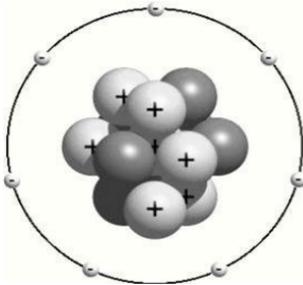
For easy understanding, maps are artificially colored and marked (latitude and longitudes lines, for example). Road maps usually make roads appear proportionally wider than in reality, and remove unwanted details.

All world maps have proportional distortions. For an example see the following page. Translating anything three dimensional into two dimensions requires distortions, as three dimensions and two dimensions are mutually exclusive. Compare your world map at home to a globe and see the differences for yourself. There are different methods of mapping the earth, each method creating its own distortions.



Distortions on maps. As with all types of world maps, this common Mercator projection map has significant distortions. Greenland is incorrectly shown as being bigger than Africa. Alaska is shown as being as large as Brazil, when Brazil is really multiple times larger.

* * * *



The above representation of an atom is different than a real atom in an abundance of major ways. To start, it's thousands and thousands of times larger than a real atom. If it wasn't you couldn't see it.

The representation hardly resembles an atom, and the artist would agree. The intent was to make a dummy model for students to learn about the different atomic 'parts.' The

unreal balls, outer ring and cartoonish appearance are designed to engage the audience, simplify things.

As with the map, this representation is part about the subject and part about humans. It is in a form students can understand. In this case the form students understand looks more like a Saturday morning cartoon character than an atom.

* * * *

Any human representation of something complex (and all things are complex) is simplified and distorted, focusing on a specific area, quality, layer or angle, made from a limited amount of information, interpreted by the maker's sensibilities, presented in a way the maker and audience can understand.

As a means of communication, a representation will include conceits of the scientist, audience and even general culture. These conceits include expected form (pie charts, graphs, book, magazine article), style, shape, measurement method (volume, height, meters, liters), color associations (hot = red, cold = blue, forest = green).

It is similar to art, where following the genre's conceits, even shallow ones, are constraining but necessary for communication. The conceits create an artificial representation, but without them you might as well be communicating in a foreign language.

* * * *

Just as the creation and perception of art involves human psychology, so does the creation and perception of scientific

representations.

Whether they admit it or not, scientists and philosophers view the universe and the things in it psychologically. A scientist and her work can no more escape human psychology than she can escape being human.

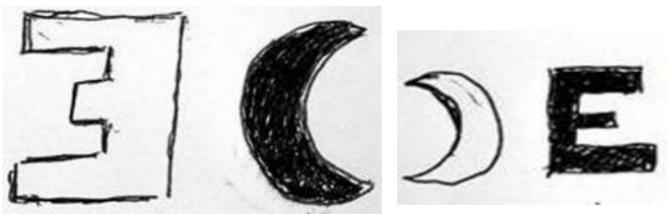
* * * *

All one has to do is to look at a scientific representation, any representation, and find the human imprint— the human sensibility in form, style, color, language, balance, aesthetic choice. A representation of water may be a magazine article in English. English language and magazine articles, of course, have to do with humans and communication between humans.

The article's subject may be about water, but its form is human. The article will be read as a work of human literature, as it is a work of human literature. As an artifact, the article shows about as much about humans as it does about water.

* * * *

Organize the following into two groups of related objects



Scientists, and non-scientists, find it convenient and often

necessary to group information. I asked different people, including a science professor, to group the previous objects into two groups of like objects. One person grouped by color (black objects and white objects), another by size, another by letters (he saw the objects as E's and C's. Interesting, as I drew the Cs as moons!), another by direction left or right (problematic as one doesn't know if a moon is faced left or right). Their reasons for pairing were equally legitimate, but produced different pairings. This should show you how one scientist's model can look different than another's, not due to scientific theory or knowledge but different views of aesthetics, simplicity and associations.

* * * *

This illustrates an essential human problem that goes beyond science. Humans must translate a subject to understand it, but what they understand is the translation.

* * * *

A scientific representation is a product of the scientist's purpose. A different purpose will produce a different representation of the same subject.

I own three maps of North America. One represents the altitude (mountains, valleys, etc), one shows the traditional aboriginal tribal regions and one is a road map. Even though they are of the identical place, each map is different. It's not so much whether the maps are right or wrong, but that they were created from different purposes.

* * * *

Many to most scientific representations aren't intended to be the *be all and end all*. Scientists usually consider scientific models to be works in progress, to be studied, tested, reworked, changed and even tossed aside as necessary. Science is a continual work in progress.

For testing purposes, models are often intentionally made to be overly simple. One purpose of such simplification is that errors are more easily identified and corrected. With a more complicated, muddled model, it's harder to identify what is working and what is not. Another reason for simplification is the scientist may be studying only one aspect of the subject. The other aspects are excluded. If a dentist is studying the teeth and gums, there may be no need for her computer model to be full-bodied, including detailed feet, fingernails, hair color and bellybutton. It may not even include eyes and nose, even though people with teeth and gums also have eyes and noses nearby. She may consider these details distracting and "beside the point." A scientist will often be the first to say his representation isn't a duplication of the subject, and was never intended to be an exact duplication of the subject.

As with communicating of scientific ideas to others, reducing a subject into a simplified if unrealistic model has practical purposes. Scientific progress would be stunted without simple, artificial models.

* * * *

Knowing that all representations contain fiction, a question to ask about a particular representation is whether the fiction is a device required for communication of ideas, testing or

other practical use, or is it wrongly portrayed as part of the subject's innate meaning. If you are well aware a fiction is fiction, there is no big issue. If you confuse fiction for fact, that is a problem.

While fiction, the size of the earlier representation of an atom is needed for humans to see the representation. If the representation was life size, it would be useless to instructors and students. Similarly, artificial color coding for a diagram or map can make for easier and quicker understanding. It's easier to find countries on a map if each is distinctly colored. These are examples of where the inclusion of artifice is fair and understandable.

A related question is how seriously is the fiction taken, both by the creator and the audience. Students and even seasoned scientists can become too comfortable, too enamored with clichés of color, shape and words. Through repetition, superficial conceits can become false idols.

“All models are wrong, but some are useful.”

— Statistician George E. P. Box

My specific goal was 900 pages, and one way or another I'll get there.

There may be a chapter of sawdust.

Law and Expert Opinion in Art Authenticity

Due to the real or perceived litigious nature of some art owners, many scholars and experts have become reluctant to give their opinions about the authenticity of works of art. In years before, open authenticity discussions about art was normal and encouraged as scholarly activity, but scholars have been sued over their opinions. Even when the scholar is correct and the court agrees, the court costs can be prohibitive. The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation, each set up by the artist's estate, discontinued their authentication boards due the potential of lawsuits and liability insurance. Though the Warhol Foundation won a lawsuit brought by a collector, the legal costs were \$7 million.

In some cases, the authenticity is legally decided by a judge or jury. This of course brings up the topic of art authenticity being judged by judges and juries who are not art experts. And the art market doesn't have to agree with the verdict. A work of art a judge decides is authentic may not sell well at auction as collectors don't agree.

Cognitive Psychology: Imagination



When looking at a scene, all humans have the natural and nonconscious ability to extrapolate beyond what is visible. When information is missing, or assumed to be missing, humans make it up in their minds.

This ability is essential to normal living, as we must regularly make quick guesses with limited information. When you step on a sturdy looking building step, you assume it will hold your weight. When you pull a book from the library shelf, you assume the pages are filled with words. When your waitress brings you a steaming mug, you assume it is filled with a hot liquid.

In many cases the extrapolation is accurate, or at least a fair estimate of reality. If your dog is standing on the other side of the open doorway, half hidden by the wall, you

correctly assume an entire dog exists. As the dog steps forward into the room, your assumption is proven correct. When the waitress puts down your steaming coffee mug, you are far from surprised to see it's filled with the hot coffee you ordered. Humans would be a dim, slow species if we couldn't make these kinds of elemental deductions.

In many cases, however, the extrapolations are wrong. These bogus extrapolations involving the viewer non-consciously perceiving what he wants to see or expects to see.

The following pages show examples of correct and incorrect perceptions based on imagining what is not seen.



Though the dogs block our view we assume there is snow behind them like the snow we see surrounding them. This assumption is likely correct.

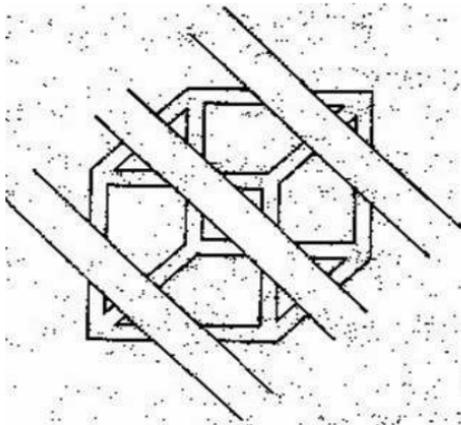
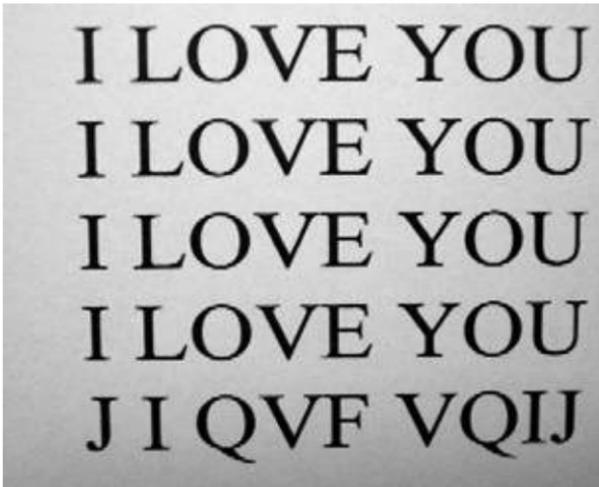


Though the overlapping prevents us from ever knowing, most will assume the above shows whole playing cards. I assume the cards are rectangular and whole.

The below says *I Love You* several times:



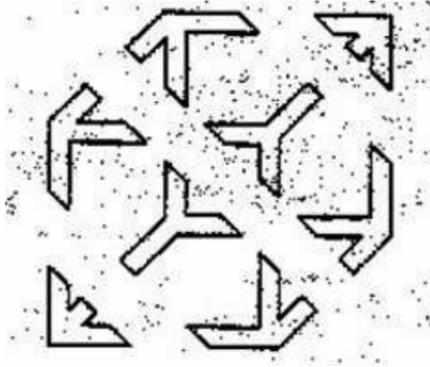
Now read the same text below with the ruler removed:



In the above, most perceive a cube behind the three diagonal bands.

With the bands removed, we perceive something

different.



* * * *

Ames Card Trick

Adelbert Ames Jr (1880-1955) was a Dartmouth scientist famed for his studies of visual perception. From his experiments he learned that human perception is influenced by expectations.

In one experiment he used a deck of playing cards standard except in size. Some cards were much larger than the others. In a specially designed viewing station he had people watch the cards being shuffled. As the viewers assumed the cards were the same size, they perceived the larger cards as being closer and the smaller cards as being further away. Their misperception about size created a second misperception about distance.

Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle

The Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle is a famous quantum physics principle made by German Nobel Prize winner Werner Heisenberg. Written mathematically, the word translation is that it is impossible to determine both the position and the momentum of a subatomic particle (an atom's electron, proton or neutron). The more accurately you measure one quality, the less accurate becomes the measurement of the other quality.

This happens because to measure the position of a subatomic particle you must shine light on it. The scientist needs to shine light to 'see' the particle, just as you or I need light to locate an apple or chair in a dark room. While necessary to identify the position, the added light energy speeds up the tiny particle. The act of observing the particle changes it. The principle has had profound influence both in science and philosophy.

I very much see this as a visual book, a sort of architecture. I expect readers to see the passages even if they don't read them. Contemplating the details, the words, is essential, but so is sitting back and watching the shapes and scenery go by the backseat window.

I know that, whatever I think of the practice and particular interpretations, the pieces are read by how they are grouped on the page. Meaning by association.

Did you know?

United States nickels, dimes, quarters, half dollars and dollar coins dated 1964 and earlier are 90 percent silver.

There is an ultra rare and valuable 1965 silver US dime that is in part identified by its completely silver edge. The normal non-silver 1965 dimes have a visually noticeable brown/copper colored layer on the edge.

I've run out of anything exciting to say, Sophy, so am going to light on fire one of my boring quips and see how that works.

* * * *

And I look at my writing about my yearnings—and it looks so cheesy, but it's true— it breaks my heart and is true

* * * *

Big issues and little tissues.

* * * *

I don't know if I should apologize to God or He to me. Probably a little bit of both. God, give me a sign if you're sorry.

I have a colorful past, if you consider black a color.

I was so busy today I only had time to cry on my lunch break.

Quantum Mechanics

Quantum mechanics is mathematical models used to describe and predict things at the atomic and subatomic level (protons, electrons, states, orbitals, etc). As with all models, it is not an exact representation of the area and, in fact, explicitly deals in probability. However it has proven good at predicting things at the subatomic level. The worthiness of a model or theory is based on how well it can predict things.

Physicists have discovered that things at the atomic and subatomic level don't work the same way as at the larger levels— the everyday human, world and cosmic levels. The traditional Newtonian laws of physics don't apply and nuclear physicists will tell you that your intuition won't work at trying to understand the subatomic world.

One of the most famous paradoxes of nuclear physics is that light and particles have both the qualities of waves and particles, which, in normal thought, is oxymoronic. Another quirk of quantum mechanics is that subatomic particles move to different states instantaneously— there is no in between speeding up or slowing own between states. It's on the order of a car going from 0 to 100 miles per hour, or from point a to point b, instantaneously.

A limitation in quantum mechanics is that exact measuring of light and particles is impossible (see the earlier piece on Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle). Measurements

are 'fuzzy' and quantum mechanics only predicts the statistical probability of where and how fast is a subatomic particle, often giving a 'cloud' of possible locations. However, these predictions have proven to be accurate enough to be very useful and applied to make products and inventions including lasers and nuclear bombs.

** *

The psychiatrist's receptionist gave me the wrong address, though I got to the office in time anyway. The doctor assured me it wasn't a test.

I'm willing to talk about going to a psychiatrist if it involves a funny story. Humor always is priority.

If you can't talk about your mental history, you've cut off 60 percent of your jokes.

* * * *

The next day the state is over and all I dwell on is trying to attain it again.

* * * *

Those who complain about the messiness and disorder of this book give false accounts of their lives, including to themselves.

Hidden information and identification



Many physical qualities of and between objects are identified by obscured or otherwise hidden visual information. Distance is often judged by objects overlapping each other and things becoming harder to see over distance. Material is in part identified by its opacity.

Obscured visual information both helps and hinders our identification. When something is far away, the lack of detail (small and blurry) serves to both help us judge its distance and prevents us from identifying the object. A closed closet door shows us that the door is in front of the things in the closet, but prevents us from knowing what are those things. Lack of information is both lack of information and information.

That some parts of the above table visually obscure other parts helps the viewer identify it as a table.



Overlapping helps show us that the scrambled eggs are on the plate and the trees are closer than the buildings.

The problem with married women is they're married.

The Unique Subjective Experience

Subjectivity is a constant and integral part of the human experience. Love, lust, like, dislike, taste, smell, views about beauty and ugliness and art. How you view this paragraph and this book involves subjectivity— your taste about the writing style, word choice, chapter subjects and length, book cover.

By definition, a subjective experience is a product of the individual's mind. While real and often profound, the subjective experience cannot be objectively measured by others. When someone is listening to music, the music's note, pitch, speed, volume and the listener's ear vibration and heartbeat can be measured by scientific instruments, but the listener's aesthetic experience cannot. This experience is experienced by the listener alone. Even if asked to, the listener could not fully translate the experience to others, in part because it is beyond words.

It's doubtful that two people have the same subjective perceptions. People may have similar, but not identical perceptions. People regularly like the same song but perceive it differently. It's common for best friends to like a movie, but one likes it more than the other or for different reasons.

* * * *

A large range of things determines a person's subjective perception and experience. This includes genes, education, culture, where and when born, personal experiences, upbringing, travel, family make up and personalities, friends, acquaintances, natural temperament, mental abilities, physiological abilities (quality of eyesight, hearing, smell), talents, language, mood, health, hobbies and work.

Little things influence, such as what toy one had as a six year old and what tea grandmother drank. While walking in a foreign land, the scent of jasmine tea can bring back a rush of memories. The appearance of the toy in a movie will alter one's emotional reaction and interpretation of the move. It may have been chance that the movie viewer's parents bought that toy, making his movie interpretation a result of chance. It's not just the tea and a toy, but millions of little things that influence, including from forgotten events.

If a bird watcher and a rock collector go for a walk together in the park they may have equally grand times, one due to the birds in the trees and the other due to the rocks on the ground. Though they were side by side, they will give decidedly different descriptions of the walk.

Do you dislike a name simply because it was the name of someone you couldn't stand?

* * * *

Even when they experience similar feelings people will usually have these feelings under different circumstances, if only slightly different. People will be artistically excited, but for different works of art or when interpreting differently the same work of art. People have similar feelings of romantic love, but for distinctly different people— different looks,

personality, culture, interests, sex, race. The emotional states may be alike, but the objects of desire are not.

* * * *

You cannot separate your biases from your perception, because it is those biases that help create the perception. Without those biases, you would have a different perception. Even that childhood toy affected the movie goer's perception thirty years later.

* * * *

Humans believe they receive important objective insights, including cosmic truths, through strong subjective experiences— such as through the sublime experience of art, epiphany of music, nature, love, lust, religious experience. The psychological power of these experiences is considered verification of the 'truths.'

A question is whether these experiences involve genuine insight into external reality or are merely strong biological reactions. Love and lust themselves, after all, are standard genetic, hormonal reactions. Psychological reactions to certain sounds, such as in powerful music, involve genetics.

The reactions to high delicate notes (such as from song birds or a pop song) and low booming notes (distant thunder, the start of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony) have been shared by humans for thousands and thousands of years. You and your ancient ancestor have remarkably similar psychological reactions to the sound of a songbird and the sudden deep roar of a bear. It's no coincidence that church music uses delicate high notes to invoke heaven in the audience, and the loud,

deep bass of the organ to invoke power and awe.

It's not coincidence that horror movies use discordant notes. The director knows audiences find the sounds scary and creepy.

In the famous 1960 Psycho shower scene, the sharp, grating, discordant musical notes invoke violence, evil, something gone horribly wrong. They sound similar to someone scratching a chalkboard, one of the most despised sounds to humans.

It can never be known to the experiencer that an epiphany made through a strong psychological experience is anything more than a genetic reaction. If there is insight into the external, the insight is shaped by the experiencer's subjectivity, and what parts of the insight are objective and what parts subjective is unknowable.

Even if important insights into the universe are gained they still are in subjective format. For example, if your epiphany comes through your experience of art, your experience of art is personal and different than that of others. Not only is your 'insight' intrinsically tied to your subjective views, you likely would not have had the insight at that same time, place or format, or at all, if you had different aesthetic views.

* * * *

Humans use aesthetic rules for defining truths, including what is good and evil, what is moral and immoral. Common rules include conditions of beauty, symmetry, color, tone (light versus dark), fashion and order.

Even if the rules were valid, it would mean truth is subjective. If truth is beautiful, your definition of what is

beautiful differs from others' definitions. Further, an individual's perception of beauty changes with time and experience. A culture's perception of beauty changes with time. Compare the depictions of the desirable feminine body from 1450, 1850, 1950 and this year.

Cultural definitions of 'objective truth' are formed by cultural sensibilities, including fashion, politics, gender, race, beauty, geography, self interest, desire for social order, etc. There is no indication these are identifiers of objective truth, or are even related, but they are still used as criterion.

“The object of art is to give life a shape.”

– Jean Anouilh

The above should explain why I think art itself should be critiqued and questioned, and why criticism on an artistic basis should be critiqued

If you think it's a beautiful quote, I'll have to box you about the ears

* * *

Henry: "One reason to invest in artificial intelligence research is so perhaps we can someday understand what the Hell David talks about."

* * * *

The main problem in judging the quality of a film by box office receipts is the audience buys the tickets before seeing the movie.

Victorian Scraps



A popular hobby in the 1800s was collecting 'scraps.' Scraps were small factory made paper pieces depicting most every popular subject from cute animals to royalty, soldiers to flowers. They were nicknamed scraps because they resembled scraps of paper. They were sold to collectors in uncut sheets. With early sheets, the individual scraps had to be cut out by hand. The pieces in the later sheets came factory die cut and the collector popped out them. The later versions were brightly colored, detailed and often embossed.



Page from an 1800s kid's scrapbook with many scraps pasted to it.

I'm writing a midnight novel where the scenes only take place in those heightened 2 am moments— those drunken musical delirious rooftop states that you wish would last forever— where if you move an inch one way or the other everything is ruined— where when you sober up you don't understand what is written on the page— The character's day-to-day lives (if they have any) are omitted, making the unwritten duration between scenes a day, a month, two years, no one knows for sure

* * * *

I'm going to have to get more proficient with buttonfly jeans or start wearing underwear.

* * * *

I'm radical, but so polite few notice.

* * * *

I'm sunk. I mean how could anyone not be against a married woman who gets so close to another man. It's a strike against me from the start. If I was your friend you talked to, I'd tell

you to run.

* * * *

I'm never embarrassed by what I say. I'm embarrassed by what I said.

* * * *

So I go meet and go out with the woman—and I am so broken up— and it's painful to go along with the smileys and jokes and tiptoeing on the thorns of roses.

And before the night is through I try to find from her/force from her the something.

* * * *

Anyone who gives you the “real,” “absolute” definition of art and points out which works on the wall are and are not the *real* works of art is full of it and probably an overbearing know-it-all in general.

"Though I mostly stop so I can write you ... don't know whether that's good or bad."

Good. Double good.

Not writing me is like spitting on Camus' grave. Well, maybe that was extreme, but you get idea of my thoughts on the matter.

For incentive, after your 500th 3+ page letter, I'll convert to Judaism and marry you.

"Let's see here ... At three letters per day, that would be ..."

Actually Sophy's thinking, "Wait a second. How many letters have I written so far? And does Zoe know how many?"

Come on, I wouldn't trick you. If you start getting nervous at #495, we can switch it to a long engagement.

Besides, admit it, you have very strong inkling that I'm worth it.

I'm twice as brilliant as I come across. I hold a lot back.

Make that three times. I had more thoughts since I wrote that paragraph.

Still three. I was making a sandwich.

* * * *

Stop saying I'm beautiful, it makes me uncomfortable.

* * * *

I'd claim Henry is my ghostwriter, but if you met him you'd know he couldn't stay awake longer than a sentence.

If I put some sausages on the keyboard I might get a word or two out of him.

He knows Czech. Or at least that's what it resembles.

* * * *

Sometimes you don't know you were wounded until afterwards.

* * * *

“Are you okay?”

“I’m never okay.”

* * * *

Tammy said I should stay away from you. At least that's what she implied with her "Hi, Zoe. Have you chosen the next book yet?" Actually, what it implied was "What Sophy sees in you is beyond me?" Though I interpreted the implication to be "Lifetime of Twinkies to the person who finishes the book first." "Sophy pays?" I implied. "Naturally" Tammy implied. "Deal" we implied and implied a handshake on it.

"Does the winner get to eat them off of Sophy?" I implied. "Gross" Tammy implied. "Is that a yes or a no?" I implied. "It's a You're a fucking retard" Tammy implied.

* * * *

I go to State Street— I drink a cup of coffee and it won't leave me— I drink a cup of coffee and read the newspaper and stare across the room and it won't leave me— I stare at her, I get up and go over and talk to her and it won't leave me— I smile and laugh and agree to meet her, and it won't leave me— I leave outside into the frosty breath, I hold the door as a couple enters and it won't leave me

And it won't leave me and I eat and I sit and I sleep and it won't leave me.

It won't leave me and I pray to the Lord Jesus
Motherfucker and it is a curse and a gift.

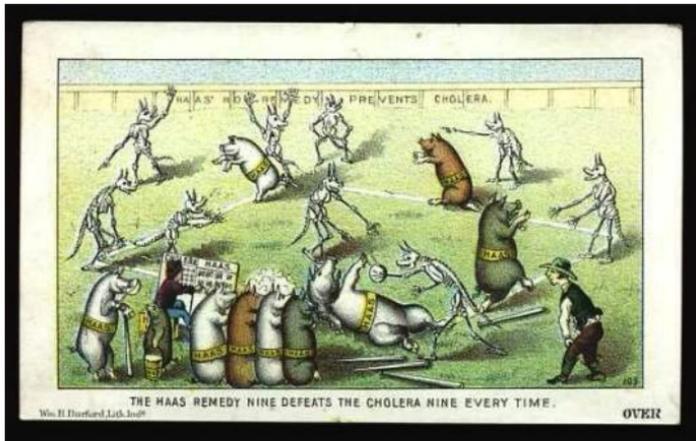
* * * *

The nice thing about being agnostic is you don't worry about
Hell. You're still going there, but you don't worry about it.

* * * *



One of the more curious and strange science fiction movies, and often showed on 'They're So Bad They're Good' movie shows, is 'Voyage to the Planet of Prehistoric Women'. Stitched together by a then unknown but later famous Hollywood director Peter Bogdanovich, the movie combined an earlier Soviet Russian sci fi movie with scenes with totally different characters shot by Bogdanovich in Southern California. As the two halves were shot in different continents and in different years, the American human characters and the Soviet human characters never meet or share the same screen. The only shared characters are a robot and a flying prehistoric bird. The above picture is from the Soviet half.



1880s trade card for the anti-cholera Haas Remedy veterinary medicine, showing the plump and healthy Haas Remedy treated pigs beating the skeletal cholera-infected pigs in a baseball game. Roughly 2/3rd the size of standard postcards and colorfully illustrated, Victorian trade cards promoted products ranging from soap to shoes to roofing shingles. They were given out as advertising, but 1800s kids avidly collected them similar to the way more modern kids collect trading cards.



1952's 'Coo Coo on a Choo Choo' is commonly ranked as both the Three Stooges most original and worst comedy short. The actors play abnormal parts. Larry not Moe is the leader, while Moe is an outsider and not a member of the trio. Shemp is drinking and heavily drunk throughout episode and has hallucinations, including of a giant canary that he woos and waltzes with.



German WWI flying ace Manfred von Richtofen, better known as the Red Barron, and his dog, Moritz. Richtofen wrote, "The most beautiful being in all creation is my Moritz."



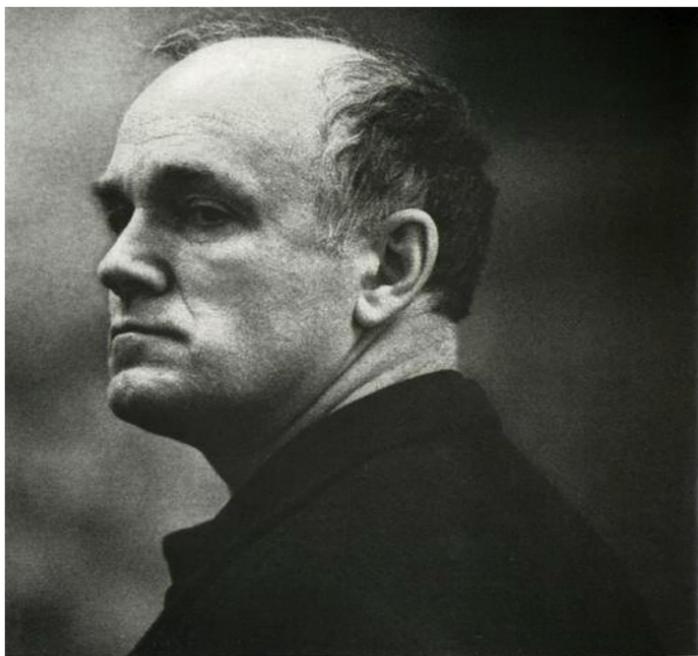
Ilya Repin's 1882 painting of Poprischin, the narrator of Nikolai Gogol's famous 1835 short story 'Diary of a Madman.' After increasingly erratic behavior and thoughts, including believing he has found the love letters between two dogs, the lowly St. Petersburg civil servant wakes up one morning with the epiphany that he is the heir to the Spanish throne. He believes the subsequent being taken to and mistreatment in an asylum is some strange part of the coronation. Years later, Gogol himself went mad, burning his unpublished manuscripts because he believed they were a trick played on him by the Devil.



Ray Milland in *The Lost Weekend* (1945)



Princess Louise, daughter of Queen Victoria, wearing her jet bead necklace. Jet is a black fossilized wood and semi-precious gem found in the seaside bogs of Whitby England and was popularized by Queen Victoria. The term 'jet black' comes from the material.



Fellow pianist greats commonly ranked Soviet pianist Sviatoslav Richter as one of the greatest pianists of the 20th century. After visiting Russia, American Van Cliburn said he cried during a Richter recital and it was the most powerful playing he'd ever heard. Glenn Gould said he never liked Schubert until he heard Richter play it.



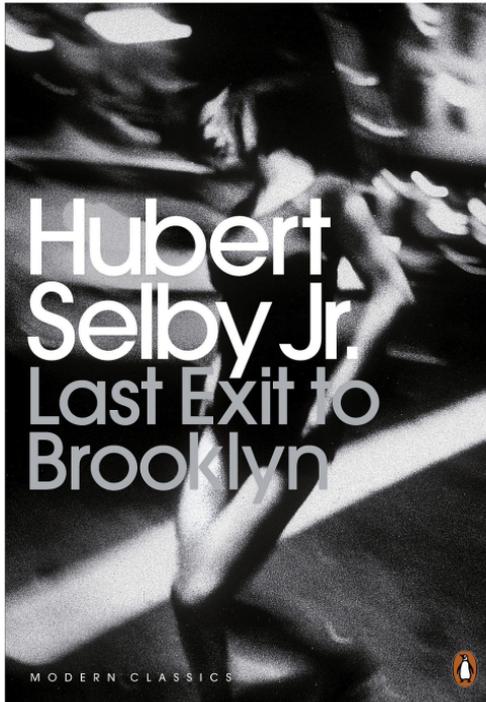
British explorer Robert Scott and his party's January 1912 self portrait (photo taken by string) on their ill fated South Pole trip. They reached the South Pole to crushingly realize that Norwegian Roald Amundsen and his party beat them by five weeks, making Amundsen the first ever to reach the pole. Scott's party died of starvation and freezing on their attempted 700+ mile return trip, with their bodies and Scott's diary of the expedition later discovered in their tent.



A female vampire from Carl Dreyer's *Vampyr* (1932). Noted for its ambiguous, dreamlike qualities, *Vampyr* was a financial and critical disaster when first released but is now ranked as the greatest ever vampire movie.



Possums really do play dead. It's an involuntary act, as they pass out when surprised or threatened. They give off a death-like odor while passed out and it takes a while for them to slowly wake up.



"The first novel to articulate the rage and pain of life in the other America," *Last Exit to Brooklyn* (1964) was Hubert Selby Jr's first and most famous novel, telling stories about damaged people in 1950s Brooklyn's hidden society of prostitutes, pimps, transvestites, drug addicts, homeless and petty criminals. It still is regularly included in lists of the most disturbing novels ever written. However, behind the violence and taboo content, Selby was a moralist and the novel is about the search for love and meaning in life.



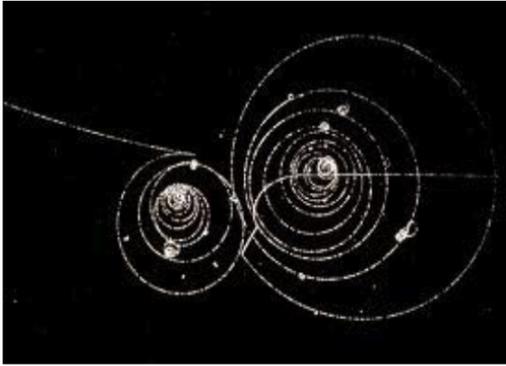
Friedrich Paulus was a German Field Marshall who defied Hitler's orders and surrendered his troops to the Russians during the Battle of Stalingrad. Hitler expected him to fight to the last soldier or commit suicide. When Paulus was appointed Field Marshall during the battle, Hitler and Paulus were well aware that no Field Marshall had ever before surrendered or been captured alive, but Paulus was a devout Catholic and surrendered his troops due to humanitarian reasons.



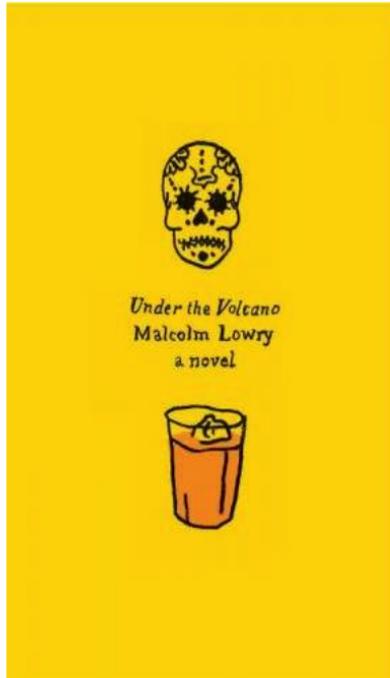
Llamas are often used as guard animals for sheep, goats and chickens, because they are large and bond with the animals they are guarding, having a strong protective instinct.



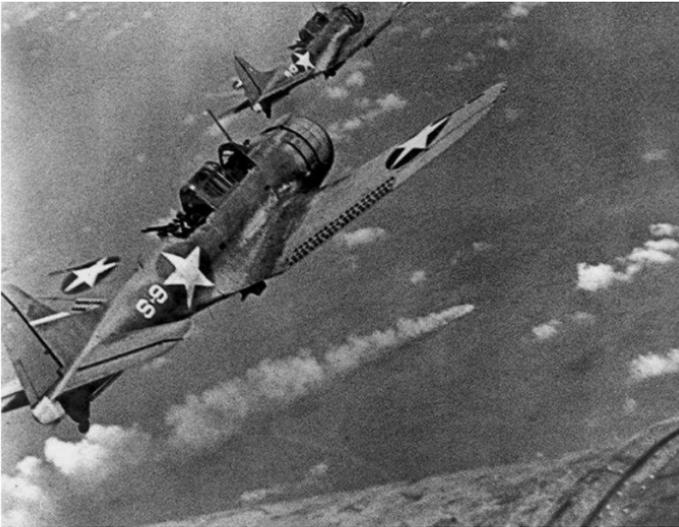
Clark Gable on his wife Carole Lombard: "You can trust that little screwball with your life or your hopes or your weaknesses, and she wouldn't even know how to think about letting you down."



Bubble chamber photograph showing atoms' electrons circling protons. Invented by American Nobel Prize winner Donald Glaser, a bubble chamber contains superheated liquid hydrogen and, as shown in the photo, the molecular particles make paths of bubbles as they move through it. The particles themselves were too small to see or photograph, but the bubbles were large enough to document. Glaser said he did early tests using beer.



"And this is how I sometimes think of myself, as a great explorer who has discovered some extraordinary land from which he can never return to give his knowledge to the world: but the name of this land is hell. It is not Mexico of course, but in the heart." -- Geoffrey Firmin, last stage alcoholic British consul to Mexico on the last day of his life and the protagonist of Malcolm Lowry's 1947 novel *Under the Volcano*



Happening just six months after Pearl Harbor, the Battle of Midway is considered one the most decisive and stunning victories in the history of naval warfare. The Japanese intended to ambush the US navy, but US codebreakers intercepted the plans and the US ambushed the Japanese. The Japanese lost 4 of their six aircraft carriers.

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Even in Kyoto how I long for Kyoto when the cuckoo
sings

-- Matsuo Basho

I try to physically enter a moment of sublime music, which is, after all, like a landscape.

Presenting works of art ‘authentically’

Similar to the problem with translating poetry is the problem in trying to present old works of arts in modern times.

Many wish to present a Shakespeare play or Verdi Opera the way it was originally presented, and there are complaints about colorizing old black and white movies.

Advocates of original presentation often refer to a work of art presented in the original manner as being "authentic."

There are a variety of problems in the presentation of old works. For example, the original work or presentation can be unrealistic to its subject. Shakespeare's plays were written for and originally performed by male actors only. Juliet and Ophelia were performed by boys dressed as women. Even those who like the idea of original presentation prefer the inclusion of actresses, meaning they want a Shakespeare performance modernized.

A similar case is where a grandfather clock chimes in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, yet the grandfather clock had not yet been invented in Caesar's time. Some would argue that fixing this historical error would make the play more historically authentic. Others would counter that, while the grandfather clock clearly is a historical blooper, the play was intended as a work of art not a historical document, and 'fixing' every detail could lessen the play artistically. They might point out that a Paul Cezanne painting of an apple is supposed to represent an apple not look like an apple

photographed, and those who criticize the painting for not being photorealistic miss the point.

Technical modernization can improve the audience's perception of an old work. Improved technology makes *Gone With The Wind* look and sound clearer in the theatre today than in 1939. It would be a safe bet that Paul McCartney prefers listening to The Beatles on a CD player rather than on a 1965 record player. Listening to the 1965 record player is more authentic to a fan listening to the music on 1965 record player, but listening to a CD is more authentic to the music itself.

I'll bet you that some old time Beatles fan has an unplugged vintage record player sitting on top of a CD player. This way he gets the old time look and the modern sound.

Presenting an old work must take into context the audience, its culture and sensibilities. A play, movie, novel or painting is continually presented to a modern audience. The language of Shakespeare was the language of the original audience. It is not the natural language of today's audience. Today's audience experiences the play differently. The use of boy actors in female parts won't be viewed in the same way as an original audience viewed it. Boys playing girls and women would at the least distract most to all in a modern audience.

Even when presented 'authentically' (as originally presented), the modern audience won't perceive an old work of art authentically, as they won't experience it as the original ('authentic') audience did. Ironically, making modernizations can make the modern audience's experience closer to the original audience's experience. Making a work newer on one level can make it older on another.

Some recreations are less concerned with the art than the history. Even if the sound is considered unorthodox to modern ears, performing a Mozart symphony using period instruments, hall, dress and manners can be of enlightenment and enjoyment to a modern audience, especially if the audience itself participates in the recreation by dressing and acting historically.

When does 1 + 1 not equal 2?

*Is a bag of potato chips one thing? Many? Both?
Neither? Other? Depends on how you look at it.*

* * * *

A basic part of mathematics, physics, chemistry, engineering, economics and daily life is counting. Counting is popularly considered to be an objective activity. In the field, however, it involves subjectivity. Not over whether $1 + 1 = 2$, but over what is 1. Both scientists and non-scientists have personal and varying views of what is 1 and what is 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Humans mentally, even nonconsciously, individualize things, isolate, group and count things— whether or not the things were designed to be individualized, isolated, grouped and counted. To humans a dog is one thing. A cat is one. A dog and a cat are two. This numbering is not just intellectual, but often psychological, aesthetic, moral, religious, political and philosophical. A human being is popularly regarded as a single thing, a proverbial island unto itself. Some will be morally offended if you count a human differently. Two humans, even if physically connected by holding hands, are not considered one human, but two.

A distant snow capped mountain of one billion stones is commonly referred to as one thing, not one billion things. Yet three of the stones removed and held in one's hand will be labeled as three. This shift is a reflection of the counter's mind and eyesight more than the counted. Mountains and

stones existed fine before humans were around to count, individualize and group them. How or whether or why we count them makes no difference to mountains and what they are. The counting is a human exercise.

When a long cloud briefly separates in the middle many call it two things, two clouds. What is the legitimacy of this representation? Could it just as well be called one? Is either number an arbitrary choice, a definition of terms?

A lake and connected creek that share the same water and fish are commonly considered two things. Is this the correct representation? Could they instead be considered one? Is 1, 2 or any number a true representation of the body of water, or merely a convenient representation for humans?

Perpendicularly intersecting roads are often considered two things, while a wooden cross is commonly considered one. What is interesting about this example is that the roads are more physically one than two boards nailed or glued together. If you stand at the middle of the intersection, the two roads at that point are physically the same. It is not one road or the other road, it is both roads simultaneously. A piece of asphalt belongs to both. The two cannot be separated or distinguished from each other. At the intersection of the cross, on the other hand, the two pieces of wood are easily distinguished and can be separated. Physically at least, the roads could be considered more one thing than the cross.

* * * *

My sandbox of stones

Say I have in my front yard a sand box filled deep with an unchanging amount of stones. Just as with a sandbox of sand, no matter how I fiddle or play or scoop or make stone castles

there is never a gap with no stones.

In this ever unbroken sea of stones, I make two tall mounds of stones on the surface. If I pull someone off the sidewalk, point to the box of stones and say, "How many things do you see?," she likely will say two. She may even point out that the two things she sees are the mounds. If I had instead made three mounds, it's likely she will say there are three things. If there was one mound, it's fair to assume she would have said one. If the surface was flat (no mounds), she may say there is one thing. Even if her answers aren't as I just said, they likely would change depending on the number of mounds.

Duly note that my question was 'How many things do you see?' I didn't ask how many stones or how many shapes or how many mounds. I let the woman define what was a thing and count as she see fit.

There are two interesting aspects about her counting of things in the box. First, it is not clear that the number of things in the box ever changed. There was always a body containing an identical amount of stones. The body was constant, other than the changing surface shape. No one I know counts lakes by counting the number of surface waves. To most people, a strong wind doesn't create more lakes. People don't count triangles as objects differently than squares, or two humped camels differently than one hump camels ("Guess what, Mom. I saw two camels at the zoo today. One one-humped camel and one two-humped camel.") There was never any separation that created isolated islands of stones. It was the changing surface shape that caused different number answers. Her counting was personal. A different person looking at the same stones might come up with different numbers, as he defined *things* differently. The

second interesting thing was that, even if accepting her definition of surface mounds as the things, the woman's math was goofy. When there were one, two, three mounds, the woman counted things by the number of mounds. But when there were no mounds, she didn't say there was nothing. She likely would have said there was one thing (the body of stones) or been confused as to what she was supposed to count or perhaps said "There are a lot of stones. I can't count them all." Her definition of what is a thing and her method of counting was inconsistent. In her math, removing 1 thing (mound) from 1 thing did not equal 0, and in fact may have equaled more than 1.

* * * *

The act of counting the box of stones, or land or clouds or a herd of wildebeest, has at least as much to do with the counter, her biases and perceptions and idiosyncrasies and choices, as with the subject being counted. That the woman's definitions changed and different people off the sidewalk may count the box of stones differently demonstrates this. Many people believe that the individualizing and counting of things is intrinsic to the things being individualized and counted, but there is no evidence this is true. The human counting of a mountain may have nothing to do with what it is. Is a cross 1 or 2? Why does it have to be either?

Many will point out that counting is essential for humans, an important tool for functioning. This is correct, but again demonstrates that counting is about humans. Having a practical use doesn't make a conceit any less of a conceit.

Henry: "Why are hardcore punk songs only a minute long?"
"Because if they were longer they would require FDA approval."

I've never seen Disney's *The Little Mermaid*, but somehow assume it doesn't follow the original Hans Christian Anderson storyline where the Little Mermaid can, as she has always dreamed, leave her life in the sea to become human and have a human soul, but to do so "it will constantly feel as if she is walking on sharp knives and feel as though she is bleeding."

Henry: "How can someone be both so brilliant and handsome? It's simply not fair."

"Well thank you!"

Henry: "I was talking about me. Boy you got yourself some ego."

* * * *

Some won't know how to judge this book-- they'll be perplexed--, which says they believe a thing, a book, is supposed to be judged.

* * * *

A man on television said "Women use words to communicate and to express their inner feelings, while men use words to not say anything." It was a comedy by the way.

* * * *

That at times I'm very unsatisfied with this book is good. That I know after I'm done I'll find it lacking and have an overwhelming desire to put in new points is good.

I want the book to be the density of diamonds, the weight

of a star, and I will never be satisfied. I need to add many different points of view to see the big picture. I included animal minds and artificial intelligence to show the limits and biases of the human way of thinking. And I am at times intentionally vague about my philosophies and at times feel a need to say it straight. And I know there are very important points and information that need to be made but will be left out.

But I also know the struggle and the dichotomy and the psychology is a more important part of the book.

An interesting area of animal cognitive psychology is the study of animal brains that have sensory perceptions beyond human capabilities.

“Is it difficult being so beautiful?”

Henry: “No, I just wake up in the morning.”

The way to Heaven is through Hell, but it's also the way to Hell.

"Do you ever have dark thoughts?"

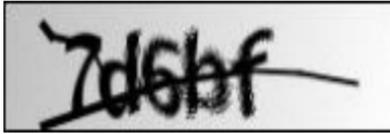
"Is there a color darker than black?"

Note that we call the nonconscious as as *non* compared to our conscious view which is itself limited and distorted.

American novelist Hubert Selby Jr. (*Last Exit to Brooklyn*, *Requiem for a Dream*) used / instead of ‘. As in “It/s mine” and “You/re a good boy”. The / key was closer on his typewriter and Selby believed in writing fast.

Though a celebrated and influential novelist, he was a high school dropout and broke other punctuation and grammar rules, including often not using periods, commas and paragraph indentations, and writing entire chapters in capitals.

Captchas: How Computers Use Cognitive Psychology to identify Users as Human



We've all had been asked to type in the letters and numbers in those funky pictures on websites, such as pictured above. These pictures are called CAPTCHAs and are used to try to identify if a visitor to a website is human or computer. Online banks, stores, news sites, chat boards and other sites want to weed out automated programs that try to steal information and spam message boards.

The question you may have is how do these pictures identify a user as human.

CAPTCHAs are designed around human shape and pattern biases and the human's natural ability to guess at or pick out identities in ambiguous information.

The letters and numbers in the CAPTCHAs aren't literally the letters and numbers, but abbreviated, mixed up, distorted versions, often with other information (visual noise) overlapping and/or surrounding it.

When told to pick out the symbols, the human picks out which letters and numbers they perceive. The symbols don't perfectly match the textbook letters and numbers, but the human guesses what they most approximate.

Computers can eventually, or at least sometimes, identify

the symbols but it takes longer. They have more difficulty with the ambiguous, messy and mixed up images.



Humans can make out different individual letters in this CAPTCHA, but it's really just one connected graphic.

Did you know? The From Hell Letter

Even at the time, there were many hoax letters and claims surrounding the unsolved Jack the Ripper murders plaguing London. However, there is one handwritten letter that many experts and historians consider likely authentic. Referred to as the 'From Hell' letter and mailed to the home of the head of a neighborhood security committee, the return address was 'From Hell' and came in a box containing a woman's kidney.

Eskimo Words for Snow

A popular but discredited story is that the Eskimo language contains many times, even multiple times, more words for snow than English. The story is that Eskimos have words for different kinds and states of snow that we don't have: where we might say "falling snow" they would have a single word.

At first blush the story seems plausible, even common sense, as the Eskimos have more experience with snow than someone in Miami Beach or Liverpool. Further, first glance at the Eskimo languages does appear to support the urban myth. Where we would have phrases describing snow ("falling snow," "Crunchy snow." "Snow drift on the roof"), the Eskimos appear to have single words for our phrases.

Beyond that there are multiple not one Eskimo languages, the problem with the myth is the Eskimo languages are structured differently than English, so it appears to have more words than it really has. The Eskimos languages are polysynthetic, meaning they have words comprised of numerous words and pieces of attached to each other. English has examples of this, including fisherman (fisher + man), sweetheart (sweet + heart) and masterpiece (master + piece). The Eskimos have more extreme combinations, with long phrases and even sentences scrunched into a word. Where we would have the phrase "Hard snow" they might have their language equivalent "hardsnow." Where we would say "Snow drift on roof of my house" they would have "Snowdriftonroofofmyhouse."

Due to the polysynthetic nature, the Eskimos attach all sorts of words together, making new words as they go.

English	Polysyntheticenglish
snow	snow
white snow	whitesnow
white snow in the wind	whitesnowinthewind
white snow on a stick	whitesnowonastick
white snow on my dog	whitesnowonmydog

Looking at the above list, some would say English has one word for snow, while Polysyntheticenglish has five. However, the only real difference between the two is the right omits the spaces. The left and right are equivalent.

In reality, the Eskimos languages may have slightly more or slightly fewer words, but not the vast amount more than English. In fact, due to the different structuring of the languages, it's impossible to exactly compare the number of words. What counts and doesn't count as a word is debatable, and the comparing the languages' words can be like comparing apples to oranges.

Canadian television show quiz segment answer: 'Vampire.'

Host's question: "What do you call someone who lives forever?"

Contestant: "Very wrinkly."



Calcite crystal on graph paper showing double refraction. The crystal splits a light ray into two rays causing 'double vision.'

Does lack of consciousness of the big picture prevents us all from committing suicide? Is that we wear blinders and are only conscious of the moment and point required to live?

You're a speck and the goal in life is to leave it a better place than if you weren't here. Bring some joy to people's lives.

Henry: "Do you suppose time lords are happier than the rest of us?"

Interesting concept, actually. We want to conquer time, but would conquering it make us any more satisfied? Probably not. My guess is it might make us more miserable.

Did you know? Ulysses S. Grant was born Hiram Ulysses Grant, which he disliked due to the HUG initials. The US Military Academy incorrectly recorded his name as Ulysses S. Grant when he entered as a young student soldier and he didn't correct them.

I learn a new language to become a different animal.

Henry: "I thought I saw a unicorn yesterday, but it turned out to be a pony with a big zit. I slayed it anyway."

* * * *

Art perception is both a psychological and an intellectual process, conscious and subconscious, logical and emotional, and we often have conflicting and changing opinions about a work. We naturally get an initial emotional reaction to a work of art-- influenced by our natural and learned reactions to shapes, colors, textures, etc. Our impression of the work can change with time. We consciously try and figure out what is going on, what is the point, how it is related to other works. Our appreciation and liking can change as we learn how it was made, what materials and techniques were used, as we hear others' views and ideas about the work.

We can like the artwork on one level but not another. We can appreciate the intellectual point but dislike the aesthetics, or be attracted to the design and colors but find the artist's message trite. Our opinion of a work can flip flop back and forth, depending on which way we consider it, even based on our mood and the time of day.

I hate saying there is the heart and the head in art perception because, of course, the 'heart' is in the mind. But if I did, you'd get the point. But I won't.

I've begun having horrible visions—terrible visions—the weight of the light is like boiling—it's like pins—my brain has turned against me—the light boils the brain—twitches it—it makes you dance on a hot plate—it makes you dance like Brer Rabbit against your will in the thicket —Stop—you scream— but you dance like Brer Rabbit in the thicket and with the horrible excitement—twitching—frantic dancing—there are with these the cool creeping visions—You dance until you fall down with exhaustion—then a cool wind comes and picks up the dust and you're on your side on the dirty kitchen floor in the dirt and grease orange—and you start having the visions—the sounds, the sights—the voices not in English—it's always murmurs—lurches of murmuring—waves coming and going—the shadowy lurching dances out of the corner of your eyes—dark figures dancing moving—The claws of a black cat clawing frantically at something, at something, what?

Instant perceptions

Humans make many visual perceptions in an instant. In an instant can mean the instant eyes are laid upon a scene. It also sometimes means the perception suddenly flashes in the mind after looking at the scene for a while.

An example of the latter is when you stare at a Magic Eye picture before the hidden image is suddenly revealed. Another is when you are looking at a crowd of faces and all of a sudden recognize a friend.

These instant perceptions often come from the nonconscious. That they arise instantly and from within, like epiphanies, make them powerful even when wrong. To true believers, they didn't arbitrarily pick out the Face on Mars, they recognized it as one recognizes a relative in a crowd.

"Juxtapositions expand your intellect."

Henry: "Maybe, but I still want you to remove the ketchup from my ice cream."

Art critics praise works that cater to their base cognitive and neurological biases. It's no better than racism or other bigotry, yet art critics praise it, swoon at it. I know truth lays beyond such shallowness, even if we can't get there.

If the book had been written in a way that met your aesthetic tastes, it would not be the academic study that it is. It's studying the areas that don't meet your aesthetic tastes where the meaning is found.

"I was wondering. You know how people in different countries speak different languages? Do dogs bark in different parts of the world bark in different languages or is it just one universal dog language? You know, like Russian dogs versus Mexican dogs."

Henry: "Dogs just bark to make noise to annoy humans."

Cognitive Dissonance

The theory developed by famous American psychologist Leon Festinger, cognitive dissonance is the mental discomfort experienced by a person who has conflicts or contradictions between ideas, values, behavior and/or information at the same time. An example of this dissonance is if after deciding to go on a diet you eat a fried chicken and ice cream-- there's a contradiction between your idea and behavior that will be obvious to you. Another is if you have a blind loyalty to a public figure and news comes out that he did something bad and against his professed views. This conflict between expectations and reality is uncomfortable and the person has a strong ingrained drive to try to reduce the dissonance. Humans psychologically want constancy between their expectations and reality, beliefs and facts.

There are countless ways to try to reduce dissonance-- healthy and unhealthy, rational and irrational, adaptive and maladaptive, honest and dishonest. Some will deal reasonably with the conflict-- such as accepting that it was a mistake to eat that bad food and vowing to get back on the straight an narrow, or making one's views about a public figure more realistic. Others will act poorly such as trying to delude themselves that fried chicken and ice cream for breakfast really is good for you, deny or dubiously justify the facts about the public figure or, as is often the case, 'shoot the messenger.' Denying facts, lying to oneself and dubious justifications are common maladaptive ways to try to regain

cognitive consistency.

How we deal with dissonance says a lot about us and our maturity and is a major part of our personality. We admire people who admit to their mistakes, handle well unexpected setbacks and can change their viewpoints when given new information. We express frustration with people who stubbornly cling to false notions and who react angrily to anyone who doesn't agree with them.

The desire to reduce cognitive dissonance explains why we all often automatically deny facts or theories that go against our ideas or beliefs, even when we later accept them. It is also an integral part of how humans act, such as throughout the chapter *Conceits*.

Did you know polar bears have black skin?

What is the best moral system?

What is the best or correct moral system, or even that there is such a thing, is beyond human knowledge. Your conception of what is good and bad, right and wrong, both in the theory and practice are in major part a matter of personal judgment, sentiment, bias, psychology and culture, your time and place of life. Common human perceptions of morality are a product of inborn human survival psychology and biology. There are no known absolutes for what is the best or correct moral system-- and even if there were, how to implement them in the messy, gray, unintended consequences, conflicting parts, impossible choices, paradoxical, can't have your cake and eat it too real world would give more impossible questions.

Is a human life worth more, less or the same than a squirrel's or tree's, and, if more, to what degree? Is an unborn baby's life worth more or less or equal than the mother's? Why? What are the correct or best ideas of justice and fairness? In the end, your value judgments on these questions are exactly that-- personal judgment calls. And your views on animal versus human worth, human versus plants worth, sexual, racial and ethnic equalities would have been different 300 years ago, and if you were around 300 years from now you'd think many of your current views are antiquated and myopic.

Our ideas of fairness, goodness and rightness may be nothing more than human concepts, and certainly most

human conceptions about them are decidedly human, personally centric and often self serving.

Are correct and best moral systems different things? Could the best moral system be fair, while the true moral system is unfair and cruel? People often say life isn't fair and nature is cruel. If nature is unfair, would it be best or right to defy the true moral system in the name of the fair system? Unanswerable question of course.

Is an unborn baby's life worth as much, more or less than the mother's? When the theoretical rubber hits the real life road and you have to chose one or the other, who's life do you chose? Do practical considerations come into play? Irrelevant to which are your moral beliefs, there will be impossible to answer real world situations, impossible choices in practice.

What is the best justice system and political system? Does ivory tower theory match practice in the messy world?

The American system values individual freedom and says it is better to let many guilty people go free than to wrongly convict an innocent person. Other cultures, or at least their governments, supremely value order and lack of crime, and choose to sacrifice individual rights in the name of order.

What's more important, freedom or lack of crime? You can't have both. Is there a point on the spectrum between the absolutes you'd choose? Where is the point? Your answer to this is a personal one. Again, a personal judgment.

Theory and practice are two different things. As Yogi Berra said "In theory, theory and practice are the same, but in practice they are different."

I am about truth, but, as demonstrated by the chapter

Conceits and Human Achievement, know it must be suppressed, including in me, for there to be practical, real world success-- including in the search for facts, information and insight. Lies and arbitrary conceits must be followed and believed for there to be practical progress. I know that things that I want-- such as truth and order, truth and practical success-- are in conflict with each other. Many of the things we want are in conflict with each other. That's a fact of life.

And many totalitarian regimes are about practical results and realize they must be unfair (to some or many) and use lies and propaganda to succeed in order to achieve what they wish to achieve. Even democracies use Marshall law and suppress free speech in times of crises.

What we have to learn is that we don't know, can't know, but must choose a way. Not choosing a system is not a possibility. Not choosing is a choice. And, in the face of not knowing, we may choose an orderly system as if we know the absolute truths. An atheist may choose a remarkably similar political and judicial system to a Christian, because the two desire the same practical social structure and order. Many atheists and theists like democracy and clean streets and public schools and kindly treatment of animals.

This is a question for you. Considering you don't know, what would you value for society (a selfish choice, self centered from the start) and how would you achieve it in the real world, how would you organize the world? What would you have to give up? What would be the give and take? How would it apply to the real world? What unexpected consequences would crop up?

Even when there is agreement between people about what is the final goal, there will be different ideas how to get there. Most people think kids becoming proficient at mathematics is an admirable goal. However, these same people will often disagree how to get to that goal. Many of the most heated arguments will be about the means and methods, not the ends.

And when thinking up how to set up our vision of rules and order for society we have to face the fact that others have other ideas and beliefs and we won't always, if ever, be able to set the rules.

It's time I tell you the facts of life. Your dog eats cat poops.

I've been asked to judge the authenticity of items for a local church. Don't worry, it's just some porcelain tea cups for their spring rummage sale, not relics on which they base their religion.

I remember as a kid walking into the half open bathroom door in the middle of the night. In the dark I saw the moon through the window on the opposite side of the bathroom and assumed the door was wide open. If the door had been closed, hiding the moon, I would have assumed the door was closed and felt for the door knob. This is a case where my assumption was half right: the door was half open. The problem being that the edge of a half opened door hurts your head more than the face of a closed door.

Hans van Meegeren

One of the most infamous art forgers was a Dutch man named Hans van Meegeren (1889-1947). He was a formally trained and commercially successful painter, but critics put down his art as old fashioned. Angry at the criticism and wanting to prove his artistic genius, he set out to forge paintings by masters Jan Vermeer, Frans Hals, Pieter de Hooch and Gerard te Borsch. He didn't counterfeit (exactly copy) paintings but made new paintings in their style and signed their names. He studied the famous artists' styles and biographies and formulated from chemical scratch paint and materials consistent to their periods. One of his fake Vermeers was declared the finest Vermeer in existence.

The problem for Meegeren was after World War II the Dutch discovered a Vermeer in the collection of Nazi leader Hermann Goering and the provenance showed that it was purchased from Meegeren. In the Netherlands, Vermeer paintings were considered national treasures and the selling of national treasures to the enemy during wartime was treason, with the punishment for treason being death. In court the terrified Meegeren claimed that it wasn't a real Vermeer and that he knew this because he made it. The court did not believe this unexpected defense and forced Meegeren to make a forged painting in the court with everyone watching. He proved his forgery skills in court and was sentenced to the much lesser offense of falsification and fraud, with a punishment of one year in prison.

“If you dig beneath the surface you could probably find some resentment, but there's no need to scratch beneath the surface.”

* * * *

Of course rules, due dates, team work are essential, but bad bosses include those who assume and expect others to work the personal way that works best for the boss. A morning person who assumes everyone works best in the morning or a person who doesn't need sleep and assumes others work well without sleep. Different people produce their best works under different situations and in different ways, and the best boss realizes that. Just as a good boss realizes that different people have different skills and talents, he recognizes they have personal strengths and weaknesses and assigns tasks and positions accordingly.

* * * *

“If you wish this was a 200 page book, read 200 pages of it.”

A young woman told a reverend that she is an atheist, because "God is vengeful, arbitrary and cruel, and I don't believe in that." The reverend said "I don't believe in that god either."

* * * *

For scientists who study animal minds and intelligence, a big area of focus is how they navigate over large spaces, such as when hunting & returning home. Some lower level animals use simple 'robotic' methods, such as taking the exact same trail to and from, being able to recognize their home or land mark along the way and automatically moving towards it, or following a laid down scent. However, there is a spider that each time greatly changes its to and from travel to better sneak up on prey, and scientists realized it had a much more advanced system than they anticipated.

I remember when I was a little kid, perhaps 6 or 7, and entered the local newspaper's kids 'Draw the Easter Bunny' contest where the winner got his or her name in the newspaper and a silver dollar. My older sister told me to paste cotton balls to my picture, because according to her the judges would fall for 'creative' stuff like that and that's what she had done to win the contest several years earlier. I did as she instructed and won the silver dollar.



"He was the strangest of all our national sports idols. But not even his disagreeable character could destroy the image of his greatness as a ballplayer"-- sportswriter Jimmy Cannon on early 1900s baseball great Ty Cobb



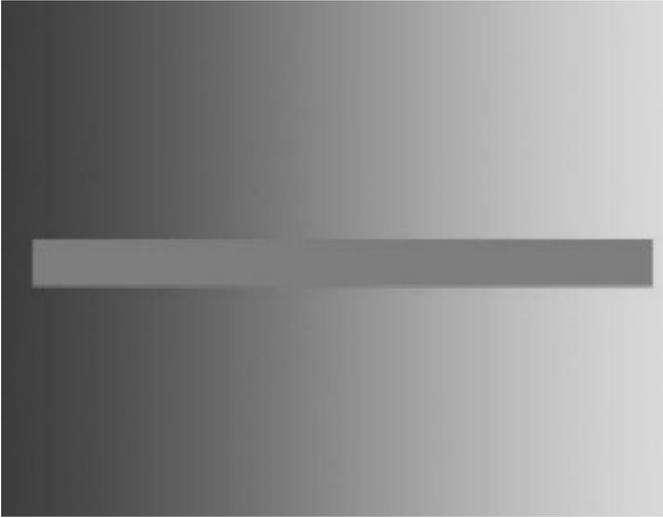
In 1922's *Nosferatu*, the vampire was the personification (so to speak) of the black plague and came over with rats on a ship. Unlike the elegant and dashing Bela Lugosi in *Dracula* (1931), *Nosferatu* was disfigured and hideous as if diseased.



"Abandon children during WWII" by Toni Frissell. Antoinette 'Toni' Frissell was a wealthy American photographer who first gained fame as a fashion photographer for *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*. She was later the first female staff photographer for *Sports Illustrated*, and the first person to shoot cover photos for both *Vogue* and *Sports Illustrated*. She is also noted for her photographs of the soldiers, civilians and children during World War II Europe.



Iconic still image of the little girl zombie from 1968's *Night of the Living Dead*. Filmed on a shoestring budget outside of Pittsburgh, it now ranks as one of the great horror movies. Bleak right up to the depressing ending, it has strong social commentary and broke social and movie taboos. It also was also the first mainstream American movie to star a black man in a non-stereotypical black role.



Visual illusions point out the existence of blind spots and unreliability in our logic and reasoning systems.

For those who have never before seen this image, the rational answer would be the bar changes in tone. To say it is solid in tone would be irrational.

It's not that all false perceptions of reality are due to faulty logic, but that many are formed using what is considered sound logic and reasoning.

Henry: "Nagging me isn't going to make me pick up my toys any faster. In particular considering I'm not going to do it."

This book is the product of genius but most people doesn't have the tools to understand it.

Just so you know.

Artistic conceits and limitations in communication



An art form (novel, rock song, painting, poem, movie) is a form of language. The artist uses an art form as a means to communicate an idea or ideas to the audience. I use the word idea in a broad sense, ranging from factual idea to emotional state. I use the term audience to mean whoever is watching the movie, reading the book, listening to the music or viewing the painting. An audience can be one million and it can be one.

To be art a work must be profoundly beautiful or sublime to the audience. It must give an audience a sublime or deeply beautiful experience. Beauty and sublime cannot be translated into simple words, so I do not define them here.

* * * *

Not only is an art form made up and surrounded by a maze of conceits, but each form is itself a conceit. This means that art has both the practical benefits and the inherent limitations of all conceits.

An artistic conceit can be deep, trivial, traditional, ephemeral, regional, worldwide, conflicting and so on.

* * * *

The follow are examples of artistic conceits. Notice that some aren't about the art itself but how the art is presented.

- * The way a country music song is supposed to sound. What instruments are supposed to be used and what instruments should not be used. How the musicians should dress and move in a music video. What topics the lyrics should cover. What topics the lyrics should not cover.
- * Don't tell me that you or others don't judge a book by its cover. If the cover for a tough guy American football star's autobiography was changed from dark blue to pink, it would affect sales even though the text remained the same.
- * Say the Chicago Symphony comes to town and offers wonderful performances of Beethoven's 9th Symphony and Haydn's Water Music. Many in the audience, including perhaps the local newspaper critic, will be unable to get beyond the fact that the orchestra dressed overly casual. The director in tank top and cutoff jeans. The lead violinist in bathrobe and stocking feet. Some in the audience will demand

their money back, the newspaper critic might spend half her review complaining about the musicians' clothes.

- * The clichéd structure, chords, riffs, chorus-to-lead, ending and starting styles, duration and other conceits of rock 'n roll songs. Upon analysis, you will find that singles by Pat Boone, Black Flag, ABBA, Black Sabbath and John Denver have far more in common than many of the respective fans would be willing to admit.
- * A movie must be about people or things that are people- like. A movie about a birch tree would be a bomb. However, you might sell some tickets if you have an animated birch that can walk and talk, wears pants and a shirt, has a good sense of humor and has romantic feelings for that spruce of the opposite sex. If you stick in a car chase or two, an evil woodsman and his bad tempered chainsaw who wants to turn Mr. Birchy and all his tree pals into kindling, a fitting musical score and a happy ending with the woodsman foiled and Mr. Birchy and Miss Spruce smooching under a rainbow with nearby supercute bunnies giggling, you might have a blockbuster on your hands.
- * When you go to an art museum, what should it look like inside? What should it not look like? What would be your reaction be if a show of Rembrandts had the original, centuries old paintings displayed in funky neon green and day glow yellow frames?
- * In Western culture what art forms are generally considered more artistically significant than others? Novel versus comic book, oil painting versus finger

painting, television show versus in theatre movie, classical music versus rock 'n roll, drama versus comedy, violin versus banjo? Why?

* * * *

In order to effectively communicate the essential artistic meaning, the artist must follow most of the audience's conceits. This not only includes the deeper conceits but the shallow.

To have the audience focus on the intended meaning, the artist must be faithful to, or at least take into consideration, most of the audience's expectations. Breaking a convention is a shock, a distraction. If the artist breaks all the conventions the audience will be too distracted to focus on the meaning. If you turn a busy street corner and an upside down nude man painted orange and walking a deer in a tuxedo asks you for directions to the library I bet you won't comprehend the first sentence or two that comes out his mouth no matter how clearly he speaks. Similarly, if you display a Rembrandt painting in a hot pink and lime green fuzzy frame with flashing neon lights and dangling felt dice, don't be surprised if the gallery patron is unable to focus on the painting. If you want the patron to focus on the painting, you use a frame that fits his or her expectations.

* * * *

Artists intentionally bend or break some conventions while following the others. They follow all the other conventions in order to focus the audience's attentions on the intentionally bent or broken convention. I dare you to find a popular *shock*

rock band that, while having a disturbing twist, does not follow the majority of fashionable conceits, even those used by The Kingston Trio and Sonny and Cher. What you intend to be shocking can't be shocking, or its shock value will be diluted to water, if the audience's attention is distracted by other things. Totally bewildering is rarely as haunting as a perverse twist of the ordinary.

The juxtaposition of the unexpected with the expected, the abnormal with the normal, is a common artistic technique. Many movies spend the first portion of the work merely setting up an artificial plot and setting to later subvert. How many monster movies start as a normal everyday white picket story? How many thrillers start as an everyday guy going about his everyday business?

The *theme and variation* is a standard musical technique-- altering the melody the second and third time around in a song or other work of music. In comparison to the remembered theme, the altered variation produces a psychological, sometimes poignant effect for the listener. Music can be plotted in a surprisingly similar way to a movie or novel.

* * * *

No matter how shallow the conceits, the successful artist must use or at least address most of the conceits of the audience. Successful art is a compromise between the artist and the audience. It is a communication and communication requires a common language. The artist may have radical things to say, but must communicate in a form the audience can understand. No matter how profound the meaning, the novelist who ignores all the audience's expectations and

sensibilities might as well write the book in a foreign language. Great artists are often keenly aware that much of their artistic vision can never be communicated to others.

A Simple Explanation of Einstein's Theory of Reality

You have probably heard how time is slower for someone on a spaceship traveling super fast, and if someone leaves from earth on a light speed spaceship and comes back in 20 earth years, everyone on earth will be twenty years older but he will have barely aged. The following is a simple explanation of Albert Einstein's theory of relativity and how time for that person on the spaceship really is slower than for the person standing on earth.

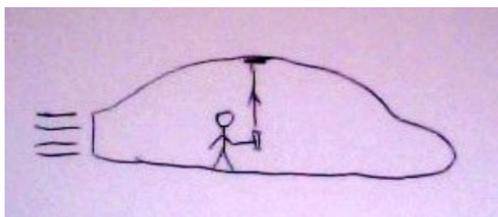
The first thing to know is the speed of light is constant. A law of physics.

Also, remember that when you are sitting on an airplane, within the enclosed atmosphere of the insides of the airplane, it feels as if you are sitting still. Even though the airplane is flying at 350 or whatever miles per hour, you don't feel a 350 mile per wind on your face. If you did, you'd blow away. If you get up from your seat, stretch, read a magazine and walk around, it seems the same as if you are stretching, reading a magazine and walking around on stationary ground. You can throw up a ball up and catch it, even though it is moving laterally at 350 miles per hour.

It is the same for the guy inside the spaceship flying at, let's say, half the speed of light.

Let's say the guy inside the spaceship going half the speed of light has a flash light and is standing directly

underneath a mirror facing directly down from the ceiling. If he shines a beam of light from the flashlight directly up to the mirror, the light will go up and be reflected back down in the same line. Or, at least, that's how it appears to him. To the man, and anyone else on the spaceship, the light will go up and back down in a straight line. Just as with when you toss up and catch that ball on the airplane.



The man shining the light beam on the spaceship. To him and anyone on the ship, the beam appears to go straight up and back along the same line.

However, to a person standing on earth (and with really, really good eyesight), the same beam of light on that speeding spaceship will appear to take a different, longer path. From her vantage point and with the spaceship moving super fast left to right as the light beam shines, the light will appear to move upwards at a rightwards angle to the mirror and reflected back down at a rightwards angle. This means to the person on earth the beam of light will appear to move further or take a longer distance path.

And with the speed of light being constant that means, to the person on earth it will take longer in time for the light to travel to up to the mirror and back down. In other words, more time passes for the person on earth for the same light beam to travel up and down than passes for the man on the space ship.



To the person on earth watching the spaceship zoom left to right, the same beam of light in the first picture will appear to move upwards and downwards at right angles, taking a path longer in distance and time. If he was watching you toss a ball on an airplane, the ball would appear to him to be moving 350 miles per hour to the right.

This is similar to how the doppler effect works, where a car's constant horn seems to sound higher in pitch as it approaches you and lower after it passes you and moves further away. The car's horn sounds constant in pitch when the vehicle is stationary and to the driver or rider in the vehicle while the vehicle is moving. However, to the person standing still with the car approaching, the moving car shortens the sound's wavelength (and raises the pitch) and the car moving away lengthens the wavelength (and lowers the pitch). The car's speed adds or subtracts to the speed of the wavelengths, but only to the persons standing still.

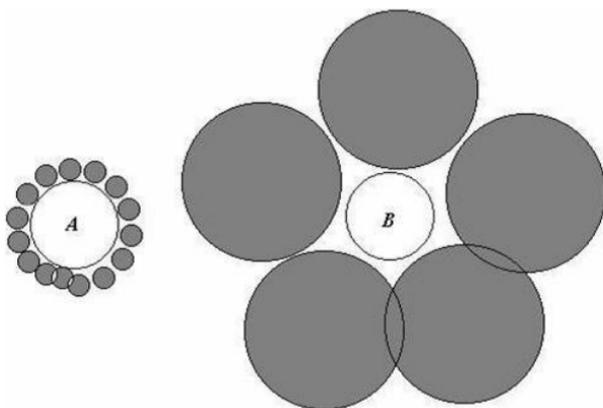






Kissing on the mouth is a uniquely human thing.

Cognitive Psychology: Comparisons



Circles A and B are the same size. It the surrounding grey circles that make circle B appear smaller.

* * * *

Human perception of objects is influenced by nearby objects, qualities and other information. Both consciously and nonconsciously we judge things through comparison. To measure fabric one compares the cloth to a yard stick. To judge the size of someone's hand, you might press your palm against hers. To judge someone's speed, you might race him or watch him race someone else.

In often less exacting comparisons, humans judge the

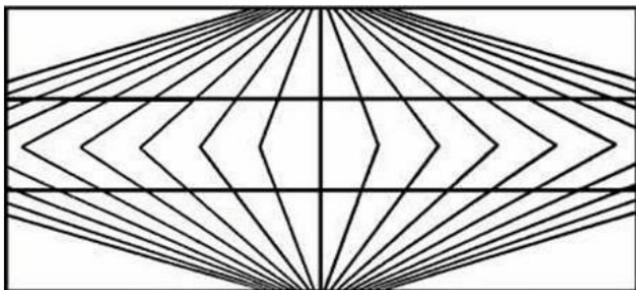
length, height, angle, shape, color and distance by comparing one object to others in the scene. Looking at a family snapshot photo you might guess the height of a stranger by comparing him to someone you know. You will guesstimate the distance to a house by comparing its size to the sizes of closer houses and trees. You will guesstimate an angle by comparing it to a level line (“Appears to be about 10-15% off from level”).

Often these guesstimates are accurate within a reasonable degree. You might guess that stranger in the photo is 6 feet tall, as you know your aunt is 5’ 5.” When you meet him, you may discover he’s 5’10-1/2.” Not perfect, but a darn good guess—especially as you were unable to clearly see what shoes they had been wearing.

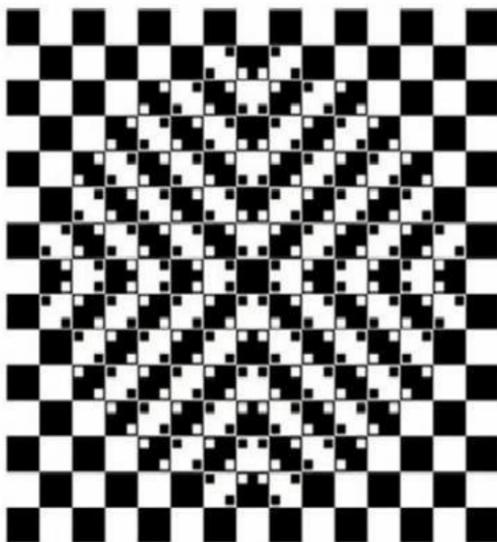
A problem is that, while comparing to other objects is essential to making judgments, comparisons can lead to errors. Seemingly logical comparisons can produce answers that are bizarrely wrong. These errors happen when assumptions about an object or about the overall scene is wrong.

What happens if you incorrectly remembered your aunt as 6 feet tall, instead of 5’5,” as the last time you saw her you were a five year old munchkin? Your calculations of the man’s height will be similarly off. You might wrongly guess he was 6’7.” What happens if she was wearing flats in the photo, while he, shy about his height, was wearing lifts? What happens if the man couldn’t make the family reunion and a cousin photo-shopped in an image of him?

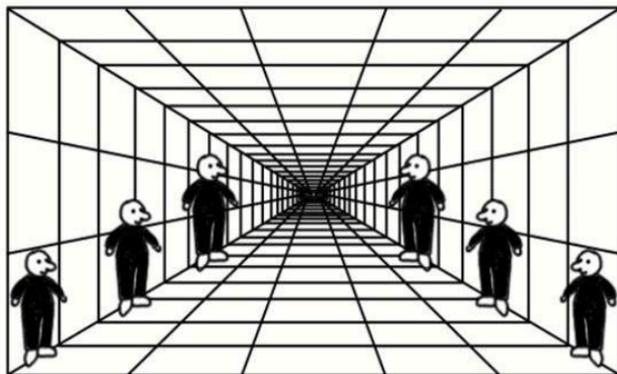
The following pictures show how your perception is distorted by surrounding information.



The above two horizontal lines are straight and parallel. The angled background makes them appear to bend. Without the angled background, the lines would appear parallel.



All the horizontal and vertical lines are straight and equally spaced. In other words, all the large checkerboard squares are perfect squares of the same size. It is the placement of the tiny squares that creates the appearance of the 'bulge.'



The men are the same size. Measure them yourself. It is the skewed *diminishing scale* lines that make them appear to be of different sizes.

‘Gravity Hill’

A so-called gravity hill is a visual illusion where a road appears to go uphill when it actually goes downhill. A car left in neutral appears to do the impossible of rolling uphill. There are gravity hills in many places around the world.

These illusions happen in areas where the road slopes only slightly and often where there is an unusually high horizon (hill, quarry backdrop, other). Humans use the horizon line to judge the slope. If you look at a road moving away from you and steeply upwards, it visually moves towards the horizon. If instead it is moving steeply downhill, the hill moves away from the horizon. With a slight slope and unusually high horizon, judgment becomes more difficult. Additionally, gravity hill areas often have unorthodox angled scenery, including few if any perpendicular objects such as trees or telephone poles. These perpendicular objects also serve as references for judging slope.

While these roads are visual illusions, locals often refer to them as them as being supernatural, haunted, magnetic, gravity or anti-gravity hills. These local legend terms are tongue in cheek to have some fun with tourists.



The road on the left clearly moves up, moving towards the sky. The vertical phone poles going up the hill aid our judgment. The slope of the road on the right is harder to judge. This is due to the lesser grade and the unorthodox, almost bizarre angles of the scenery.

Monster

We cannot enter into the human world-- the daylight world-- though we can see them, meet them at night-- I have talked to a few-- observed them

At times I've walked in the day-- just a few times-- Met some of the daylight ones-- An old man on a bench who talked about baseball

I watch a beautiful, painfully boring couple sitting on a bench

I made a machine to put the image onto paper-- To have something tangible-- But this didn't help-- I held it, caressed it-- I made it into a paste and injected it into my vein-- But it just made me sick
Then in desperation he goes up to a woman—She doesn't know what he's talking about

He walks along the sidewalk and doesn't know what to do.
He begs the toad, he begs the grass but they don't talk back

The beloved Birgit grows old, dies- SH continually

dates young women-- who shrivel up and die

He says he is the only one of his kind on earth-- with nothing to do-- As he grew out of being a human being-- he lost their desires for day to day, light, etc-- And his temper, desires grew-- Can only think big

Finds spy-- confronts spy--- Spy says he doesn't know what SH is talking about

I must paint scenes-- I must promote scenes-- I must provide the music and food and drink for the scenes. And I must enter into the scenes. I must beg of them, I must plead of them

Some scientists say that some non-human animals are as intelligent as humans, but in different ways and using different senses and communication methods. Ways that are regularly ignored, discounted and/or unmeasurable by humans. The blood hound's sense of smell may be more complex and sophisticated than a human's sense of sight--and in fact blood hounds can answer many identity questions that humans cannot--, but human iq tests have no smell questions. Lots of visual questions but no smell questions.

An animal behavior professor said he could ask two dolphins he studied to do a spontaneous and unique water routine. The dolphins would swim together underwater and jump out of the water and do novel twisting and flipping movements in complete unison. Humans have yet to figure out how they do that. There's a mysterious form of communication going on there.

Swarm intelligence

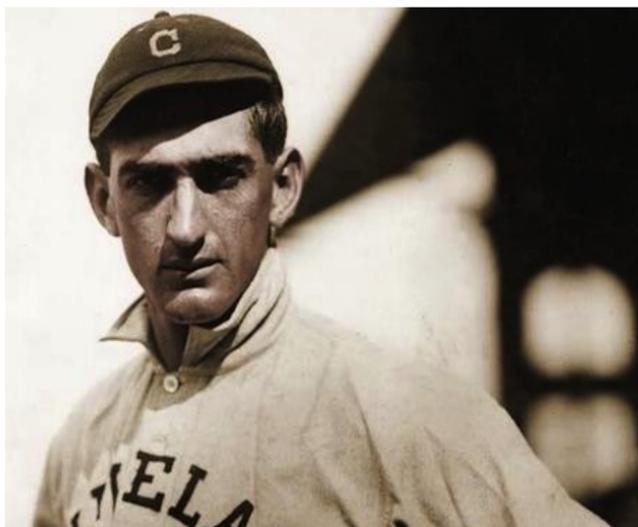
Swarm intelligence is where large groups of animals exhibit a group intelligence and capability much larger than any of the individual animals exhibit or are even aware of. Examples include small fish and birds that unconsciously and instinctually form large groups that protect themselves from predators (essentially forming one large animal), ant groups that gather food in long lines and termites that build giant, intricate homes. Each of the animals does a very simple-minded task in its own immediate surroundings (a fish in a school will swim a certain distance from surrounding fish) and is unaware of the groups' overall structure and capability. Computer scientists employ artificial swarm intelligence to try and come up with structures and answers to difficult questions.

Economics is just one area where the human species exhibits swarm intelligence.





Original 1870s cabinet card photograph of Laura Bridgman, the first blind deaf person to learn English. Predated Helen Keller. Apparently, she led a full life, became educated and was a celebrity in her day. Her education started as a child with a patient tutor who communicated by tapping on her hand.



Though not a household name like Babe Ruth and Joe DiMaggio, Joe Jackson has near mythical status to fans and collectors of early baseball. An illiterate from South Carolina, Jackson was one of the great hitters of the day before being banned for life for his participation in the fixing of the 1919 World Series. As he could barely write his name and usually had his wife sign for him, his signatures are ultra rare and the most expensive sports autograph in the world. A signed baseball will sell for tens of thousands of dollars.



Antonin Artaud and Maria Falconetti in Carl Dreyer's 'Passion of John of Arc' (1928)

Swarm intelligence begs the question of if there are swarm intelligences and group functions the human species are doing that they are unaware of.

It also begs the question of if individual consciousness, or consciousness itself, is as important as humans say it is. We could be doing things higher and more intelligent than we are conscious of. Consciousness and awareness are things people aspire to, greatly value, but perhaps human consciousness of things is nothing more than a quaint and relatively minor quality in the big picture of group intelligence, group function and group minds. It's a rather self centered thing for humans to say what matters is what they know.

The following three biographies of US President William McKinley, actress Greta Garbo and musician Syd Barrett were cut and pasted from Wikipedia. Whether you wish to read them, skim them or skip over them is up to you. To be honest, while I know well about the three people and purposefully picked them, I haven't fully read the passages.

**William McKinley (January 29, 1843m-
September 14, 1901) 25th President of
the United States**

William McKinley, Jr., was born in 1843 in Niles, Ohio, the seventh child of William and Nancy (née Allison) McKinley.[1] The McKinleys were of English and Scots-Irish descent and had settled in western Pennsylvania in the 18th century. There, the elder McKinley was born in Pine Township.[1]

The family moved to Ohio when the senior McKinley was a boy, settling in New Lisbon (now Lisbon). He met Nancy Allison there in 1829, and married her the same year.[1] The Allison family was of mostly English blood and among Pennsylvania's earliest settlers.[2] The family trade on both sides was iron-making, and McKinley senior operated foundries throughout Ohio, in New Lisbon, Niles, Poland, and finally Canton. [3] The McKinley household was, like many from Ohio's Western Reserve, steeped in Whiggish and abolitionist sentiment, the latter based on the family staunch Methodist beliefs. [4] William followed in the Methodist tradition, becoming active in the local Methodist church at the age of sixteen. [5]

He was a lifelong pious Methodist.[6] In 1852, the family moved from Niles to Poland so that their children could attend the better school there. Graduating in 1859, he enrolled the following year at Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania. He remained at Allegheny for only one year, returning home in 1860 after becoming ill and depressed.[7] Although his health recovered, family finances declined and McKinley was unable to return to Allegheny, first working as a postal clerk and later taking a job teaching at a school near Poland. [8]

Civil War

When the Southern states seceded from the Union and the American Civil War began, thousands of men in Ohio volunteered for service.[9] Among them were McKinley and his cousin William McKinley Osbourne, who enlisted as privates in the newly formed Poland Guards in July 1861.[10] The men left for Columbus where they were consolidated with other small units to form the 23rd Ohio Infantry.[11] The men were

unhappy to learn that, unlike Ohio's earlier volunteer regiments, they would not be permitted to elect their officers; they would be designated by Ohio's governor, William Dennison.[11] Dennison appointed Colonel William Rosecrans as the commander of the regiment, and the men began training on the outskirts of Columbus.[11] McKinley quickly took to the soldier's life and wrote a series of letters to his hometown newspaper extolling the army and the Union cause.[12] Delays in issuance of uniforms and weapons again brought the men into conflict with their officers, but Major Rutherford B. Hayes convinced them to accept what the government had issued them; his style in dealing with the men impressed McKinley, beginning an association and friendship that would last until Hayes' death in 1893.[13]

After a month of training, McKinley and the 23rd Ohio, now led by Colonel Eliakim P. Scammon, set out for western Virginia (today part of West Virginia) in June 1861 as a part of the Kanawha Division.[14] McKinley initially thought Scammon was a martinet, but when the regiment finally saw battle, he came to appreciate the value of their relentless drilling.[15] Their first contact with the enemy came in September when they drove back Confederate troops at Carnifex Ferry in present-day West Virginia.[16] Three days after the battle, McKinley was assigned to duty in the brigade quartermaster office, where he worked both to supply his regiment, and as a clerk.[17] In November, the regiment established winter quarters near Fayetteville (today in West Virginia).[18] McKinley spent the winter substituting for a commissary sergeant who was ill, and in April 1862 he was promoted to that rank.[19] The regiment resumed its advance that spring with Hayes in command (Scammon by then led the brigade) and fought several minor engagements against the rebel forces.[20]

That September, McKinley's regiment was called east to reinforce General John Pope's Army of Virginia at the Second Battle of Bull Run.[21] Delayed in passing through Washington, D.C., the 23rd Ohio did not arrive in time for the battle, but joined the Army of the Potomac as it hurried north to cut off Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia as it advanced into Maryland.[21] The 23rd was the first regiment to encounter the Confederates at the Battle of South Mountain on September 14.[22] After severe losses, Union forces drove back the Confederates and

continued to Sharpsburg, Maryland, where they engaged Lee's army at the Battle of Antietam, one of the bloodiest battles of the war.[23] The 23rd was also in the thick of the fighting at Antietam, and McKinley himself came under heavy fire when bringing rations to the men on the line.[23][a] McKinley's regiment again suffered many casualties, but the Army of the Potomac was victorious and the Confederates retreated into Virginia.[23] The regiment was then detached from the Army of the Potomac and returned by train to western Virginia.[24]

Shenandoah Valley and promotion

While the regiment went into winter quarters near Charleston, Virginia (present-day West Virginia), McKinley was ordered back to Ohio with some other sergeants to recruit fresh troops.[25] When they arrived in Columbus, Governor David Tod surprised McKinley with a commission as second lieutenant in recognition of his service at Antietam.[25] McKinley and his comrades saw little action until July 1863, when the division skirmished with John Hunt Morgan's cavalry at the Battle of Buffington Island.[26] Early in 1864, the Army command structure in West Virginia was reorganized, and the division was assigned to George Crook's Army of West Virginia.[27] They soon resumed the offensive, marching into southwestern Virginia to destroy salt and lead mines used by the enemy.[27] On May 9, the army engaged Confederate troops at Cloyd's Mountain, where the men charged the enemy entrenchments and drove the rebels from the field.[27] McKinley later said the combat there was "as desperate as any witnessed during the war." [27] Following the rout, the Union forces destroyed Confederate supplies and skirmished with the enemy again successfully.[27]

McKinley and his regiment moved to the Shenandoah Valley as the armies broke from winter quarters to resume hostilities. Crook's corps was attached to Major General David Hunter's Army of the Shenandoah and soon back in contact with Confederate forces, capturing Lexington, Virginia, on June 11.[28] They continued south toward Lynchburg, tearing up railroad track as they advanced.[28] Hunter believed the troops at Lynchburg were too powerful, however, and the brigade returned to West Virginia.[28] Before the army could make another attempt, Confederate General Jubal Early's raid into Maryland forced their recall to the north.[29] Early's army surprised them at

Kernstown on July 24, where McKinley came under heavy fire and the army was defeated.[30] Retreating into Maryland, the army was reorganized again: Major General Philip Sheridan replaced Hunter, and McKinley, who had been promoted to captain after the battle, was transferred to General Crook's staff.[31] By August, Early was retreating south in the valley, with Sheridan's army in pursuit.[32] They fended off a Confederate assault at Berryville, where McKinley had a horse shot out from under him, and advanced to Opequon Creek, where they broke the enemy lines and pursued them farther south.[33] They followed up the victory with another at Fisher's Hill on September 22, and were engaged once more at Cedar Creek on October 19.[34] After initially falling back from the Confederate advance, McKinley helped to rally the troops and turn the tide of the battle.[34]

After Cedar Creek, the army stayed in the vicinity through election day, when McKinley cast his first presidential ballot, for the incumbent Republican, Abraham Lincoln.[34] The next day, they moved north up the valley into winter quarters near Kernstown.[34] In February 1865, Crook was captured by Confederate raiders.[35] Crook's capture added to the confusion as the army was reorganized for the spring campaign, and McKinley found himself serving on the staffs of four different generals over the next fifteen days - Crook, John D. Stevenson, Samuel S. Carroll, and Winfield S. Hancock.[35] Finally assigned to Carroll's staff again, McKinley acted as the general's first and only adjutant.[36] Lee and his army surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant a few days later, effectively ending the war. McKinley found time to join a Freemason lodge (later renamed after him) in Winchester, Virginia, before he and Carroll were transferred to Hancock's First Veterans Corps in Washington.[37] Just before the war's end, McKinley received his final promotion, a brevet commission as major.[38] In July, the Veterans Corps was mustered out of service, and McKinley and Carroll were relieved of their duties.[38] Carroll and Hancock encouraged McKinley to apply for a place in the peacetime army, but he declined and returned to Ohio the following month.[38]

Legal career and marriage

After the war ended in 1865, McKinley decided on a career in the law and began studying in the office of an attorney in Poland, Ohio.[39] The following

year, he continued his studies by attending Albany Law School in New York.[40] After studying there for less than a year, McKinley returned home and was admitted to the bar in Warren, Ohio, in March 1867. [40] That same year, he moved to Canton, the county seat of Stark County, and set up a small office.[40] He soon formed a partnership with George W. Belden, an experienced lawyer and former judge.[41] His practice was successful enough for him to buy a block of buildings on Main Street in Canton, which provided him with a small but consistent rental income for decades to come.[41] When his Army friend Rutherford B. Hayes was nominated for governor in 1867, McKinley made speeches on his behalf in Stark County, his first foray into politics.[42] The county was closely divided between Democrats and Republicans, but Hayes carried it that year in his statewide victory.[42] In 1869, McKinley ran for the office of prosecuting attorney of Stark County, an office usually then held by Democrats, and was unexpectedly elected.[43] When McKinley ran for re-election in 1871, the Democrats nominated William A. Lynch, a prominent local lawyer, and McKinley was defeated by 143 votes.[43]

As McKinley's professional career progressed, so too did his social life blossom as he wooed Ida Saxton, the daughter of a prominent Canton family. [43] They were married on January 25, 1871, in the newly built First Presbyterian Church of Canton, although Ida soon joined her husband's Methodist church.[44] Their first child, Katherine, was born on Christmas Day 1871.[44] A second daughter, Ida, followed in 1873, but died the same year.[44] McKinley's wife descended into a deep depression at her baby's death and her health, never robust, grew worse.[44] Two years later, in 1875, Katherine died of typhoid fever. Ida never recovered from her daughters' deaths; the McKinleys had no more children.[44] Ida McKinley developed epilepsy around the same time and thereafter disliked her husband's leaving her side.[44] He remained a devoted husband and tended to his wife's medical and emotional needs for the rest of his life.[44]

Ida insisted that McKinley continue his increasingly successful career in law and politics. [45] He attended the state Republican convention that nominated Hayes for a third term as governor in 1875, and campaigned again for his old friend in the election that fall.[45] The next year, McKinley undertook a high-profile case defending a group of

coal miners arrested for rioting after a clash with strikebreakers.[46] Lynch, McKinley's opponent in the 1871 election, and his partner, William R. Day, were the opposing counsel, and the mine owners included Mark Hanna, a Cleveland businessman.[46] Taking the case pro bono, he was successful in getting all but one of the miners acquitted.[46] The case raised McKinley's standing among laborers, a crucial part of the Stark County electorate, and also introduced him to Hanna, who would become his strongest backer in years to come.[46]

McKinley's good standing with labor became useful that year as he campaigned for the Republican nomination for Ohio's 17th congressional district. [47] Delegates to the county conventions thought he could attract blue-collar voters, and in August 1876, McKinley was nominated.[47] By that time, Hayes had been nominated for President, and McKinley campaigned for him while running his own congressional campaign. [48] Both were successful. McKinley, campaigning mostly on his support for a protective tariff, defeated the Democratic nominee, Levi L. Lamborn, by 3,300 votes, while Hayes won a hotly disputed election to reach the presidency.[48] McKinley's victory came at a personal cost: his income as a congressman would be half of what he earned as a lawyer.[49]

Rising politician 1877-1895

Congressman McKinley

McKinley first took his congressional seat in October 1877, when President Hayes summoned Congress into special session.[b] With the Republicans in the minority, McKinley was given unimportant committee assignments, which he undertook conscientiously.[50] McKinley's friendship with Hayes did McKinley little good on Capitol Hill; the President was not well-regarded by many leaders there.[51] The young congressman broke with Hayes on the question of the currency, but it did not affect their friendship.[52] The United States had effectively been placed on the gold standard by the Coinage Act of 1873; when silver prices dropped significantly, many sought to make silver again a legal tender, equally with gold. Such a course would be inflationary, but advocates argued that the economic benefits of the increased money supply would be worth the inflation; opponents warned that "free silver" would not bring the promised benefits and would harm the United States in international trade.[53] McKinley voted for the

Bland-Allison Act of 1878, which mandated large government purchases of silver for striking into money, and also joined the large majorities in each house that overrode Hayes' veto of the legislation. In so doing, McKinley voted against the position of the House Republican leader, his fellow Ohioan and friend, James Garfield.[54]

From his first term in Congress, McKinley was a strong advocate of protective tariffs. The primary purposes of such imposts was not to raise revenue, but to allow American manufacturing to develop by giving it a price advantage in the domestic market over foreign competitors. McKinley biographer Margaret Leech noted that Canton had become prosperous as a center for the manufacture of farm equipment because of protection, and that this may have helped form his political views. McKinley introduced and supported bills that raised protective tariffs, and opposed those that lowered them or imposed tariffs simply to raise revenue.[55] Garfield's election as president in 1880 created a vacancy on the House Ways and Means Committee; McKinley was selected to fill it, placing him on the most powerful committee after only two terms.[56]

McKinley increasingly became a significant figure in national politics. In 1880, he served a brief term as Ohio's representative on the Republican National Committee. In 1884, he was elected a delegate to that year's Republican convention, where he served as chair of the Committee on Resolutions and won plaudits for his handling of the convention when called upon to preside. By 1886, McKinley, Senator John Sherman, and Governor Joseph B. Foraker were considered the leaders of the Republican party in Ohio.[57] Sherman, who had helped to found the Republican Party, ran three times for the Republican nomination for president in the 1880s, each time failing,[58] while Foraker began a meteoric rise in Ohio politics early in the decade. Hanna, once he entered public affairs as a political manager and generous contributor, supported Sherman's ambitions, as well as those of Foraker. The latter relationship broke off at the 1888 Republican National Convention, where McKinley, Foraker, and Hanna were all delegates supporting Sherman. Convinced Sherman could not win, Foraker threw his support to the unsuccessful Republican 1884 presidential nominee, Maine Senator James G. Blaine. When Blaine stated he was not a candidate, Foraker returned to Sherman, but the

nomination went to former Indiana senator Benjamin Harrison, who was elected president. In the bitterness that followed the convention, Hanna abandoned Foraker, and for the rest of McKinley's life, the Ohio Republican Party was divided into two factions, one aligned with McKinley, Sherman, and Hanna and the other with Foraker.[59] Hanna came to admire McKinley and became a friend and close adviser to him. Although Hanna remained active in business and in promoting other Republicans, in the years after 1888, he spent an increasing amount of time boosting McKinley's political career.[60]

In 1889, with the Republicans in the majority, McKinley sought election as Speaker of the House. He failed to gain the post, which went to Thomas B. Reed of Maine; however, Speaker Reed appointed McKinley chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. The Ohioan guided the McKinley Tariff of 1890 through Congress; although McKinley's work was altered through the influence of special interests in the Senate, it imposed a number of protective tariffs on foreign goods.[61]

Gerrymandering and defeat for re-election

Recognizing McKinley's potential, the Democrats, whenever they controlled the Ohio legislature, sought to gerrymander or redistrict him out of office.[62] In 1878, McKinley faced election in a redrawn 17th district; he won anyway, causing Hayes to exult, "Oh, the good luck of McKinley! He was gerrymandered out and then beat the gerrymander! We enjoyed it as much as he did." [63] After the 1882 election, McKinley was unseated on an election contest by a near party-line House vote.[64] Out of office, he was briefly depressed by the setback, but soon vowed to run again. The Democrats again redistricted Stark County for the 1884 election; McKinley was returned to Congress anyway.[65]

For 1890, the Democrats gerrymandered McKinley one final time, placing Stark County in the same district as one of the strongest pro-Democrat counties, Holmes, populated by solidly Democratic Pennsylvania Dutch. The new boundaries seemed good, based on past results, for a Democratic majority of 2000 to 3000. The Republicans could not reverse the gerrymander as legislative elections would not be held until 1891, but they could throw all their energies into the district, as the McKinley Tariff was a main theme of the Democratic campaign nationwide, and there was considerable attention paid

to McKinley's race. The Republican Party sent its leading orators to Canton, including Blaine (then Secretary of State), Speaker Reed and President Harrison. The Democrats countered with their best spokesmen on tariff issues.[66] McKinley tirelessly stumped his new district, reaching out to its 40,000 voters to explain that his tariff was framed for the people ... as a defense to their industries, as a protection to the labor of their hands, as a safeguard to the happy homes of American workingmen, and as a security to their education, their wages, and their investments ... It will bring to this country a prosperity unparalleled in our own history and unrivalled in the history of the world." [67]

Democrats ran a strong candidate in former lieutenant governor John G. Warwick. To drive their point home, they hired young partisans to pretend to be peddlers, who went door to door offering 25-cent tinware to housewives for 50 cents, explaining the rise in prices was due to the McKinley Tariff. In the end, McKinley lost by 300 votes, but the Republicans won a statewide majority and claimed a moral victory. [68]

Governor of Ohio

Even before McKinley completed his term in Congress, he met with a delegation of Ohioans urging him to run for governor. Governor James E. Campbell, a Democrat, who had defeated Foraker in 1889, was to seek re-election in 1891. The Ohio Republican party remained divided, but McKinley quietly arranged for Foraker to nominate him at the 1891 state Republican convention, which chose McKinley by acclamation. The former congressman spent much of the second half of 1891 campaigning against Campbell, beginning in his birthplace of Niles. Hanna, however, was little seen in the campaign; he spent much of his time raising funds for the election of legislators pledged to vote for Sherman in the 1892 senatorial election. [69] [70] [c] McKinley won the 1891 election by some 20,000 votes; [71] the following January, Sherman, with considerable assistance from Hanna, turned back a challenge by Foraker to win the legislature's vote for another term in the Senate. [72]

Even after his final run for president in 1884, James G. Blaine was still seen as a possible candidate for the Republican nomination. In this 1890 Puck cartoon, he is startling Reed and McKinley

(right) as they make their plans for 1892.

Ohio's governor had relatively little power—for example, he could recommend legislation, but not veto it—but with Ohio a key swing state, its governor was a major figure in national politics.[73] Although McKinley believed that the health of the nation depended on that of business, he was evenhanded in dealing with labor.[74] He procured legislation that set up an arbitration board to settle work disputes and obtained passage of a law that fined employers who fired workers for belonging to a union.[75]

President Harrison had proven unpopular; there were divisions even within the Republican party as the year 1892 began and Harrison began his re-election drive. Although no declared candidate opposed Harrison, many Republicans were ready to dump the President from the ticket if an alternative emerged. Among the possible candidates spoken of were McKinley, Reed, and the aging Blaine. Fearing that the Ohio governor would emerge as a candidate, Harrison's managers arranged for McKinley to be permanent chairman of the convention in Minneapolis, requiring him to play a public, neutral role. Hanna established an unofficial McKinley headquarters near the convention hall, though no active effort was made to convert delegates to McKinley's cause. McKinley objected to delegate votes being cast for him; nevertheless he finished third, behind the renominated Harrison, and behind Blaine, who had sent word he did not want to be considered.[76] Although McKinley campaigned loyally for the Republican ticket, Harrison was defeated by former President Cleveland in the November election. In the wake of Cleveland's victory, McKinley was seen by some as the likely Republican candidate in 1896.[77]

Soon after Cleveland's return to office, hard times struck the nation with the Panic of 1893. A businessman in Youngstown, Robert Walker, had lent money to McKinley in their younger days; in gratitude, McKinley had often guaranteed Walker's borrowings for his business. The governor had never kept track of what he was signing; he believed Walker a sound businessman. In fact, Walker had deceived McKinley, telling him that new notes were actually renewals of matured ones. Walker was ruined by the recession; McKinley was called upon for repayment in February 1893. [78] The total owed was over \$100,000 and a despairing McKinley initially proposed to resign as governor and earn the money as an attorney.

[79] Instead, McKinley's wealthy supporters, including Hanna and Chicago publisher H. H. Kohlsaat, became trustees of a fund from which the notes would be paid. Both William and Ida McKinley placed their property in the hands of the fund's trustees (who included Hanna and Kohlsaat), and the supporters raised and contributed a substantial sum of money. All of the couple's property was returned to them by the end of 1893, and when McKinley, who had promised eventual repayment, asked for the list of contributors, it was refused him. Many people who had suffered in the hard times sympathized with McKinley, whose popularity grew. [79] He was easily re-elected in November 1893, receiving the largest percentage of the vote of any Ohio governor since the Civil War. [80]

McKinley campaigned widely for Republicans in the 1894 midterm congressional elections; many party candidates in districts where he spoke were successful. His political efforts in Ohio were rewarded with the election in November 1895 of a Republican successor as governor, Asa Bushnell, and a Republican legislature that elected Foraker to the Senate. McKinley supported Foraker for Senate and Bushnell (who was of Foraker's faction) for governor; in return, the new senator-elect agreed to back McKinley's presidential ambitions. With party peace in Ohio assured, McKinley turned to the national arena. [81]

Election of 1896

It is unclear when William McKinley began to seriously prepare a run for president. As Phillips notes, "no documents, no diaries, no confidential letters to Mark Hanna (or anyone else) contain his secret hopes or veiled stratagems." [82] From the beginning, McKinley's preparations had the participation of Hanna, whose biographer William T. Horner noted, "what is certainly true is that in 1888 the two men began to develop a close working relationship that helped put McKinley in the White House." [83] Sherman did not run for president again after 1888, and so Hanna could support McKinley's ambitions for that office wholeheartedly. [84]

Backed by Hanna's money and organizational skills, McKinley quietly built support for a presidential bid through 1895 and early 1896. When other contenders such as Speaker Reed and Iowa Senator William B. Allison sent agents outside their states to organize Republicans in support of their

candidacies, they found that Hanna's agents had preceded them. According to historian Stanley Jones in his study of the 1896 election,

Another feature common to the Reed and Allison campaigns was their failure to make headway against the tide which was running toward McKinley. In fact, both campaigns from the moment they were launched were in retreat. The calm confidence with which each candidate claimed the support of his own section [of the country] soon gave way to ... bitter accusations that Hanna by winning support for McKinley in their sections had violated the rules of the game.[85]

Hanna, on McKinley's behalf, met with the eastern Republican political bosses, such as Senators Thomas Platt of New York and Matthew Quay of Pennsylvania, who were willing to guarantee McKinley's nomination in exchange for promises regarding patronage and offices. McKinley, however, was determined to obtain the nomination without making deals, and Hanna accepted that decision.[86] Many of their early efforts were focused on the South; Hanna obtained a vacation home in southern Georgia where McKinley visited and met with Republican politicians from the region. McKinley needed 453½ delegate votes to gain the nomination; he gained nearly half that number from the South and border states. Platt lamented in his memoirs, "[Hanna] had the South practically solid before some of us awakened." [87]

The bosses still hoped to deny McKinley a first-ballot majority at the convention by boosting support for local favorite son candidates such as Quay, New York Governor (and former vice president) Levi P. Morton, and Illinois Senator Shelby Cullom. Delegate-rich Illinois proved a crucial battleground, as McKinley supporters, such as Chicago businessman (and future vice president) Charles G. Dawes, sought to elect delegates pledged to vote for McKinley at the national convention in St. Louis. Cullom proved unable to stand against McKinley despite the support of local Republican machines; at the state convention at the end of April, McKinley completed a near-sweep of Illinois' delegates.[88] Former president Harrison had been deemed a possible contender if he entered the race; when Harrison made it known he would not seek a third nomination, the McKinley organization took control of Indiana with a speed Harrison privately found unseemly. Morton operatives who journeyed to Indiana sent word back that they had found the state alive for McKinley.[89] Wyoming

Senator Francis Warren wrote, "The politicians are making a hard fight against him, but if the masses could speak, McKinley is the choice of at least 75% of the entire [body of] Republican voters in the Union".[90]

By the time the national convention began in St. Louis on June 16, 1896, McKinley had an ample majority of delegates. The former governor, who remained in Canton, followed events at the convention closely by telephone, and was able to hear part of Foraker's speech nominating him over the line. When Ohio was reached in the roll call of states, its votes gave McKinley the nomination, which he celebrated by hugging his wife and mother as his friends fled the house, anticipating the first of many crowds that gathered at the Republican candidate's home. Thousands of partisans came from Canton and surrounding towns that evening to hear McKinley speak from his front porch. The convention nominated Republican National Committee vice chairman Garret Hobart of New Jersey for vice president, a choice actually made, by most accounts, by Hanna. Hobart, a wealthy lawyer, businessman, and former state legislator, was not widely known, but as Hanna biographer Herbert Croly pointed out, "if he did little to strengthen the ticket he did nothing to weaken it".[91][92]

General election campaign

Before the 1896 convention, McKinley tried to avoid coming down on one side or the other of the currency question. William Allen Rogers's cartoon from Harper's Weekly, June 1896.

Before the Republican convention, McKinley had been a "straddle bug" on the currency question, favoring moderate positions on silver such as accomplishing bimetalism by international agreement. In the final days before the convention, McKinley decided, after hearing from politicians and businessmen, that the platform should endorse the gold standard, though it should allow for bimetalism by international agreement. Adoption of the platform caused some western delegates, led by Colorado Senator Henry M. Teller, to walk out of the convention. However, compared with the Democrats, Republican divisions on the issue were small, especially as McKinley promised future concessions to silver advocates.[93][94][95]

The bad economic times had continued, and

strengthened the hand of forces for free silver. The issue bitterly divided the Democratic Party; President Cleveland firmly supported the gold standard, but an increasing number of rural Democrats wanted silver, especially in the South and West. The silverites took control of the 1896 Democratic National Convention and chose William Jennings Bryan for president; he had electrified the delegates with his Cross of Gold speech. Bryan's financial radicalism shocked financiers—they thought his inflationary program would bankrupt the railroads and ruin the economy. Hanna approached them for support for his strategy to win the election, and they gave \$3.5 million for speakers and over 200 million pamphlets advocating the Republican position on the money and tariff questions.[96][97] Bryan's campaign had at most an estimated \$500,000. With his eloquence and youthful energy his major assets in the race, Bryan decided on a whistle-stop political tour by train on an unprecedented scale. Hanna urged McKinley to match Bryan's tour with one of his own; the candidate declined on the grounds that the Democrat was a better stump speaker: "I might just as well set up a trapeze on my front lawn and compete with some professional athlete as go out speaking against Bryan. I have to think when I speak." [98] Instead of going to the people, McKinley would remain at home in Canton and allow the people to come to him; according to historian R. Hal Williams in his book on the 1896 election, "it was, as it turned out, a brilliant strategy. McKinley's 'Front Porch Campaign' became a legend in American political history." [98]

William and Ida McKinley (to her husband's right) pose with members of the "Flower Delegation" from Oil City, Pennsylvania, before the McKinley home. Although women could not vote in most states, they might influence male relatives and were encouraged to visit Canton.

McKinley made himself available to the public every day except Sunday, receiving delegations from the front porch of his home. The railroads subsidized the visitors with low excursion rates—the pro-silver Cleveland Plain Dealer disgustingly stated that going to Canton had been made "cheaper than staying at home". [99][100] Delegations marched through the streets from the railroad station to McKinley's home on North Market Street. Once there, they crowded

close to the front porch—from which they surreptitiously whittled souvenirs—as their spokesman addressed McKinley. The candidate then responded, speaking on campaign issues in a speech molded to suit the interest of the delegation. The speeches were carefully scripted to avoid extemporaneous remarks; even the spokesman's remarks were approved by McKinley or a representative. This was done as the candidate feared an offhand comment by another that might rebound on him.[99][101][102]

Most Democratic newspapers refused to support Bryan, the major exception being the *New York Journal*, controlled by William Randolph Hearst, whose fortune was based on silver mines. In biased reporting and through the sharp cartoons of Homer Davenport, Hanna was viciously characterized as a plutocrat, trampling on labor. McKinley was drawn as a child, easily controlled by big business.[103] Even today, these depictions still color the images of Hanna and McKinley: one as a heartless businessman, the other as a creature of Hanna and others of his ilk.[104]

The Democrats had pamphlets too, though not as many. Jones analyzed how voters responded to the education campaigns of the two parties:

For the people it was a campaign of study and analysis, of exhortation and conviction—a campaign of search for economic and political truth. Pamphlets tumbled from the presses, to be read, reread, studied, debated, to become guides to economic thought and political action. They were printed and distributed by the million ... but the people hankered for more. Favorite pamphlets became dog-eared, grimy, fell apart as their owners laboriously restudied their arguments and quoted from them in public and private debate.[105]

The battleground proved to be the Midwest — the South and most of the West were conceded to Bryan — and the Democrat spent much of his time in those crucial states.[106][107] The Northeast was considered most likely safe for McKinley after the early-voting states of Maine and Vermont supported him in September.[108] By then, it was clear that public support for silver had receded, and McKinley began to emphasize the tariff issue. By the end of September, the Republicans had discontinued printing material on the silver issue, and were entirely concentrating on the tariff question.[109] On November 3, 1896, the voters had their say in most of

the nation. McKinley won the entire Northeast and Midwest; he won 51% of the vote and an ample majority in the Electoral College. Bryan had concentrated entirely on the silver issue, and had not appealed to urban workers. Voters in cities supported McKinley; the only city outside the South of more than 100,000 population carried by Bryan was Denver, Colorado. [110]

The 1896 presidential election is often seen as a realigning election, in which McKinley's view of a stronger central government building American industry through protective tariffs and a dollar based on gold triumphed. The voting patterns established then displaced the near-deadlock the major parties had seen since the Civil War; the Republican dominance begun then would continue until 1932, another realigning election with the ascent of Franklin Roosevelt. [111] Phillips argues that, with the possible exception of Iowa Senator Allison, McKinley was the only Republican who could have defeated Bryan—he theorized that eastern candidates such as Morton or Reed would have done badly against the Illinois-born Bryan in the crucial Midwest. [112] According to the biographer, though Bryan was popular among rural voters, "McKinley appealed to a very different industrialized, urbanized America." [113]

McKinley was sworn in as president on March 4, 1897, as his wife and mother looked on. The new President gave a lengthy inaugural address; he urged tariff reform, and stated that the currency issue would have to await tariff legislation. He warned against foreign interventions, "We want no wars of conquest. We must avoid the temptation of territorial aggression." [114]

McKinley's most controversial Cabinet appointment was that of John Sherman as Secretary of State. [115] Sherman was not McKinley's first choice for the position; he initially offered it to Senator Allison. [115] One consideration in Senator Sherman's appointment was to provide a place in the Senate for Hanna (who had turned down a Cabinet position as Postmaster General). As Sherman had served as Secretary of the Treasury under Hayes, only the State position, the leading Cabinet post, was likely to entice him from the Senate. Sherman's mental faculties were decaying even in 1896; this was widely spoken of in political circles, but McKinley did not believe the rumors. [115] Nevertheless, McKinley sent his cousin, William McKinley Osborne, to have dinner

with the 73-year-old senator; he reported back that Sherman seemed as lucid as ever.[116] McKinley wrote once the appointment was announced, "the stories regarding Senator Sherman's 'mental decay' are without foundation ... When I saw him last I was convinced both of his perfect health, physically and mentally, and that the prospects of life were remarkably good." [116]

After some difficulties, Ohio Governor Bushnell appointed Hanna to the Senate.[117] Once in Cabinet office, Sherman's mental incapacity became increasingly apparent. He was often bypassed by his first assistant, McKinley's Canton crony Judge William Day, and by the second secretary, Alvey A. Ade. Day, an Ohio lawyer unfamiliar with diplomacy, was often reticent in meetings; Ade was somewhat deaf. One diplomat characterized the arrangement, "the head of the department knew nothing, the first assistant said nothing, and the second assistant heard nothing". [116]

Maine Congressman Nelson Dingley, Jr. was McKinley's choice for Secretary of the Treasury; he declined it, preferring to remain as chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. Charles Dawes, who had been Hanna's lieutenant in Chicago during the campaign, was considered for the Treasury post but by some accounts Dawes considered himself too young. Dawes eventually became Comptroller of the Currency; he recorded in his published diary that he had strongly urged McKinley to appoint as secretary the successful candidate, Lyman J. Gage, president of the First National Bank of Chicago and a Gold Democrat.[118] The Navy Department was offered to former Massachusetts Congressman John Davis Long, an old friend from the House, on January 30, 1897.[119] Although McKinley was initially inclined to allow Long to choose his own assistant, there was considerable pressure on the President-elect to appoint Theodore Roosevelt, head of the New York City Police Commission and a former state assemblyman. McKinley was reluctant, stating to one Roosevelt booster, "I want peace and I am told that your friend Theodore is always getting into rows with everybody." Nevertheless, he made the appointment.[120]

In addition to Sherman, McKinley made one other ill-advised Cabinet appointment,[121] that of Secretary of War, which fell to Russell A. Alger, former general and Michigan governor. Competent enough in peacetime, Alger proved inadequate once the

conflict with Spain began. With the War Department plagued by scandal, Alger resigned at McKinley's request in mid-1899.[122] Vice President Hobart, as was customary at the time, was not invited to Cabinet meetings. However, he proved a valuable adviser both for McKinley and for his Cabinet members. The wealthy Vice President leased a residence close to the White House; the two families visited each other without formality, and the Vice President's wife, Jennie Tuttle Hobart, sometimes substituted as Executive Mansion hostess when Ida McKinley was unwell.[123] For most of McKinley's administration, George B. Cortelyou served as his personal secretary. Cortelyou, who served in three Cabinet positions under Theodore Roosevelt, became a combination press secretary and chief of staff to McKinley.[124]

War with Spain

Main article: Spanish-American War

For decades, rebels in Cuba had waged an intermittent campaign for freedom from Spanish colonial rule. By 1895, the conflict had expanded to a war for Cuban independence.[125] As war engulfed the island, Spanish reprisals against the rebels grew ever harsher. These included the removal of Cubans to internment camps near Spanish military bases, a strategy designed to make it hard for the rebels to receive support in the countryside.[126] American opinion favored the rebels, and McKinley shared in their outrage against Spanish policies.[127] As many of his countrymen called for war to liberate Cuba, McKinley favored a peaceful approach, hoping that through negotiation, Spain might be convinced to grant Cuba independence, or at least to allow the Cubans some measure of autonomy.[128] The United States and Spain began negotiations on the subject in 1897, but it became clear that Spain would never concede Cuban independence, while the rebels (and their American supporters) would never settle for anything less.[129]

In January 1898, Spain promised some concessions to the rebels, but when American consul Fitzhugh Lee reported riots in Havana, McKinley agreed to send the battleship USS Maine there to protect American lives and property.[130] On February 15, the Maine exploded and sank with 266 men killed.[131] Public opinion and the newspapers demanded war, but McKinley insisted that a court of inquiry first determine whether the explosion was accidental.[132] Negotiations with Spain continued as the court considered the evidence,

but on March 20, the court ruled that the Maine was blown up by an underwater mine.[133] As pressure for war mounted in Congress, McKinley continued to negotiate for Cuban independence.[134] Spain refused McKinley's proposals, and on April 11, McKinley turned the matter over to Congress. He did not ask for war, but Congress declared war anyway on April 20, with the addition of the Teller Amendment, which disavowed any intention of annexing Cuba.[135]

Editorial cartoon intervention in Cuba. Columbia (the American people) reaches out to help oppressed Cuba in 1897 while Uncle Sam (the U.S. government) is blind to the crisis and will not use its powerful guns to help. Judge magazine, February 6, 1897.

The expansion of the telegraph and the development of the telephone gave McKinley a greater control over the day-to-day management of the war than previous presidents had enjoyed, and he used the new technologies to direct the army's and navy's movements as far as he was able.[136] McKinley found Alger inadequate as Secretary of War, and did not get along with the Army's commanding general, Nelson A. Miles.[137] Bypassing them, he looked for strategic advice first from Miles's predecessor, General John Schofield, and later from Adjutant General Henry Clarke Corbin.[137] The war led to a change in McKinley's cabinet, as the President accepted Sherman's resignation as Secretary of State; Day agreed to serve as Secretary until the war's end. [138]

Within a fortnight, the navy had its first victory when the Asiatic Squadron, led by Commodore George Dewey, engaged the Spanish navy at the Battle of Manila Bay in the Philippines, destroying the enemy force without the loss of a single American vessel.[139] Dewey's overwhelming victory expanded the scope of the war from one centered in the Caribbean to one that would determine the fate of all of Spain's Pacific colonies.[140] The next month, he increased the number of troops sent to the Philippines and granted the force's commander, Major General Wesley Merritt, the power to set up legal systems and raise taxes—necessities for a long occupation.[141] By the time the troops arrived in the Philippines at the end of June 1898, McKinley had decided that Spain would be required to surrender the archipelago to the United States.[142] He professed to be open to all views on the subject; however, he

believed that as the war progressed, the public would come to demand retention of the islands as a prize of war.[143]

Meanwhile, in the Caribbean theater, a large force of regulars and volunteers gathered near Tampa, Florida, for an invasion of Cuba.[144] The army faced difficulties in supplying the rapidly expanding force even before they departed for Cuba, but by June, Corbin had made progress in resolving the problems. [145] After lengthy delays, the army, led by Major General William Rufus Shafter, sailed from Florida on June 20, landing near Santiago de Cuba two days later.[146] Following a skirmish at Las Guasimas on June 24, Shafter's army engaged the Spanish forces on July 2 in the Battle of San Juan Hill.[147] In an intense day-long battle, the American force was victorious, although both sides suffered heavy casualties.[148] The next day, the Spanish Caribbean squadron, which had been sheltering in Santiago's harbor, broke for the open sea but was intercepted and destroyed by Rear Admiral William T. Sampson's North Atlantic Squadron in the largest naval battle of the war.[149] Shafter laid siege to the city of Santiago, which surrendered on July 17, placing Cuba under effective American control.[150] McKinley and Miles also ordered an invasion of Puerto Rico, which met little resistance when it landed in July.[150] The distance from Spain and the destruction of the Spanish navy made resupply impossible, and the Spanish government began to look for a way to end the war.[151]

Peace and territorial gain

Signing of the Treaty of Paris

On July 22, the Spanish authorized Jules Cambon, the French Ambassador to the United States, to represent Spain in negotiating peace.[151] The Spanish initially wished to restrict the discussion to Cuba, but were quickly forced to recognize that their other possessions would be claimed as spoils of war.[151] McKinley's cabinet agreed with him that Spain must leave Cuba and Puerto Rico, but they disagreed on the Philippines, with some wishing to annex the entire archipelago and some wishing only to retain a naval base in the area.[152] Although public sentiment seemed to favor annexation of the Philippines, several prominent political leaders, including Bryan, ex-President Cleveland, and the newly formed American Anti-Imperialist League made

their opposition known.[153]

McKinley proposed to open negotiations with Spain on the basis of Cuban liberation and Puerto Rican annexation, with the final status of the Philippines subject to further discussion.[154] He stood firmly in that demand even as the military situation on Cuba began to deteriorate when the American army was struck with yellow fever.[154] Spain ultimately agreed to a ceasefire on those terms on August 12, and treaty negotiations began in Paris in September 1898.[155] The talks continued until December 18, when the Treaty of Paris was signed.[156] The United States acquired Puerto Rico and the Philippines as well as the island of Guam, and Spain relinquished its claims to Cuba; in exchange, the United States agreed to pay Spain \$20 million.[156] McKinley had difficulty convincing the Senate to approve the treaty by the requisite two-thirds vote, but his lobbying, and that of Vice President Hobart, eventually saw success, as the Senate voted in favor on February 6, 1899, 57 to 27.[157]

During the war, McKinley also pursued the annexation of the Republic of Hawaii. The new republic, dominated by American interests, had seized power from the royal government in 1893.[158] The lame-duck Harrison administration had submitted a treaty of annexation to the Senate; Cleveland, once he returned to office, had sent a special commission to the islands. After receiving the report, Cleveland withdrew the treaty, stating that the revolution did not reflect the will of Hawaiian citizens.[159] Nevertheless, many Americans favored annexation, and the cause gained momentum as the United States became embroiled in war with Spain.[160] McKinley came to office as a supporter of annexation, and lobbied Congress to adopt his opinion, believing that to do nothing would invite a royalist counter-revolution or a Japanese takeover.[160] Foreseeing difficulty in getting two-thirds of the Senate to approve a treaty of annexation, McKinley instead supported the effort of Democratic Representative Francis G. Newlands of Nevada to accomplish the result by joint resolution of both houses of Congress.[161] The resulting Newlands Resolution passed both houses by wide margins, and McKinley signed it into law on July 8, 1898.[161] McKinley biographer H. Wayne Morgan notes, "McKinley was the guiding spirit behind the annexation of Hawaii, showing ... a firmness in pursuing it";[162] the President told Cortelyou, "We

need Hawaii just as much and a good deal more than we did California. It is manifest destiny." [163] Wake Island, an uninhabited atoll between Hawaii and Guam, was claimed for the United States on July 12, 1898. [164]

Expanding influence overseas

In acquiring Pacific possessions for the United States, McKinley expanded the nation's ability to compete for trade in China. [165] Even before peace negotiations began with Spain, McKinley asked Congress to set up a commission to examine trade opportunities in the region and espoused an "Open Door Policy", in which all nations would freely trade with China and none would seek to violate that nation's territorial integrity. [166] When John Hay replaced Day as Secretary of State at the end of the war, he circulated notes to that effect to the European powers. [167] Great Britain favored the idea, but Russia opposed it; France, Germany, Italy and Japan agreed in principle, but only if all the other nations signed on. [167]

Trade with China became imperiled shortly thereafter as the Boxer Rebellion menaced foreigners and their property in China. [168] Americans and other westerners in Peking were besieged and, in cooperation with other western powers, McKinley ordered 5000 troops to the city in June 1900 in the China Relief Expedition. [169] The westerners were rescued the next month, but several Congressional Democrats objected to McKinley dispatching troops without consulting the legislature. [168] McKinley's actions set a precedent that led to most of his successors exerting similar independent control over the military. [169] After the rebellion ended, the United States reaffirmed its commitment to the Open Door policy, which became the basis of American policy toward China. [170]

Closer to home, McKinley and Hay engaged in negotiations with Britain over the possible construction of a canal across Central America. The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, which the two nations signed in 1850, prohibited either from establishing exclusive control over a canal there. The war had exposed the difficulty of maintaining a two-ocean navy without a connection closer than Cape Horn. [171] Now, with American business and military interests even more involved in Asia, a canal seemed more essential than ever, and McKinley pressed for a renegotiation of the treaty. [171] Hay and the British

ambassador, Julian Pauncefote, agreed that the United States could control a future canal, provided that it was open to all shipping and not fortified.[172] McKinley was satisfied with the terms, but the Senate rejected them, demanding that the United States be allowed to fortify the canal.[172] Hay was embarrassed by the rebuff and offered his resignation, but McKinley refused it and ordered him to continue negotiations to achieve the Senate's demands.[172] He was successful, and a new treaty was drafted and approved, but not before McKinley's assassination in 1901.[172]

Tariffs and bimetallism

1900 reelection poster celebrates McKinley standing tall on the gold standard with support from soldiers, sailors, businessmen, factory workers and professionals.

Two of the great issues of the day, tariff reform and free silver, became intertwined in 1897.[173] Ways and Means chairman Dingley introduced a new tariff bill (later called the Dingley Act) to revise the Wilson-Gorman Tariff Act of 1894.[173] McKinley supported the bill, which increased tariffs on wool, sugar, and luxury goods, but the proposed new rates alarmed the French, who exported many luxury items to the United States.[173] The Dingley Act passed the House easily, but was delayed in the Senate as they assessed the French objections.[174] French representatives offered to cooperate with the United States in developing an international agreement on bimetallism if the new tariff rates were reduced; this pleased silverite Republicans in the Senate, whose votes were necessary for passage.[175] The Senate amended the bill to allow limited reciprocity (giving France some possibility of relief), but did not reduce the rates on luxury goods.[176] McKinley signed the bill into law and agreed to begin negotiations on an international bimetallism standard.[177]

American negotiators soon concluded a reciprocity treaty with France, and the two nations approached Britain to gauge British enthusiasm for bimetallism.[177] The Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, and his government showed some interest in the idea and told the American envoy, Edward O. Wolcott, that he would be amenable to reopening the mints in India to silver coinage if the Viceroy's Executive Council there agreed.[178] News of a possible departure from the

gold standard stirred up immediate opposition from its partisans, and misgivings by the Indian administration led Britain to reject the proposal. [178] With the international effort a failure, McKinley turned away from silver coinage and embraced the gold standard. [179] Even without the agreement, agitation for free silver eased as prosperity began to return to the United States and gold from recent strikes in the Yukon and Australia increased the monetary supply even without silver coinage. [180] In the absence of international agreement, McKinley favored legislation to formally affirm the gold standard, but was initially deterred by the silver strength in the Senate. [181] By 1900, with another campaign ahead and good economic conditions, McKinley urged Congress to pass such a law, and was able to sign the Gold Standard Act on March 14, 1900, using a gold pen to do so. [182]

Civil rights

In the wake of McKinley's election in 1896, African Americans were hopeful of progress towards equality. McKinley had spoken out against lynching while governor, and most African Americans who could vote supported him in 1896. McKinley's priority, however, was in ending sectionalism, and they were disappointed by his policies and appointments. Although McKinley made some appointments of African Americans to low-level government posts, and received some praise for that, the appointments were less than they had received under previous Republican administrations. Blanche K. Bruce, an African American who during Reconstruction had served as senator from Mississippi, received the post of register at the Treasury Department; this post was traditionally given to an African American by Republican presidents. McKinley appointed several black postmasters; however, when whites protested the appointment of Justin W. Lyons as postmaster of Augusta, Georgia, McKinley asked Lyons to withdraw (he was subsequently given the post of Treasury register after Bruce's death in 1898). [183] The President did appoint George B. Jackson, a former slave, to the post of customs collector in Presidio, Texas. [184] However, African Americans in northern states felt that their contributions to McKinley's victory were overlooked; few were appointed to office. [183]

The administration's response to racial violence was minimal, causing him to lose black support. [183]

When black postmasters at Hogansville, Georgia in 1897, and at Lake City, South Carolina the following year, were assaulted, McKinley issued no statement of condemnation. Although black leaders criticized McKinley for inaction, supporters responded by saying there was little the president could do to intervene. Critics replied by saying that he could at least publicly condemn such events, as Harrison had done. [185]

According to historian Clarence A. Bacote, "Before the Spanish-American War, the Negroes, in spite of some mistakes, regarded McKinley as the best friend they ever had." [186] African Americans saw the onset of war in 1898 as an opportunity to display their patriotism; and black soldiers fought bravely at El Caney and San Juan Hill. African Americans in the peacetime Army had formed elite units; nevertheless they were harassed by whites as they traveled from the West to Tampa for embarkation to the war. Under pressure from black leaders, McKinley required the War Department to commission black officers above the rank of lieutenant. The heroism of the black troops did not still racial tensions in the South, as the second half of 1898 saw several outbreaks of racial violence; 11 African Americans were killed in riots in Wilmington, North Carolina. [187] McKinley toured the South in late 1898, hoping for sectional reconciliation. In addition to visiting Tuskegee Institute and black educator Booker T. Washington, he addressed the Georgia legislature, wearing a badge of gray, and visited Confederate memorials. In his tour of the South, McKinley did not mention the racial tensions or violence. Although the President received a rapturous reception from Southern whites, many African Americans, excluded from official welcoming committees, felt alienated by the President's words and actions. [187] [188]

According to Gould and later biographer Phillips, given the political climate in the South, with white legislatures passing segregationist laws such as that upheld in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, there was little McKinley could have done to improve race relations, and he did better than later presidents Theodore Roosevelt, who doubted racial equality, and Woodrow Wilson, who supported segregation. However, Gould concluded, "McKinley lacked the vision to transcend the biases of his day and to point toward a better future for all Americans". [189]

Judicial appointments

After the retirement of Justice Stephen Johnson Field, McKinley appointed Attorney General Joseph McKenna to the Supreme Court of the United States in December 1897.[190] The appointment aroused some controversy as McKenna's critics in the Senate said he was too closely associated with railroad interests and lacked the qualifications of a Supreme Court justice.[191] Despite the objections, McKenna's nomination was approved unanimously.[192] McKenna responded to the criticism of his legal education by taking some courses at Columbia Law School for several months before taking his seat.[191] Along with his Supreme Court appointment, McKinley appointed six judges to the United States Courts of Appeals, and 28 judges to the United States district courts.[193]

1900 election

McKinley ran on his record of prosperity and victory in 1900, winning easy re-election over Bryan.

Main article: *United States presidential election, 1900*

Republicans were generally successful in state and local elections around the country in 1899, and McKinley was optimistic about his chances at re-election in 1900.[194] McKinley's popularity in his first term assured him of renomination for a second.[195] The only question about the Republican ticket concerned the vice presidential nomination; McKinley needed a new running mate as Hobart had died in late 1899.[196] McKinley initially favored Elihu Root, who had succeeded Alger as Secretary of War, but McKinley decided that Root was doing too good a job at the War Department to move him.[196] He considered other prominent candidates, including Allison and Cornelius N. Bliss, but none were as popular as the Republican party's rising star, Theodore Roosevelt.[197] After a stint as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Roosevelt had resigned and raised a cavalry regiment; they fought bravely in Cuba, and Roosevelt returned home covered in glory. Elected governor of New York on a reform platform in 1898, Roosevelt had his eye on the presidency.[196] Many supporters recommended him to McKinley for the second spot on the ticket, and Roosevelt believed it would be an excellent stepping stone to the presidency in 1904.[196] McKinley remained uncommitted in public, but Hanna was firmly

opposed to the New York governor.[198] The Ohio senator considered the New Yorker overly impulsive; his stance was undermined by the efforts of political boss and New York Senator Thomas Platt, who, disliking Roosevelt's reform agenda, sought to sideline the governor by making him vice president. [199]

When the Republican convention began in Philadelphia that June, no vice presidential candidate had overwhelming support, but Roosevelt had the broadest range of support from around the country.[196] McKinley affirmed that the choice belonged to the convention, not to him.[200] On June 21, McKinley was unanimously renominated and, with Hanna's reluctant acquiescence, Roosevelt was nominated for vice president on the first ballot. [201] The Democratic convention convened the next month in Kansas City and nominated William Jennings Bryan, setting up a rematch of the 1896 contest.[202]

The candidates were the same, but the issues of the campaign had shifted: free silver was still a question that animated many voters, but the Republicans focused on victory in war and prosperity at home as issues they believed favored their party. [203] Democrats knew the war had been popular, even if the imperialism issue was less sure, so they focused on the issue of trusts and corporate power, painting McKinley as the servant of capital and big business.[204] As in 1896, Bryan embarked on a speaking tour around the country while McKinley stayed at home, this time making only one speech, to accept his nomination.[205] Roosevelt emerged as the campaign's primary speaker and Hanna helped the cause working to settle a coal miners strike in Pennsylvania.[206] Bryan's campaigning failed to excite the voters as it had in 1896, and McKinley never doubted that he would be re-elected.[207] On November 6, 1900, he was proven correct, winning the largest victory for any Republican since 1872.[208] Bryan carried only four states outside the solid South, and McKinley even won Bryan's home state of Nebraska.[208]

Second term and assassination

McKinley entering the Temple of Music on September 6, 1901, shortly before the shots were fired.

Soon after his second inauguration on March 4, 1901, William and Ida McKinley undertook a six-week

tour of the nation. Traveling mostly by rail, the McKinleys were to travel through the South to the Southwest, and then up the Pacific coast and east again, to conclude with a visit on June 13, 1901 to the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York. [209] However, the First Lady fell ill in California, causing her husband to limit his public events and cancel a series of speeches he had planned to give urging trade reciprocity. He also postponed the visit to the fair until September, planning a month in Washington and two in Canton before the Buffalo visit. [210]

Although McKinley enjoyed meeting the public, Cortelyou was concerned with his security due to recent assassinations by anarchists in Europe, and twice tried to remove a public reception from the President's rescheduled visit to the Exposition. McKinley refused, and Cortelyou arranged for additional security for the trip. [211] On September 5, the President delivered his address at the fairgrounds, before a crowd of some 50,000 people. In his final speech, McKinley urged reciprocity treaties with other nations to assure American manufacturers access to foreign markets. He intended the speech as a keynote to his plans for a second term. [212] [213]

One man in the crowd, Leon Czolgosz, hoped to assassinate McKinley. He had managed to get close to the presidential podium, but did not fire, uncertain of hitting his target. [212] Czolgosz, since hearing a speech by anarchist Emma Goldman in Cleveland, had decided to do something heroic (in his own mind) for the cause. He had initially decided to get near McKinley, and on September 4, he decided to assassinate him. [214] After the failure on the fifth, Czolgosz waited until the next day at the Temple of Music on the Exposition grounds, where the President was to meet the public after his return from Niagara Falls. Czolgosz concealed his gun in a handkerchief, and, when he reached the head of the line, shot McKinley twice in the abdomen. [215]

McKinley's concerns, after unsuccessfully trying to convince Cortelyou that he was not seriously wounded, were to urge his aides to break the news gently to Ida, and to call off the mob that had set on Czolgosz—a request that may have saved his assassin's life. [216] McKinley was taken by electric ambulance to the Exposition hospital, which despite its name and the inclusion of an operating theatre generally only dealt with the minor medical issues of

fairgoers. One bullet had apparently been deflected by a button and only grazed the President. Cortelyou selected Dr. Matthew D. Mann from the doctors who hastened to the scene; he had little experience in abdominal surgery or in dealing with gunshot wounds and proved unable to locate the other bullet. Although a primitive X-ray machine was being exhibited on the Exposition grounds, it was not used, and Mann carefully cleaned and closed the wound. After the operation, McKinley was taken to the Milburn House, where the First Lady had taken the news calmly.[217]

In the days after the shooting McKinley appeared to improve. Doctors issued increasingly cheerful bulletins. Members of the Cabinet, who had rushed to Buffalo on hearing the news, dispersed; Vice President Roosevelt departed on a camping trip to the Adirondacks.[218] Leech wrote,

It is difficult to interpret the optimism with which the President's physicians looked for his recovery. There was obviously the most serious danger that his wounds would become septic. In that case, he would almost certainly die, since drugs to control infection did not exist ... [Prominent New York City physician] Dr. McBurney was by far the worst offender in showering sanguine assurances on the correspondents. As the only big-city surgeon on the case, he was eagerly questioned and quoted, and his rosy prognostications largely contributed to the delusion of the American public.[219]

McKinley biographer H. Wayne Morgan wrote of the week following the shooting:

His hearty constitution, everyone said, would see him through. The doctors seemed hopeful, even confident ... It is difficult to understand the cheer with which they viewed their patient. He was nearly sixty years old, overweight, and the wound itself had not been thoroughly cleaned or traced. Precautions against infections, admittedly difficult in 1901, were negligently handled.[220]

By September 12, McKinley's doctors were confident enough of his condition to allow him toast and coffee. He proved unable to digest the food. Unknown to the doctors, the gangrene that would kill him was growing on the walls of his stomach, slowly poisoning his blood. On the morning of September 13, McKinley took a turn for the worse, becoming critically ill. Frantic word was sent to the Vice President, who was 12 miles (19 km) from the nearest

telegraph station or telephone. By the evening, McKinley roused from a stupor and realized his condition: "It is useless, gentlemen. I think we ought to have prayer." [221] Relatives and friends gathered around the dying man's bed as Ida McKinley sobbed over him, stating that she wanted to go with him. "We are all going, we are all going," her husband replied. "God's will be done, not ours." [221] By some accounts, those were his final words; he may also have sung part of his favorite hymn, "Nearer, My God, to Thee". Sometime that evening, Mark Hanna approached the bedside. The senator addressed McKinley as "Mr. President"; when he received no intelligible response, he abandoned formality and cried out to his friend, "William, William, don't you know me?" [221]

At 2:15 a.m. on September 14, President McKinley died. [221] Theodore Roosevelt was hastily returning to Buffalo by carriage and rail; that afternoon he took the oath of office as president in Buffalo at the house of his friend Ansley Wilcox, wearing borrowed formal clothing and pledging to carry out McKinley's political agenda. [222] Czolgosz, put on trial for murder nine days after McKinley's death, was found guilty, sentenced to death on September 26, and executed by electric chair on October 29, 1901. [223]

According to Gould, "The nation experienced a wave of genuine grief at the news of McKinley's passing." [224] The stock market, faced with sudden uncertainty, suffered a steep decline—almost unnoticed in the mourning. The nation focused its attention on the casket that made its way by train, first to Washington, where it first lay in the East Room of the Executive Mansion, and then in state in the Capitol, and then was taken to Canton. [225] A hundred thousand people passed by the open casket in the Capitol Rotunda, many having waited hours in the rain; in Canton, an equal number did the same at the Stark County Courthouse on September 18. The following day, a funeral service was held at the First Methodist Church; the casket was then sealed and taken to the McKinley house, where relatives paid their final respects. [226] It was then transported to the receiving vault at West Lawn Cemetery in Canton, to await the construction of the memorial to McKinley already being planned. [227]

There was a widespread expectation that Ida McKinley would not long survive her husband; one

family friend stated, as William McKinley lay dying, that they should be prepared for a double funeral. [228] This did not occur; the former first lady accompanied her husband on the funeral train. Leech noted "the circuitous journey was a cruel ordeal for the woman who huddled in a compartment of the funeral train, praying that the Lord would take her with her Dearest Love". [229] She was unable to attend [why?] the services in Washington or Canton, although she listened at the door to the service for her husband in her house on North Market Street. She remained in Canton for the remainder of her life, setting up a shrine in her house, and often visiting the receiving vault, until her death at age 59 on May 26, 1907. [228] She died only months before the completion of the large marble monument to her husband in Canton, which was dedicated by President Roosevelt on September 30, 1907. William and Ida McKinley are interred there with their daughters, atop a hillside overlooking the city of Canton. [230]

legacy

McKinley's biographer, H. Wayne Morgan remarks that McKinley died the most beloved president in history. [234] However, the young, enthusiastic Roosevelt quickly captured public attention after his predecessor's death. The new president made little effort to secure the trade reciprocity McKinley had intended to negotiate with other nations. Controversy and public interest surrounded Roosevelt throughout the seven and a half years of his presidency as memories of McKinley faded; by 1920, according to Gould, McKinley's administration was deemed no more than "a mediocre prelude to the vigor and energy of Theodore Roosevelt's". [224] Beginning in the 1950s, McKinley received more favorable evaluations; nevertheless, in surveys ranking American presidents, he has generally been placed near the middle, often trailing contemporaries such as Hayes and Cleveland. [224] Morgan suggests that this relatively low ranking is due to a perception among historians that while many decisions during McKinley's presidency profoundly affected the nation's future, he more followed public opinion than led it, and that McKinley's standing has suffered from altered public expectations of the presidency. [235]

There has been broad agreement among historians that McKinley's election was at the time of a transition between two political eras, dubbed the

Third and Fourth Party Systems.[236] Kenneth F. Warren emphasizes the national commitment to a pro-business, industrial, and modernizing program, represented by McKinley.[237] Historian Daniel P. Klinghard argued that McKinley's personal control of the 1896 campaign gave him the opportunity to reshape the presidency—rather than simply follow the party platform—by representing himself as the voice of the people.[238] However, more recently, as Republican political official Karl Rove exalted McKinley as the agent of sweeping political realignment in the 2000s, some scholars, such as David Mayhew, questioned whether the 1896 election truly represented a realignment, thereby placing in issue whether McKinley deserves credit for it.[239] Historian Michael J. Korzi argued in 2005 that while it is tempting to see McKinley as the key figure in the transition from congressional domination of government to the modern, powerful president, this change was an incremental process through the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[240]

Phillips writes that McKinley's low rating is undeserved, and that he should be ranked just after the great presidents such as Washington and Lincoln. He pointed to McKinley's success at building an electoral coalition that kept the Republicans mostly in power for a generation.[241] Phillips believes that part of McKinley's legacy is the men he included in his administration, who dominated the Republican Party for a quarter century after his death. These officials included Cortelyou, who served in three Cabinet positions under Roosevelt, and Dawes, who became vice president under Coolidge. Other McKinley appointees who later became major figures include Day, who Roosevelt elevated to the Supreme Court where he remained nearly twenty years, and William Howard Taft, whom McKinley had made Governor-General of the Philippines and who succeeded Roosevelt as president.[242]

A controversial aspect of McKinley's presidency is territorial expansion and the question of imperialism—with the exception of the Philippines, granted independence in 1946, the United States retains the territories taken under McKinley.[243] The territorial expansion of 1898 is often seen by historians as the beginning of American empire.[244] Morgan sees that historical discussion as a subset of the debate over the rise of America as a world power; he expects the debate over McKinley's actions to

continue indefinitely without resolution, and notes that however one judges McKinley's actions in American expansion, one of his motivations was to change the lives of Filipinos and Cubans for the better.[245]

Morgan alludes to the rise of interest in McKinley as part of the debate over the more assertive American foreign policy of recent decades:

McKinley was a major actor in some of the most important events in American history. His decisions shaped future policies and public attitudes. He usually rises in the estimation of scholars who study his life in detail. Even those who disagree with his policies and decisions see him as an active, responsible, informed participant in charge of decision making. His dignified demeanor and subtle operations keep him somewhat remote from public perception. But he is once again at the center of events, where he started.[246]

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Greta Garbo, Swedish actress

Greta Lovisa Gustafsson (1905-90) was born in Södermalm, Stockholm, Sweden. She was the third and youngest child of Anna Lovisa (née Karlsson, 1872-1944)—a homemaker who later worked at a jam factory—and Karl Alfred Gustafsson (1871-1920), a laborer.[3] [4] Garbo had an older brother, Sven Alfred (1898-1967), and an older sister, Alva Maria (1903-1926). [5]

Her parents met in Stockholm where her father visited from Frinnaryd. He moved to Stockholm to become independent and worked in various odd jobs—street cleaner, grocer, factory worker and butcher's assistant.[6] He married Anna, who had recently relocated from Högsby.[7][8] The Gustafssons were impoverished and lived in a three-bedroom cold-water flat at Blekingegatan No. 32. They raised their three children in a working-class district regarded as the city's slum.[9] Garbo would later recall:

It was eternally gray—those long winter's nights. My father would be sitting in a corner, scribbling figures on a newspaper. On the other side of the room my mother is repairing ragged old clothes, sighing. We children would be talking in very low voices, or just sitting silently. We were filled with anxiety, as if there were danger in the air. Such evenings are unforgettable for a sensitive girl. Where we lived, all the houses and apartments looked alike, their ugliness matched by everything surrounding us.[10]

Garbo was a shy daydreamer as a child.[11] She hated school[12][13] and preferred to play alone.[14] Yet she was an imaginative child and a natural leader[15] who became interested in theatre at an early age.[16] She directed her friends in make-believe games and performances[17] and dreamed of becoming an actress.[16][18] Later, she would participate in amateur theatre with her friends and frequent the Mosebacke Theater.[19] At the age of 13, Garbo graduated from school,[20] and, typical of a Swedish working-class girl at that time, she did not attend high school. She would later confess she had an inferiority complex about this.[21]

In the winter of 1919, the Spanish flu spread throughout Stockholm, and Garbo's father, to whom she was very close, became ill. He began missing work and eventually lost his job.[22] Garbo stayed at home

looking after him and taking him to the hospital for weekly treatments. He died in 1920 when she was 14 years old.[8][23]

Careerm Beginnings (1920-1924)

Garbo first worked as a soap-lather girl in a barbershop but eventually, on the advice of her friends, applied for, and accepted, a position in the PUB department store running errands and working in the millinery department. Before long, she began modeling hats for the store's catalogs which led to a more lucrative job as a fashion model.[24] In late 1920, a director of film commercials for the store began casting Garbo in roles advertising women's clothing. Her first commercial premiered on 12 December 1920 and was followed by others the following year.[25] Thus began Garbo's cinematic career. In 1922, Garbo caught the attention of director Erik Arthur Petschler who gave her a part in his short comedy, *Peter the Tramp*. [26]

From 1922 to 1924, she studied at The Royal Dramatic Theatre's Acting School in Stockholm. She was recruited in 1924 by the prominent Swedish director Mauritz Stiller to play a principal part in his classic film *The Saga of Gösta Berling*, a dramatization of the famous novel by Nobel Prize winner Selma Lagerlöf. She played opposite Lars Hanson, a well-known Swedish actor. Stiller became her mentor, training her as a film actress and managing all aspects of her nascent career.[27] She followed her role in *Gösta Berling* with a starring role in the 1925 German film *Die freudlose Gasse* (*Joyless Street* or *The Street of Sorrow*), directed by G. W. Pabst and co-starring Asta Nielsen.[28]

Accounts differ on the circumstances of her first contract with Louis B. Mayer, at that time vice president and general manager of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Victor Seastrom, a respected Swedish director at MGM, was a good friend of Stiller and encouraged Mayer to meet him on a trip to Berlin. There are two recent versions of what happened next. In one, [29] Mayer, always looking for new talent, had done his research and was interested in Stiller. He made an offer but Stiller demanded that Garbo be part of any contract, convinced that she would be an asset to his career. Mayer balked, but eventually agreed to a private viewing of *Gösta Berling*. He was immediately struck by Garbo's magnetism and became more interested in

her than in *Stiller*. "It was her eyes," his daughter recalled him saying; "I can make a star out of her." In the second version,[30] Mayer had already seen Gösta Berling before his Berlin trip and Garbo, not *Stiller*, was his primary interest. On the way to the screening, Mayer said to his daughter, "This director is wonderful but what we really ought to look at is the girl.... The girl, look at the girl!" After the screening, his daughter reported, he was unwavering: "I'll take her without him. I'll take her with him. Number one is the girl." [31] In any case, a contract was drafted that included both of them and after several months, the two set sail for America on the last day of June 1925.

Silent film stardom (1925-1929)

Stiller and *Garbo*, who was then age twenty and unable to speak English, arrived in New York where they remained for three months without any word from MGM. She and *Stiller* then went to Los Angeles on their own[32][33] but another three weeks passed with little contact from MGM. During this period, the studio arranged for a dentist to straighten her teeth and made sure she lost weight.[34] Although she expected to work with *Stiller* on her first film,[35] she was cast in *Torrent* (1926), an adaptation of a novel by Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, with director Monta Bell. She displaced Aileen Pringle, ten years her senior, and played a vamp opposite Ricardo Cortez. [36][37] *Torrent* was a hit and despite its cool reception by the trade press,[38] *Garbo's* performance was critically acclaimed.[39][40]

Garbo in *Flesh and the Devil* (1926) with John Gilbert

The success led Irving Thalberg, head of production at MGM,[41] to cast her in a similar role in *The Temptress* (1926), based on another Ibáñez novel. After only one film, she was given top billing, playing opposite Antonio Moreno.[42] Her mentor *Stiller*, who had persuaded her to take the part, was assigned to direct.[43] For both *Garbo* (who did not want to play another vamp and did not like the script any more than she did the first one)[44] and *Stiller*, *The Temptress* was a harrowing experience. *Stiller*, who spoke little English, had difficulty adapting to the studio system,[45] and did not get on with Moreno,[46] was fired by Thalberg and replaced by Fred Niblo. Reshooting *The Temptress* was expensive and even though it became one of the top-

grossing films of the 1926-27 season,[47] it was the only Garbo film of the period to lose money.[48] However, Garbo received rave reviews[49][50][51][52] and MGM had a new star.[47][53]

After her lightning ascent, Garbo went on to make eight more silent films and all were hits.[54] She starred in three of them with popular leading man John Gilbert.[55] About their first movie, *Flesh and the Devil* (1926), silent film expert Kevin Brownlow states that "she gave a more erotic performance than Hollywood had ever seen." [56] Their on-screen chemistry soon translated into an off-camera romance and by the end of the production, they began living together.[57] The film also marked a turning point in Garbo's career. Film historian Mark Vieira writes, "Audiences were mesmerized by her beauty and titillated by her love scenes with Gilbert. She was a sensation." [58] Profits from her third movie with Gilbert, *A Woman of Affairs* (1928), catapulted her to top Metro star of the 1928-29 box office season.[59] In 1929, reviewer Pierre de Rohan wrote in the *New York Telegraph*: "She has a glamour and fascination for both sexes which have never been equaled on the screen." [60]

The impact of Garbo's acting and screen presence quickly established her reputation as one of Hollywood's greatest actresses. Film historian and critic David Denby argues that Garbo introduced a subtlety of expression to the art of silent acting and that its effect on audiences cannot be exaggerated. She "lowers her head to look calculating or flutters her lips," he says. "Her face darkens with a slight tightening around the eyes and mouth; she registers a passing idea with a contraction of her brows or a drooping of her lids. Worlds turned on her movements." [61]

During this period, Garbo began to require unusual conditions during the shooting of her scenes. She prohibited visitors—including the studio brass—from her sets and demanded that black flats or screens surround her to prevent extras and technicians from watching her. When asked about these eccentric requirements, she said, "If I am by myself, my face will do things I cannot do with it otherwise." [62]

Despite her popularity as a silent star,[63] the studio feared that her Swedish accent might impair her work in sound and delayed the shift for as long as possible.[64][65] MGM itself made a slow

changeover to sound[66] and her last silent movie, *The Kiss* (1929), was also the studio's.[67] Garbo would go on to become one of the biggest box office draws of the next decade.

Continued success (1930-1939)

In late 1929, MGM cast Garbo in *Anna Christie* (1930), a film adaptation of the 1922 play by Eugene O'Neill, provided her first speaking role. The screenplay was adapted by Frances Marion and the film was produced by Irving Thalberg and Paul Bern. Sixteen minutes into the film, she famously utters her first line, "Gimme a whiskey, ginger ale on the side, and don't be stingy, baby." The film premiered in New York City on February 21, 1930 publicized with the catchphrase "Garbo talks!", and was the highest-grossing film of the year.[68] Garbo received her first Academy Award for Best Actress nomination for her performance, although she lost to MGM colleague Norma Shearer. Her nomination that year included her performance in *Romance* (1930). After filming ended, Garbo—along with a different director and cast—filmed a German-language version of *Anna Christie* that was released in December 1930.[69] The film's success certified Garbo's successful transition to talkies. In her follow-up film, *Romance* (1930), she portrayed an Italian opera star opposite Lewis Stone. She was paired opposite Robert Montgomery in *Inspiration* (1931), and her popularity was used to boost the career of the relatively unknown Clark Gable in *Susan Lenox* (*Her Fall and Rise*) (1931). Although the films did not match Garbo's success with her sound debut, she was ranked as the most-popular female star in the United States in 1930 and 1931.

Garbo followed with two of her most famous roles. In 1931, she played the World War I German spy in the lavish production of *Mata Hari*, opposite Ramón Novarro. Garbo was placed in multiple risqué outfits and several love scenes were written into the script to showcase her. When the film was released, it "caused panic with police reserves required to keep the waiting mob in order." [70] The following year, she played a Russian ballerina in *Grand Hotel* (1932), opposite an ensemble cast, including John Barrymore, Joan Crawford, and Wallace Beery among others. The film won that year's Academy Award for Best Picture. Both films had been MGM's highest-earning films of 1931 and 1932, respectively, and Garbo was dubbed "the greatest money-making machine ever put on

screen." [23] [71] [72] [73] Garbo's close friend and career collaborator, Salka Viertel, then penned a screenplay for Garbo to portray Joan of Arc, but producers rebuffed the idea and the film was shelved. After appearing in *As You Desire Me* (1932), co-starring Melvyn Douglas, Garbo's MGM contract expired. As negotiations began, she returned to Sweden for a vacation. As weeks lengthened into months, Garbo and MGM could not come to an agreement over her new contract. Several newspapers and fan magazines spread rumors that Garbo had retired. [citation needed] Over time, it was said that she was only to appear in Swedish films thereafter and that she was engaged to a prince, but both claims were untrue. [citation needed]

After nearly a year of negotiations, Garbo agreed to renew her MGM contract on the condition she would star in *Queen Christina* on her new salary of \$300,000 a film. The film's screenplay had been written by Viertel, and although MGM had been reluctant to make the movie, they relented at Garbo's insistence. For her leading man, producers suggested Charles Boyer or Laurence Olivier, but Garbo rejected both actors, preferring her former co-star and lover, John Gilbert. The studio balked at the idea of casting Gilbert, fearing his declining popularity would have a negative backlash on the film's outcome, but Garbo refused to proceed until Gilbert was cast. [74] [75] *Queen Christina* had a lavish production, becoming one of the studio's biggest productions up until that time. Publicized as "Garbo returns", the film premiered in December 1933 to critical acclaim and box office triumph, becoming the highest-grossing film of the year. The movie, however, met with controversy upon its release; censors objected to the scenes in which Garbo disguised herself as a man and kissed a female co-star. [76] [77]

Although her domestic box office popularity was undiminished in the early 1930s, high profits for Garbo's films after *Queen Christina* in 1933, depended on their success in foreign markets. The *Painted Veil*, written by Viertel and John Meehan, was her next film. Accepting the part because the script had been tailored to fit her talent by Viertel, filming commenced on location in China. Garbo, although fond of the on-location shoot, was not particularly fond of her co-stars, Herbert Marshall and George Brent. When the film was released in 1934, it received mixed reviews from critics and was not the financial

success MGM had hoped for.

In the midst of the Great Depression, American screen audiences seemed to favor "home-blown" screen couples, such as Clark Gable and Jean Harlow. Garbo's cosmopolitan look was beginning to generate more profits abroad; also, the type of historical and melodramatic films she began to make on the advice of Viertel, were highly successful abroad, but considerably lesser so in the United States. In 1935, David O. Selznick wanted to cast her as the dying heiress in *Dark Victory*, but Garbo chose Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1935) in which she played another of her renowned roles.[78] Her critically acclaimed performance won her the New York Film Critics Circle Award for Best Actress. The film was internationally successful and did better than MGM expected domestically.[79] Still, its profit was significantly diminished because of her exorbitant salary.[80] Garbo selected George Cukor's romantic drama *Camille* (1936) as her next project. She had longed to collaborate with Cukor, [citation needed] who was notorious for being the best "woman's director" in Hollywood. She also wanted to reunite with producer Irving Thalberg, [citation needed] who had produced six of her previous films. The veteran producer cast her opposite talents Robert Taylor and former co-star, Lionel Barrymore. Cukor carefully crafted Garbo's portrayal of Marguerite Gattier, a lower-class woman, who becomes the world-renowned mistress Camille. The film premiered in New York on December 12, 1936, and became an international success, becoming Garbo's first major success in America in three years. The film was critically lauded, with a particularly reviewer calling Garbo's performance her "most accomplishing and touching." [citation needed] She won a New York Film Critics Circle Award for Best Actress award for her performance, and she was again nominated for an Academy Award, but lost to Luise Rainer for *The Good Earth*.

Garbo's follow-up project was Clarence Brown's lavish production of *Conquest* (1937) opposite Charles Boyer. The plotted the dramatized romance between Napoleon and Marie Walewska. It was MGM's biggest and most-publicized movie of 1937, but upon its release, it lost more than \$1 million at the box office, becoming one of the studio's biggest failures of the decade.[77] Garbo's popularity had considerably

dropped, and when her contract expired soon thereafter, she returned briefly to Sweden. When she returned, she resigned with MGM, receiving a sizable drop in salary. On May 3, 1938, Garbo was among the many stars—including Joan Crawford, Norma Shearer, Luise Rainer, Katharine Hepburn, Mae West, Marlene Dietrich, Fred Astaire, Dolores del Rio and others—dubbed to be "Box Office Poison" in an article published by Harry Brandt on behalf of the Independent Theatre Owners of America. Brandt stated in the article that while these stars' dramatic abilities was "unquestioned," while labeling them as a group of stars whose "box office draw is nil." Brandt also claimed that their high salaries did not reflect in their ticket sales, thus hurting the movie exhibitors involved.

In the late 1930s, MGM decided a change-of-pace needed to occur in Garbo's career to resurrect her declining popularity. The studio teamed her with producer-director Ernst Lubitsch to film *Ninotchka*, her first comedy. She became close to her producer and director Lubitsch, who said that Garbo was a "gifted comedienne,"[citation needed] and her co-stars Melvyn Douglas and Bela Lugosi. The film was one of the first Hollywood movies which, under the cover of a satirical, light romance, depicted the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin as being rigid and gray when compared to the its prewar years. *Ninotchka* premiered in October 1939, publicized with the catchphrase "Garbo laughs!", commenting on the departure of Garbo's serious and melancholy image as she transferred to comedy. Despite the film's critical favoritism and box office success in the United States and abroad, it was banned in the Soviet Union and its satellites. The success of the film revived Garbo's career and she was voted one of the strongest box office draws of the year by theater owners.[citation needed]

Last work and early retirement (1941-1948)

With George Cukor's *Two-Faced Woman* (1941), MGM attempted to capitalize on Garbo's success in *Ninotchka* by casting her in a romantic comedy which sought to portray her as an ordinary girl. She played a double role that featured her dancing the rumba, swimming, and skiing. The film was a critical failure, but, contrary to popular belief, performed reasonably well at the box office.[81] Garbo referred to the film as "my grave." [82] *Two-Faced Woman* was

her last film; she was thirty-six and had made twenty-eight feature films in sixteen years.

Although Garbo was humiliated by the negative reviews of *Two-Faced Woman*, she did not at first intend to retire.[83][84] But her films depended on the European market and when it fell through with the war, finding a vehicle was problematic for MGM.[85][86] She signed a one-picture deal in 1942 to make *The Girl from Leningrad* but the project quickly dissolved.[85] She still thought she would continue when the war was over[85][87] though she was ambivalent and indecisive about returning to the screen. Salka Viertel, Garbo's close friend and collaborator, said in 1945, "Greta is impatient to work. But on the other side, she's afraid of it." [88] Garbo also worried about her age. "Time leaves traces on our small faces and bodies. It's not the same anymore, being able to pull it off." [88] George Cukor, director of *Two-Faced Woman*, and often blamed for its failure, said, "People often glibly say that the failure of *Two-Faced Woman* finished Garbo's career. That's a grotesque oversimplification. It certainly threw her, but I think that what really happened was that she just gave up. She didn't want to go on." [87]

Still, Garbo signed a contract in 1948 with producer Walter Wanger, who had produced *Queen Christina*, to shoot a picture based on Balzac's *La Duchesse de Langeais*. Max Ophüls was slated to adapt and direct.[89][90][91] She made several screen tests, learned the script, and arrived in Rome in the summer of 1949 to shoot the picture. However, the financing failed to materialize and the project was abandoned.[92] The screen tests—the last time Garbo stepped in front of a movie camera—were thought to have been lost for forty-one years until they were rediscovered in 1990 by film historians Leonard Maltin and Jeanine Basinger.[93] Parts of the footage were included in the 2005 TCM documentary *Garbo*. [94]

In 1949, she was offered the role of fictional silent film star Norma Desmond in *Sunset Boulevard*. However, after a meeting with film producer Charles Brackett, she insisted that she had no interest in the part whatsoever.

She was offered many roles in the 1940s and throughout her retirement years but she rejected all but a few of them. In the few instances when she accepted, the slightest problem led her to drop out.

[95] Although she refused to talk to friends throughout her life about her reasons for retiring, she told Swedish biographer Sven Broman four years before her death, "I was tired of Hollywood. I did not like my work. There were many days when I had to force myself to go to the studio... I really wanted to live another life." [96]

Public persona

From the early days of her career, Garbo avoided industry social functions, preferring to spend her time alone or with friends. She never signed autographs, [97] [98] answered no fan mail, [98] [99] [100] gave few interviews, [98] [101] [102] and refused to give permission to arrange publicity contracts with the studio. [103] She never appeared at the Oscar ceremonies even when she was nominated for the Best Actress award. [104] Her aversion to publicity and the press was undeniably genuine, [105] [106] and exasperating to the studio at first. But MGM eventually capitalized on it for it bolstered the image of the silent and reclusive woman of mystery. [107] [104] [108]

She is closely associated with a line from *Grand Hotel*, one which the American Film Institute in 2005 voted the 30th most memorable movie quote of all time, [109] "I want to be alone; I just want to be alone." The theme became a running gag beginning in her silent pictures. For example, in *Love* (1927) a title card reads, "I like to be alone"; in *The Single Standard* (1929) her character says, "I am walking alone because I want to be alone"; in the same film, she sails to the South Seas with her lover on a boat called the *All Alone*; in *Susan Lenox (Her Fall and Rise)* (1931) she says to a suitor, "This time I rise... and fall... alone"; in *Inspiration* (1931) she tells a fickle lover, "I just want to be alone for a little while"; in *Mata Hari* (1931) she says to her new amour, "I never look ahead. By next spring I shall probably be... quite alone." By the early 1930s, the motif had become indelibly linked to Garbo's public and private personae. [110] [111] It is lampooned in *Ninotchka* (1939) when emissaries from Russia ask her, "Do you want to be alone, comrade?" "No," she says bluntly. But about her private life, she later remarked, "I never said, 'I want to be alone'; I only said, 'I want to be let alone.' There is a world of difference." [110] [111]

In retirement

In retirement, Garbo generally led a private life

of simplicity and leisure. She made no public appearances and assiduously tried to avoid the publicity she loathed.[112] As she had been during her Hollywood years, Garbo, with her innate need for solitude, was often reclusive. But contrary to myth, she had, from the beginning, many friends and acquaintances with whom she socialized, and later, traveled.[113][114] Occasionally, she jet-setted with well-known and wealthy personalities, striving to guard her privacy as she had during her career.

Still, she often floundered about what to do and how to spend her time ("drifting" was the word she frequently used),[115] always struggling with her many eccentricities,[114][116] and her lifelong melancholy, or depression, and moodiness.[117][118] As she approached her sixtieth birthday, she told a frequent walking companion, "In a few days, it will be the anniversary of the sorrow that never leaves me, that will never leave me for the rest of my life." [119] To another friend she said in 1971, "I suppose I suffer from very deep depression." [120] It is also arguable, says one biographer, that she was bipolar. "I am very happy one moment, the next there is nothing left for me," she said in 1933.[120]

Beginning in the 1940s, she became something of an art collector. Many of the paintings she purchased were of negligible value, but she did buy paintings by Renoir, Rouault, Kandinsky, Bonnard,[121] and Jawlensky.[122] Her art collection was worth millions when she died in 1990.[123]

On 9 February 1951, she became a naturalized citizen of the United States[124] and in 1953, bought a seven-room apartment at 450 East 52nd Street in Manhattan, New York City,[125] where she lived for the rest of her life.[124]

On 13 November 1963, Garbo was a dinner guest at the White House.[126] President John Kennedy and his wife Jacqueline found Garbo to be very funny and charming.[126] She spent the night at the Washington, D.C., home of philanthropist Florence Mahoney.[127] [128] Garbo's niece Gray Reisfield told museum specialist James Wagner at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, quoted in a 2000 press release: "[Garbo] always spoke of it as a magical evening." [129]

Italian motion picture director Luchino Visconti allegedly attempted to bring Garbo back to the screen in 1969 with a small part, Maria Sophia, Queen of

Naples, in his adaptation of Proust's Remembrance of Things Past. He exclaimed: "I am very pleased at the idea that this woman, with her severe and authoritarian presence, should figure in the decadent and rarefied climate of the world described by Proust." [130] Claims that Garbo was interested in the part cannot be substantiated. [131] [130]

In 1971, Garbo vacationed with her close friend Baroness Cécile de Rothschild at her summer home in Southern France. [132] De Rothschild introduced her to Samuel Adams Green, a well-known art collector and curator in New York, and the two formed an immediate bond. [133] Green, who became an important friend and walking companion, was in the habit of tape-recording all of his telephone calls and, with Garbo's permission, recorded many of his conversations with her. In 1985, Garbo ended the friendship when she was falsely informed that Green had played the tapes to friends. [134] In his last will and testament, Green bequeathed in 2011 all of the tapes, which reveal Garbo's personality in later life, sense of humor, and various eccentricities, to the film archives at Wesleyan University. [135]

Although she became increasingly withdrawn in her final years, [136] she had become close over time to her cook and house-keeper, Claire Koger, who worked for her for thirty-one years. "We were very close-like sisters," the reticent Koger said. [137]

Throughout her life, Garbo was known for taking long, daily walks with companions or by herself. In retirement, she walked the streets of New York City dressed casually and wearing large sunglasses. "Garbo-watching" became a sport for photographers, the media, admirers, and curious New Yorkers, [138] but she maintained her elusive mystique to the end.

Relationships

Garbo never married, had no children, and lived alone as an adult. Her most famous romance was with her frequent co-star, John Gilbert, with whom she lived intermittently in 1926 and 1927. [139] [140] MGM capitalized on her relationship with Gilbert after their huge hit, *Flesh and the Devil* by costarring them again in two more hits, *Love* (1927) and *A Woman of Affairs* (1928). Gilbert allegedly proposed to her numerous times. Legend has it that when a double marriage ceremony was arranged in 1926 (Eleanor Boardman and King Vidor made up the other couple), Garbo failed to appear at the ceremony. Her recent

biographers, however, question the veracity of this story.[1][141][142] In 1937, she met conductor Leopold Stokowski with whom she had a highly publicized friendship or romance while traveling throughout Europe the following year.[143][144] In his diary, Erich Maria Remarque discusses a liaison with Garbo in 1941[145] and in his memoir, Cecil Beaton described an affair with her in 1947 and 1948.[146][147] In 1940, she met the Russian-born millionaire, George Schlee, who was married to fashion designer Valentina. Schlee, who split his time between the two, became Garbo's close companion and advisor until his death in 1964.[148][149]

Recent biographers and others believe that Garbo was bisexual and that she had intimate relationships with women as well as with men.[150][151][152][153][154] In 1927, Garbo was introduced to stage and screen actress Lilyan Tashman and evidence indicates that the two began an affair;[155][156] silent film star Louise Brooks stated that she and Garbo had a brief liaison the following year.[157] In 1931, Garbo befriended the writer and avowed lesbian Mercedes de Acosta,[158] introduced to her by her close friend Salka Viertel, and, according to Garbo's and de Acosta's biographers, began a sporadic and volatile romance. The two remained friends—with ups and downs—for almost thirty years during which time Garbo wrote de Acosta 181 letters, cards, and telegrams which are kept at the Rosenbach Museum & Library in Philadelphia.[159][160] Garbo's family, which controls her estate,[161] has made only 87 of them available to the public.[162] In 2005 sixty letters from Garbo to Swedish actress Mimi Pollak, a close friend in drama school, were released. Several letters indicate that she had romantic feelings for Pollak for many years. After learning of Pollak's pregnancy in 1930, for example, Garbo wrote, "We cannot help our nature, as God has created it. But I have always thought you and I belonged together." [163] In 1975, she wrote a poem about not being able to touch the hand of her friend with whom she might have been walking through life.[164]

Death

Gravestone of Greta Garbo

Garbo was successfully treated for breast cancer in 1984.[165][166] Towards the end of her life, only Garbo's closest friends knew she was receiving dialysis treatments for six hours three times a week

at The Rogosin Institute in New York Hospital. A photograph appeared in the media in early 1990, showing Koger assisting Garbo, who was walking with a cane, into the hospital.

Greta Garbo died on 15 April 1990, aged 84, in the hospital, as a result of pneumonia and renal failure. [167] Daum later claimed that towards the end, she also suffered from gastrointestinal and periodontal ailments.

Garbo was cremated in Manhattan, and her ashes were interred in 1999 at Skogskyrkogården Cemetery just south of her native Stockholm. [168]

Garbo had invested wisely, primarily in stocks and bonds, and left her entire estate, \$32,042,429–\$57,000,000 by 2013 rates—to her niece, Gray Reisfield. [169]

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- coldest weather. Listen to their voices doing their parts in the productions. Smell the grease paint! There is no smell in the world like the smell of the backyard of a theater. No smell that will mean as much to me - ever. Night after night, I sat there dreaming. Dreaming when I would be inside - getting ready.
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Syd Barrett, English rock musician and founder of Pink Floyd

Roger 'Syd' Barrett (1946-2005) in the English city of Cambridge to a middle-class family living at 60 Glisson Road.[3][4] Barrett was the third of five children.[3] His father, Arthur Max Barrett, was a prominent pathologist[3][5][6] and he was related[clarification needed] to Elizabeth Garrett Anderson.[5][6] In 1951 his family moved to 183 Hills Road.[3][4]

Barrett played piano occasionally, but usually preferred writing and drawing. He got a ukulele at 10, a banjo at 11[7] and a Hofner acoustic guitar at 14.[8][9] A year after he got his first acoustic guitar, he bought his first electric guitar and built his own amplifier. One story of how Barrett acquired the nickname "Syd" is that at the age of 14 he was called after an old local Cambridge jazz double bassist,[9][10] Sid "the beat" Barrett, which claims Syd Barrett changed the spelling to differentiate himself from his namesake.[11] Another story is that when he was 13, his schoolmates nicknamed him "Syd" after he showed up to a field day at Abington Scout site wearing a flat cap instead of his Scout beret because "Syd" was a "working-class" name.[12] He used both names interchangeably for several years. His sister Rosemary stated, "He was never Syd at home. He would never have allowed it." [10]

At one point at Morley Memorial Junior School he was taught by Roger Waters' mother, Mary.[13] Later, in 1957, he attended Cambridgeshire High School for Boys[14] (with Waters).[3] His father died of cancer on 11 December 1961,[9][15] less than a month before Barrett's 16th birthday.[16] Also on this day, Barrett had left the entry in his diary for this date blank.[9] By this time, his brothers and sisters had left home and his mother decided to rent out rooms to lodgers.[15][17][18] Eager to help her son recover from his grief, Barrett's mother encouraged the band in which he played, Geoff Mott and The Mottoes, a band which Barrett formed,[9] to perform in their front room. Waters and Barrett were childhood friends, and Waters often visited such gigs.[3][9] [19] At one point, Waters even organised a gig, a CND

benefit at Friends Meeting House on 11 March 1962, [3] but shortly afterwards Jeff Mott joined the Boston Crabs, and the Mottoes broke up. [9]

In September 1962, Barrett had taken a place at the Cambridge Technical College art department, [20] where he met David Gilmour. [21] During the winter of 1962 and early 1963, the Beatles made an impact on Barrett, and he began to play Beatles songs at parties and at picnics. In 1963, Barrett became a Rolling Stones fan and Barrett and then-girlfriend Libby Gausden saw them perform at a village hall in Cambridgeshire. [21] It was at this point Barrett started writing songs; one friend recalls hearing "Effervescing Elephant" (later to be recorded on his solo album Barrett). [22] Also around this time, Barrett and Gilmour occasionally played acoustic gigs together. [23] Barrett had played bass guitar with Those Without during the summer of 1963 [23] [24] and both bass and guitar with The Hollerin' Blues the next summer. [23] In 1964, Barrett and Gausden saw Bob Dylan perform. [21] After this performance, Barrett was inspired to write "Bob Dylan Blues". [25] Barrett, now thinking about his future, [23] decided to apply for Camberwell College of Arts in London. [26] Barrett enrolled in the college in the summer of 1964 [23] to study painting. [27]

Pink Floyd years (1965-68)

Starting in 1964, the band that would become Pink Floyd evolved through various line-up and name changes including "The Abdabs", [28] [29] "The Screaming Abdabs", [29] "Sigma 6", [29] [30] and "The Meggadeaths". [29] In 1965, Barrett joined them as The Tea Set [29] [31] (sometimes spelled T-Set). [32] When they found themselves playing a concert with another band of the same name, Barrett came up with "The Pink Floyd Sound" (also known as "The Pink Floyd Blues Band", [32] later "The Pink Floyd"). [nb 1] During 1965, they went into a studio for the first time, when a friend of Richard Wright's gave the band free time to record. [nb 2] [31] In the summer of 1965, Barrett began an affair with Lindsay Corner. [39]

During this summer Barrett had his first LSD trip in the garden of friend Dave Gale, [39] [40] with Ian Moore and Storm Thorgerson. [nb 3] [39] In one period of experimentation with LSD, Barrett and another friend, Paul Charrier, ended up naked in the bath, reciting: "No rules, no rules". [41] That summer, as a consequence of the continuation of drug use, the band became absorbed in Sant Mat, a Sikh sect. Storm

Thorgerson (then living on Earlham Street) and Barrett went to a London hotel to meet the sect's guru; Thorgerson managed to join the sect, while Barrett, however, was deemed too young to join. Thorgerson perceives this as a deeply important event in Barrett's life, as he was intensely upset by the rejection. While living within close proximity of his friends, Barrett decided to write more songs ("Bike" was written around this time).[35]

London Underground, Blackhill Enterprises and gigs

While Pink Floyd began by playing cover versions of American R&B songs,[42] by 1966 they had carved out their own style of improvised rock and roll,[43] [44] which drew as much from improvised jazz.[45] After Bob Klose departed from the band, the band's direction changed. However, the change was not instantaneous,[nb 4] with more improvising on the guitars and keyboards.[35] Mason reflected, "It always felt to me that most of the ideas were emanating from Syd at the time." [nb 5][35]

At this time, Barrett's reading reputedly included: Grimm's Fairy Tales, Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings*, Carlos Castaneda's *The Teachings of Don Juan*, and *The I-Ching*. During this period, Barrett wrote most of the songs for Pink Floyd's first album, and also songs that would later appear on his solo albums.[48] In 1966, a new rock concert venue, the UFO (pronounced as "you-foe"),[50] opened in London and quickly became a haven for British psychedelic music. Pink Floyd, the house band,[46][50][51][52] was its most popular attraction and after making appearances at the rival Roundhouse, [52][53][54] became the most popular musical group of the "London Underground" psychedelic music scene.[8]

By the end of 1966, Pink Floyd had gained a reliable management team in Andrew King and Peter Jenner.[55] Towards the end of October 1966, Pink Floyd, with King and Jenner, set up Blackhill Enterprises, to manage the group's finances. Blackhill was staffed by lodgers Jenner found in his Edbrooke Road house, and among others, Barrett's flatmate, Peter Wynne Wilson (who became road manager, however, since he had more experience in lighting, he was also lighting assistant).[56] King and Jenner wanted to prepare some demo recordings for a possible record deal, so at the end of October, they booked a session at Thompson Private Recording Studio,[52] in Hemel Hempstead.[nb 6][56] King said

of the demos: "That was the first time I realised they were going to write all their own material, Syd just turned into a songwriter, it seemed like overnight." [57]

King and Jenner befriended American expatriate Joe Boyd, the promoter of the UFO Club, who was making a name for himself as one of the more important entrepreneurs on the British music scene. The newly hired booking agent, Bryan Morrison, and Boyd had proposed sending in better quality recordings. From Morrison's agency the band played a gig outside London for the first time. [58] In November, the band performed the first (of many) strangely named concerts: Philadelic Music for Simian Hominids, a multimedia event arranged by the group's former landlord, Mike Leonard, at Hornsey College of Art. [52] [58] They performed at the Free School [59] for the following two weeks, before performing at the Psychodelphia Versus Ian Smith event at the Roundhouse in December, arranged by the Majority Rule for Rhodesia Campaign, and an Oxfam benefit at the Albert Hall [52] (the band's biggest venue up to this point). [58]

Releases

Tonite Lets All Make Love in London

Main article: Tonite Lets All Make Love in London

At the beginning of 1967, Barrett was dating Jenny Spires (who would later marry future Stars member Jack Monck), however, unknown to Barrett, Spires had an affair with Peter Whitehead. Spires convinced Whitehead (who thought the band sounded like "bad Schoenberg") to utilise Pink Floyd in a film about the swinging London scene. [60] So at the cost of £80, in January, Whitehead took the band into John Wood's Sound Techniques in Chelsea, [61] with promoter Joe Boyd in tow. [60] Here, the band recorded a 16-minute version of "Interstellar Overdrive" and another composition, "Nick's Boogie". [60] [61] Whitehead had filmed this recording, which was used in the film Tonite Let's All Make Love in London [61] and later on the video release of London '66-'67. [60] [61] Whitehead later commented about the band that: "They were just completely welded together, just like a jazz group". [60]

Record deal

Boyd attempted to sign the band with Polydor Records. [49] [62] However, Morrison had convinced King and Jenner to try to start a bidding war between Polydor and EMI. [62] In late January, Boyd produced a

recording session for the group,[49][55] with them returning to Sound Techniques in Chelsea again.[nb 7] [49][64] After the aforementioned bidding war idea was finished, Pink Floyd signed with EMI. Unusually for the time the deal included recording an album, which meant the band had unlimited studio time at EMI Studios, in return for a smaller royalty percentage. The band then attempted to re-record "Arnold Layne", but the Boyd version from January was released instead.[63]

The Piper at the Gates of Dawn

Main article: *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn*

The band's first studio album, *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn*, was recorded intermittently between February and July 1967 in Studio 3 at Abbey Road Studios, and produced by former Beatles engineer Norman Smith.[65] At the same time, the Beatles were recording "Lovely Rita" for their album, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, in Studio 2. By the time the album was released on 4 August, "Arnold Layne" (which was released months earlier, on 11 March) had reached number 20 on the British singles charts[66] (despite being banned by Radio London)[63] [67] and the follow-up single, "See Emily Play", had done even better, peaking at number 6.[66] The album was successful in the UK, hitting number 6 on the British album charts.[66] Their first three singles (including their third "Apples and Oranges"), were written by Barrett, who also was the principal visionary/author of their critically acclaimed 1967 debut album. Of the eleven songs on *Piper*, Barrett wrote eight and co-wrote another two.[68]

Departure from Pink Floyd

Through late 1967 and early 1968, Barrett's behaviour became increasingly erratic and unpredictable, partly as a consequence of his reported heavy use of psychedelic drugs, most prominently LSD.[8] Many reports described him on stage, strumming one chord through the entire concert, or not playing at all.[69] At a show at The Fillmore in San Francisco, during a performance of "Interstellar Overdrive", Barrett slowly detuned his guitar. The audience seemed to enjoy such antics, unaware of the rest of the band's consternation. Interviewed on Pat Boone's show during this tour, Syd's reply to Boone's questions was a "blank and totally mute stare," according to Nick Mason, "Syd wasn't into moving his lips that day." Barrett exhibited similar behaviour during the band's first

appearance on Dick Clark's popular TV show American Bandstand.[70] Although surviving footage of this appearance shows Barrett miming his parts of the song competently,[71] during a group interview afterwards, when asked two questions by Clark, Barrett's answers were terse, almost to the point of rudeness (though, Clark noted, they had been flying non-stop from London to Los Angeles). During this time, Barrett would often forget to bring his guitar to sessions, damage equipment and occasionally was unable to hold his pick.[72] Before a performance in late 1967, Barrett reportedly crushed Mandrax tranquilliser tablets and an entire tube of Brylcreem into his hair, which subsequently melted down his face under the heat of the stage lighting,[73] making him look like "a guttered candle".[74] Nick Mason later disputed the Mandrax portion of this story, stating that "Syd would never waste good mandies".[75]

During their UK tour with Jimi Hendrix in November 1967, guitarist David O'List from The Nice was called in to substitute for Barrett on several occasions when he was unable to perform or failed to appear.[76] Sometime around Christmas, David Gilmour (Barrett's old school friend) was asked to join the band as a second guitarist to cover for Barrett, whose erratic behaviour prevented him from performing, with the idea of retaining a five-member line-up of the band. For a handful of shows Gilmour played and sang while Barrett wandered around on stage, occasionally deciding to join in playing. The other band members soon grew tired of Barrett's antics and, on 26 January 1968, when Waters was driving on the way to a show at Southampton University, the band elected not to pick Barrett up: one person in the car said, "Shall we pick Syd up?" and another said, "Let's not bother." [77][78][79][80] As Barrett had, up until then, written the bulk of the band's material, the initial plan was to keep him in the group as a non-touring member—as The Beach Boys had done with Brian Wilson—but this soon proved to be impractical.[79][81][82] Gilmour subsequently became a full-time member of the band.

According to Roger Waters, Barrett came into what was to be their last practice session with a new song he had dubbed "Have You Got It Yet?". The song seemed simple enough when he first presented it, but it soon became impossibly difficult to learn and they eventually realised that while they were practising it, Barrett kept changing the arrangement.[79][82] He

would then play it again, with the arbitrary changes, and sing "Have you got it yet?". Eventually they realised they never would, and that they were simply bearing the brunt of Barrett's idiosyncratic sense of humour.[83] Waters had called it "a real act of mad genius".[79][82]

Barrett did not contribute material to the band after *A Saucerful of Secrets* was released in 1968. Of the songs he wrote for Pink Floyd after *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn*, only one, "Jugband Blues", made it to the band's second album; one, "Apples and Oranges", became a less-than-successful single; and two others, "Scream Thy Last Scream" and "Vegetable Man", were never officially released. Barrett supposedly spent time outside the recording studio, in the reception area,[84] waiting to be invited in. He also showed up to a few gigs and glared at Gilmour. Barrett played slide guitar on "Remember a Day" (which had been first attempted during the Piper sessions), and also played on "Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun".[85] On 6 April 1968, the group officially announced Barrett was no longer a member, [84] the same day the band's contract with Blackhill Enterprises was terminated.[79]

Solo years (1968-72)

After leaving Pink Floyd, Barrett left the public eye. At the behest of EMI and Harvest Records, he embarked on a brief solo career, releasing two solo albums, *The Madcap Laughs* and *Barrett* (both 1970), and a single, "Octopus". Some songs, "Terrapin", "Maisie" and "Bob Dylan Blues", reflected Barrett's early interest in the blues.[86]

The Madcap Laughs

Main article: *The Madcap Laughs*

After Barrett left Pink Floyd, Jenner followed suit. He led Barrett into EMI Studios to record some tracks[87] in May that would later be released on Barrett's first solo album, *The Madcap Laughs*. However, Jenner said: "I had seriously underestimated the difficulties of working with him".[88] By the sessions of June and July, most of the tracks were in better shape; however, shortly after the July sessions, Barrett broke up with girlfriend Lindsay Corner and went on a drive around Britain in his Mini, ending up in psychiatric care in Cambridge.[89] During New Year 1969, a somewhat recovered Barrett had taken up tenancy in a flat on Egerton Gardens, Earls Court, London, with artist Duggie Fields.[89] [90] Here, Barrett's flat was so close to that of

Gilmour's that Gilmour could look right into Barrett's kitchen.[89] Deciding to return to music, Barrett contacted EMI and was passed to Malcolm Jones, the then-head of EMI's new prog rock label, Harvest[87] (after Norman Smith[91] and Jenner declined to produce Barrett's record,[91] Jones produced it).[89][91] Barrett wanted to recover the Jenner-produced sessions recordings; several of the tracks were improved upon.[92]

The Jones-produced sessions started in April 1969 at EMI Studios. After the first of these sessions, Barrett brought in friends to help out: Humble Pie drummer, Jerry Shirley and Jokers Wild (Gilmour's old band) drummer, Willie Wilson. For the sessions, Gilmour played bass. Talking to Barrett wasn't easy, said Jones: "It was a case of following him, not playing with him. They were seeing and then playing so they were always a note behind".[89] A few tracks on the album feature overdubs by members of the band Soft Machine.[53] During this time, Barrett also played guitar on the sessions for Soft Machine founder Kevin Ayers' debut LP *Joy of a Toy*,[93] although his performance on "Religious Experience" (later titled "Singing a Song in the Morning") was not released until the album was reissued in 2003.[53][94] One time, Barrett had told his flatmate that he was going off "for an afternoon drive". However, he followed Pink Floyd to Ibiza (according to legend, he skipped check-ins and customs, ran onto the runway and attempted to flag down a jet). One of his friends, J. Ryan Eaves, bass player for the short-lived but influential Manchester band "York's Ensemble", later spotted him on a beach wearing messed-up clothes and with a carrier bag full of money. At this point, during the trip, Barrett had asked Gilmour for his help in the recording sessions.[89]

After two of the Gilmour/Waters-produced sessions,[95] they remade one track from the Soft Machine overdubs and recorded three tracks. These sessions came to a minor halt when Gilmour and Waters were mixing Pink Floyd's newly recorded album, *Ummagumma*, to Barrett's dismay. However, through the end of July, they managed to record three more tracks. The problem with the recording was that the songs were recorded as Barrett played them "live" in studio. On the released versions a number of them have false starts and commentaries from Barrett.[89] Despite the track being closer to complete and better

produced, Gilmour and Waters left the Jones-produced track "Opel" off Madcap.[96]

Gilmour, on the sessions for *The Madcap Laughs*:

"[Sessions] were pretty tortuous and very rushed. We had very little time, particularly with *The Madcap Laughs*. Syd was very difficult, we got that very frustrated feeling: Look, it's your fucking career, mate. Why don't you get your finger out and do something? The guy was in trouble, and was a close friend for many years before then, so it really was the least one could do."

- David Gilmour, [97]

Upon the album's release in January 1970, Malcolm Jones was shocked by the substandard musicianship on the Gilmour and Waters-produced songs: "I felt angry. It's like dirty linen in public and very unnecessary and unkind". Gilmour said: "Perhaps we were trying to show what Syd was really like. But perhaps we were trying to punish him". Waters was more positive: "Syd is a genius".[98]

"It's quite nice but I'd be very surprised if it did anything if I were to drop dead. I don't think it would stand as my last statement."

-Barrett, [98]

Barrett

Main article: Barrett (album)

The second album, Barrett, was recorded more sporadically than the first,[99] with sessions taking place between February and July 1970.[98][100] The album was produced by David Gilmour,[98][101] and featured Gilmour on bass guitar, Richard Wright on keyboard and Humble Pie drummer Jerry Shirley. The first two songs attempted were for Barrett to play and/or sing to an existing backing track. However, Gilmour thought they were losing the "Barrett-ness". One track ("Rats") was originally recorded with Barrett on his own. That would later be overdubbed by musicians, despite the changing tempos. Shirley said of Barrett's playing: "He would never play the same tune twice. Sometimes Syd couldn't play anything that made sense; other times what he'd play was absolute magic." At times Barrett would say: "Perhaps we could make the middle darker and maybe the end a bit middle afternoonish. At the moment it's too windy and icy". [98]

These sessions were happening while Pink Floyd had just begun to work on *Atom Heart Mother*. On various occasions, Barrett went to "spy" on the band as they recorded their album.[98]

Wright said of the Barrett sessions:

Doing Syd's record was interesting, but extremely difficult. Dave [Gilmour] and Roger did the first one (The Madcap Laughs) and Dave and myself did the second one. But by then it was just trying to help Syd any way we could, rather than worrying about getting the best guitar sound. You could forget about that! It was just going into the studio and trying to get him to sing.

—Richard Wright, [102]

Performances

Despite the numerous recording dates for his solo albums, Barrett undertook very little musical activity between 1968 and 1972 outside the studio. On 24 February 1970, he appeared on John Peel's BBC radio programme *Top Gear*[98][103] playing five songs—only one of which had been previously released. Three would be re-recorded for the Barrett album, while the song "Two of a Kind" was a one-off performance (possibly written by Richard Wright).[nb 8] Barrett was accompanied on this session by Gilmour and Shirley who played bass and percussion,[98] respectively.[nb 9]

Gilmour and Shirley also backed Barrett for his one and only live concert during this period.[101] The gig took place on 6 June 1970 at the Olympia Exhibition Hall as part of a Music and Fashion Festival.[106] The trio performed four songs,[101] "Terrapin", "Gigolo Aunt", "Effervescing Elephant" and "Octopus". Poor mixing left the vocals barely audible until part-way through the last number.[106] At the end of the fourth song, Barrett unexpectedly but politely put down his guitar and walked off the stage.[101] The performance has been bootlegged.[106] [107] Barrett made one last appearance on BBC Radio, recording three songs at their studios on 16 February 1971. [nb 10] All three came from the Barrett album. After this session, he took a hiatus from his music career that lasted more than a year, although in an extensive interview with Mick Rock and Rolling Stone in December, he discussed himself at length, showed off his new 12-string guitar, talked about touring with Jimi Hendrix and stated that he was frustrated in terms of his musical work because of his inability to find anyone good to play with.[108]

Later years (1972–2006)

Stars and final recordings

See also: Stars (British band)

In February 1972, after a few guest spots in

Cambridge with ex-Pink Fairies member Twink on drums and Jack Monck on bass using the name The Last Minute Put Together Boogie Band (backing visiting blues musician Eddie "Guitar" Burns and also featuring Henry Cow guitarist Fred Frith), the trio formed a short-lived band called Stars.[109] Though they were initially well received at gigs in the Dandelion coffee bar and the town's Market Square, one of their gigs at the Corn Exchange in Cambridge[110] with the MC5 proved to be disastrous.[111] A few days after this final show, Twink recalled that Barrett stopped him on the street, showed him a scathing review of the gig they had played, and quit on the spot,[111] despite having played at least one subsequent gig at the same venue supporting Nektar.[75]

Free from his EMI contract on 9 May 1972, Barrett signed a document that ended his association with Pink Floyd, and any financial interest in future recordings.[112] Barrett attended an informal jazz and poetry performance by Pete Brown and former Cream bassist Jack Bruce in October 1973. Brown arrived at the show late, and saw that Bruce was already onstage, along with "a guitarist I vaguely recognised", playing the Horace Silver tune "Doodlin'". Later in the show, Brown read out a poem, which he dedicated to Syd, because, "he's here in Cambridge, and he's one of the best songwriters in the country" when, to his surprise, the guitar player from earlier in the show stood up and said, "No I'm not".[113] By the end of 1973, Barrett had returned to live in London, staying at various hotels and, in December of that year, settling in at Chelsea Cloisters. He had little contact with others, apart from his regular visits to his management's offices to collect his royalties,[109] and the occasional visit from his sister Rosemary.

In August 1974,[109] Jenner persuaded Barrett to return to Abbey Road Studios in hope of recording another album. According to John Leckie, who engineered these sessions, even at this point Syd still "looked like he did when he was younger..long haired".[114] The sessions lasted three days and consisted of blues rhythm tracks with tentative and disjointed guitar overdubs. Barrett recorded 11 tracks, the only one of which to be titled was "If You Go, Don't Be Slow". Once again, Barrett withdrew from the music industry, but this time for good. He sold the rights to his solo albums back to the record label and moved into a London hotel. During this

period, several attempts to employ him as a record producer (including one by Jamie Reid on behalf of the Sex Pistols, and another by The Damned, who wanted him to produce their second album) were all fruitless.[115][116]

Withdrawal to Cambridge

In 1978, when Barrett's money ran out, he moved back to Cambridge to live with his mother. He returned to live in London again in 1982, but lasted only a few weeks and soon returned to Cambridge for good. Barrett walked the 50 miles (80 km) from London to Cambridge.[117] Until his death, Barrett received royalties from his work with Pink Floyd from each compilation and some of the live and studio albums and singles that featured his songs. Gilmour commented that he (Gilmour) "[made] sure the money [got] to him all right".[118]

In 1996, Barrett was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as a member of Pink Floyd; he did not attend the ceremony.[119]

According to a 2005 profile by biographer Tim Willis, Barrett, who had reverted to using his original name of Roger, continued to live in his late mother's semi-detached home in Cambridge, and had returned to painting, creating large abstract canvases. He was also said to have been an avid gardener and his main point of contact with the outside world was his sister, Rosemary, who lived nearby. He was reclusive, and his physical health declined, as he suffered from stomach ulcers and type 2 diabetes.[120]

Although Barrett had not appeared or spoken in public since the mid-1970s, time did little to diminish interest in his life and work. Reporters and fans still travelled to Cambridge to seek him out, despite his attempts to live a quiet life and public appeals from his family for people to leave him alone.[121] Many photos of Barrett being harassed by paparazzi when walking or cycling from the 1980s until his death in 2006, have been published in various media. Apparently, Barrett did not like being reminded about his musical career and the other members of Pink Floyd had no direct contact with him. However, he did visit his sister's house in November 2001 to watch the BBC Omnibus documentary made about him - reportedly he found some of it "a bit noisy", enjoyed seeing Mike Leonard of Leonard's Lodgers again, calling him his "teacher", and enjoyed hearing "See Emily Play" again.[122]

Death and aftermath

After suffering from diabetes for several years, Barrett died at home in Cambridge on 7 July 2006, [18] aged 60. The cause of death was pancreatic cancer. [123][124] The occupation on his death certificate was "retired musician". [125] He was cremated, with his ashes given to a family member or friend. [126] In 2006, his home in St. Margaret's Square, Cambridge, was put on the market and reportedly attracted considerable interest. [127] After over 100 showings, many by fans, it was sold to a French couple who bought it simply because they liked it; reportedly they knew nothing about Barrett. [128] On 28 November 2006, Barrett's other possessions were sold at an auction at Cheffins auction house in Cambridge, raising £120,000 for charity. [129] Items sold included paintings, scrapbooks and everyday items that Barrett had decorated. [130] NME produced a tribute issue to Barrett a week later with a photo of him on the cover. In an interview with *The Sunday Times*, Barrett's sister revealed that he had written a book: "He read very deeply about the history of art and actually wrote an unpublished book about it, which I'm too sad to read at the moment. But he found his own mind so absorbing that he didn't want to be distracted." [131]

According to local newspapers, Barrett left approximately £1.7 million to his two brothers and two sisters. [132] This sum was apparently largely acquired from royalties from Pink Floyd compilations and live recordings featuring songs he had written while with the band. [118] A tribute concert called *Games for May* [133] was held at the Barbican Centre, London on 10 May 2007 with Robyn Hitchcock, Captain Sensible, Damon Albarn, Chrissie Hynde, Kevin Ayers and his Pink Floyd bandmates performing. [134] A series of events called *The City Wakes* was held in Cambridge in October 2008 to celebrate Barrett's life, art and music. Barrett's sister, Rosemary Breen, supported this, the first-ever series of official events in memory of her brother. [135] After the festival's success, arts charity *Escape Artists* announced plans to create a centre in Cambridge, using art to help people suffering from mental health problems. [136]

Mental state

There has been much speculation concerning Barrett's psychological well-being. Many believe he

suffered from schizophrenia.[83][180][181] Barrett's use of psychedelic drugs, especially LSD, during the 1960s is well documented. In an article published in 2006, in response to notions that Barrett's problems came from the drug, Gilmour was quoted as saying: "In my opinion, his nervous breakdown would have happened anyway. It was a deep-rooted thing. But I'll say the psychedelic experience might well have acted as a catalyst. Still, I just don't think he could deal with the vision of success and all the things that went with it." [182] Many stories of Barrett's erratic behaviour off stage as well as on are also well-documented. In *Saucerful of Secrets: The Pink Floyd Odyssey*, author Nicholas Schaffner interviewed people who knew Barrett before and during his Pink Floyd days. These included friends Peter and Susan Wynne-Wilson, artist Duggie Fields (with whom Barrett shared a flat during the late 1960s), June Bolan and Storm Thorgerson, among others.

"For June Bolan, the alarm bells began to sound only when Syd kept his girlfriend under lock and key for three days, occasionally shoving a ration of biscuits under the door." [183] A claim of cruelty against Barrett committed by the groupies and hangers-on who frequented his apartment during this period was described by writer and critic Jonathan Meades. "I went [to Barrett's flat] to see Harry and there was this terrible noise. It sounded like heating pipes shaking. I said, 'What's up?' and he sort of giggled and said, 'That's Syd having a bad trip. We put him in the linen cupboard'". [184] Storm Thorgerson responded to this claim by stating "I do not remember locking Syd up in a cupboard. It sounds to me like pure fantasy, like Jonathan Meades was on dope himself." [184] Watkinson and Anderson included quotes from a story told to them by Thorgerson that underscored how volatile Barrett could be. "On one occasion, I had to pull him off Lindsay (Barrett's girlfriend at the time) because he was beating her over the head with a mandolin". [185] On one occasion, Barrett threw a woman called Gilly across the room, because she refused to go to Gilmour's house. [111] According to Gilmour in an interview with Nick Kent, the other members of Pink Floyd approached psychiatrist R. D. Laing with the 'Barrett problem'. After hearing a tape of a Barrett conversation, Laing declared him "incurable". [186][187]

After Barrett died, his sister Rosemary insisted that Barrett neither suffered from mental illness nor

received treatment for it at any time since they resumed regular contact in the 1980s.[188] She allowed that he did spend some time in a private "home for lost souls"—Greenwoods in Essex—but claimed there was no formal therapy programme there. Some years later, Barrett apparently agreed to sessions with a psychiatrist at Fulbourn psychiatric hospital in Cambridge, but Breen claimed that neither medication nor therapy was considered appropriate. [188] His sister denied he was a recluse or that he was vague about his past: "Roger may have been a bit selfish—or rather self-absorbed—but when people called him a recluse they were really only projecting their own disappointment. He knew what they wanted, but he wasn't willing to give it to them." Barrett, she said, took up photography and sometimes they went to the seaside together. "Quite often he took the train on his own to London to look at the major art collections—and he loved flowers. He made regular trips to the Botanic Gardens and to the dahlias at Anglesey Abbey, near Lode. But of course, his passion was his painting", she said.

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terwards.[176]

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Camouflage: Seeing But Not Perceiving



With some forms of camouflage, such as a brown chameleon standing in front of a matching brown rock, you see the chameleon but don't perceive it. Your eyes and mind receive the same visual chameleon information as when the chameleon is standing in front of a white sheet. This is how a chameleon or arctic fox can hide in open view.



Many things are camouflaged because they are missed by our habitual shortcut methods of processing information. The above picture is an example. Read this triangle, then look at it again. Did you skip over the second 'the'?

Often when I write a book, such as an academic book, I feel how narrow and dry is the format and argument, how unrepresentative of life, my life, and have a compulsion to rebel against it by adding incongruous, off topic text.

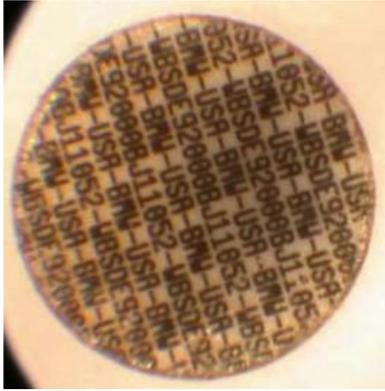
When I was a young college student I often felt that the textbooks and lectures were lies by omission, the insincere social lives we all live that hide our inner truths. Granted it was accounting 102.

This book liberally reuses and reshuffles old text from my earlier books *Conceits*, *I Miss Me Too*, *Return Trip*, *Strange Beauty*, *Looking at Art and Artifacts*, with some of those books reusing and reshuffling texts from others of those books, and this paragraph right here is from an earlier book. There were several reasons for this, including defying literary conventions just to defy literary conventions, plus the theme and actuality of revisiting and examining old information. Things can be said, analyzed, many different ways, and one bound published way is just one way. Revisiting and reshuffling is a searching, a digging. It is autobiographical in a way. I could rearrange the pieces, delete and add pieces, a hundred more times. And perhaps I will.

The doctor said I was too virile to have kids. Or something like that. Maybe it was vile.

I told my friend that, though I grew up in the city, we had 2-1/2 acre wooded yard and you couldn't even see the neighbors. She said "Maybe that's why you're interested in artificial intelligence."

Microdots



microdot under the microscope

Art, artifacts, collectibles and other valuables are often security marked in case of theft, loss, dispute or later identification. The markers range from overt holograms and stickers to invisible tags to allow the marked items to be identified.

An interesting covert marking system uses microdots. Microdots are microscopically small metal discs that have identifying information micro-etched on them. The dots can be the size of a standard printed period (.). The etched information can be a serial number that identifies the object's owner. The dots will go completely unnoticed by the average thief, but can be used to trace the item back to the rightful owner.

Microdots and related covert 'shrinking down text' is an old-time application. German spies used microdots to covertly pass information during WWII. 1870 Franco-Prussian War carrier pigeon messages were photographically shrunk so the bird could carry more text.

This is a book, but it also is an artifact, to be turned over, taken apart, mulled over. I have written short books, and my intent with this book was to have physical bulk. Volume was an essential quality. Physical book fans often treat a book as a thing. They talk about the feel and smell, put it on a shelf like an vase. After seeing a Basil Rathbone Sherlock Holmes movie as a kid, I carved out a secret compartment inside my *Book of Lists*. Painter Amedeo Modigliani's favorite book was Lautreamont's *Maldoror*, and he cut his copy into two convenient sized pieces and carried them around in his coat pockets.

For those who say the book is too long, show me where did I say you had to or should read the whole thing? Nowhere do I say or imply this.

I also don't see how a reader can complain about off topic chapters being included. They are clearly labelled, and the reader can skip over them if and as he wants. If someone wants to read it like a magazine or reference book, picking and choosing which articles to read, that is fine by me. I, for one, am not a linear reader and am a picker and chooser.

* * * *

A friend said she was morally offended by my theories on artificial intelligence. I said "That's different. Most people are just bored by them."

* * * *

A guy told me he could never own a Lamborghini even if he was wealthy, because he couldn't enjoy driving it while constantly being worried it might be scratched or dented in traffic. I told him people who own Lamborghinis are rich enough they buy two-- one for driving, one for sitting in the garage.

* * * *

Most great artists had periods of self-loathing, so I'm trying to incorporate more of that into my life.

* * * *

A beginning philosopher is skeptical of the answers, while an advanced philosopher is skeptical of the questions.

Henry: "Do you ever just let your hair down and listen to ear candy music?"

"You mean like Shostakovich?"

Henry: "Never mind."

Did you know? Steve McQueen was a rebellious and troubled youth, shuffled from family members to family members, in gangs and often in trouble the law. At one point he was sent to live on his uncle's farm. McQueen later described the his uncle as "a very good man, very strong, very fair. I learned a lot from him" and said one of his fondest memories was when he finally left the farm and his uncle gave hm a gold watch inscribed "To Steve, who has been a son to me."

There are actual but very early stages ways to make objects invisible by bending light around them. Manufactured materials can bend light to make an object disappear from view. These technologies are being developed by the military and university labs.

* * * *

Did you know that the Leonardo da Vinci wrote his notebooks in mirror image? It is believed this was because he was left handed, making writing in reverse easier, and to obscure his private notes from onlookers.

As a kid I assumed tuna were small
because they came in those little cans.

Henry: "How do you not offend women?"

"Never say anything about anything ever. Whatever is the topic, don't say anything about it, no matter how benign you think is your comment."

Henry: "But if you never say anything ever, won't a woman find that offensive?"

"Probably."

Defining Art

In conclusion, good luck with that.

"Do sociopaths know they're sociopaths?"

Henry: "You're a sociopath. Do you know you're one?"

"I'm not a sociopath."

Henry: "There you go."

* * * *

"Why don't you get your own facebook page instead of posting on mine?"

Henry: "I've tried several times, but whenever I post my profile photo, the facebook bots assume I've stolen it from a Vogue cover and block me for copyright infringement."

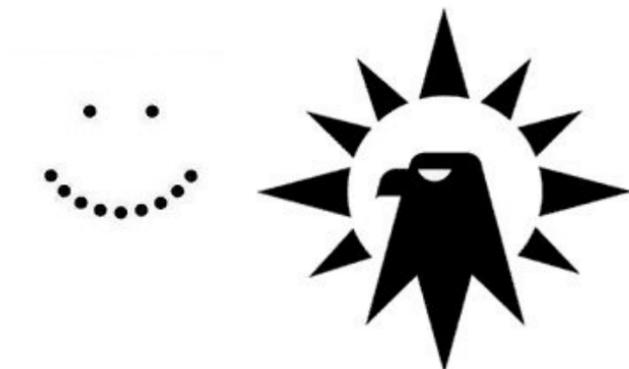
* * * *

I remember when I was a kid on a family vacation to San Francisco and an Italian waiter with a strong Italian accent served us. I told my parents that I thought people only sounded like that in Bugs Bunny cartoons.

When something is made invisible, it usually is invisible at only one frequency of light. It can be seen at other frequencies. A soldier hidden by the shroud of night can be seen with night goggles that detect infrared light. Our bones inside our bodies are hidden from normal view, but are seen and photographed under x-rays. A jet fighter can be invisible to radar, but clearly seen with the naked eyes. Even in old horror movies, the invisible man can often be detected via sound, smell, footprints, things moving.

Henry: "Are you sending subtle Satanic messages in your pictures?"

"Didn't realize they were subtle."



Many of our perceptions aren't so much larger than the sum of the individual parts but different. This is often the case in art, music. The sublime experience of art is something different than the pieces, even the genre.

When humans listen to music, they automatically get a visual image in their minds-- a scene, story, person, landscape, animals, dreamlike design, musicians playing, other. Humans are visual animals and this is how they 'hear.' You never process or listen to sounds on a purely auditory level.

I like the idea of the book being a world at both the naked eye level and at each magnifying glass closeup.

I'm writing a book of fairy tales for disturbed children. At least they will be.

* * * *

Intelligence

As expected, humans have a self centered and myopic definition of intelligence. To them, and as measured by them, intelligence has human qualities and biases. They judge intelligence by human logic, cultural norms and sensibilities, their sensory perceptions, use of symbolic language.

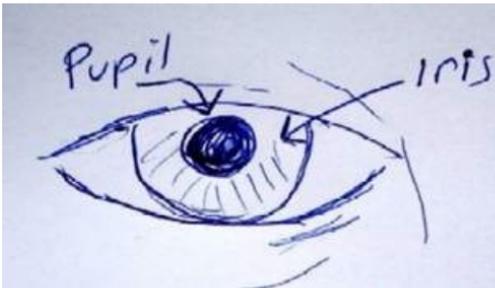
As noted later in artificial intelligence, even when a computer does better than human at a task, many humans will say it isn't intelligent because it doesn't have the qualities of human intelligence, such as personality, emotions, consciousness. Not only does this point to the biases humans have about intelligence, often nothing more than sentimentality, but perhaps points out that intelligence (or at least intelligence defined by humans) isn't as important as human like to think it is. If the 'less intelligent' computer performs better, perhaps human intelligence is not so important.

What we see is different than what we look at: The physiology of seeing

Despite common belief, humans do not perceive a direct and exact representation of external reality, but a distorted translation formed by their eyes and mind. The image we see is different than what we are looking at. This is not some coffee house theory, but physiological fact. The human eyes and brain do a decent but imperfect job at detecting and translating light.

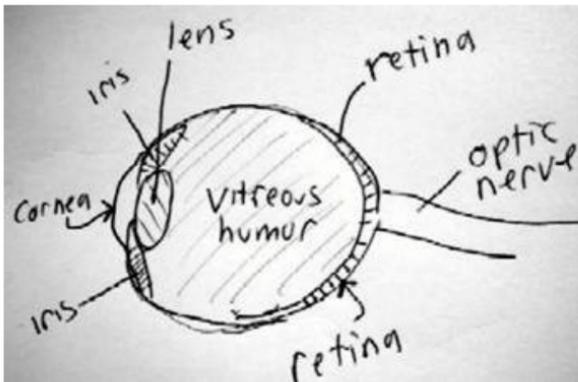
This chapter is a look at the physiology of seeing and offers examples of optical distortion caused by the eyes and mind.

A quick look at the physiology of seeing



When a human looks at an object, light from the object enters the eyes. The light goes through the cornea, which is a clear covering, then through the pupil which is a clear circle in the center of the colored part of the eye called the iris. The

pupil gets larger (dilates) when there is little light and smaller when there is more light. The lens focuses the light through the aqueous humor, a clear liquid, onto the retina. The retina, in the back of the eye, contains millions of tiny photo sensors that detect the light. There are two main kinds of photo sensors, called rods and cones. Shaped like rods, rods detect shades and forms and are needed for night and peripheral vision. Rods are not good at detecting color. Shaped like cones, cones are needed for seeing details, seeing in daylight and detecting colors. Cones do not work well in low light. Rods and cones cover the entire retina except for a spot where the optic nerve connects to the brain. The optic nerve carries the information received from the retina to the brain, where the brain translates it into the single image we perceive, or 'see.'



* * * *

The Blind Spot

All humans have blind spots, which are spots where the eye cannot see. The blind spot corresponds to the spot on the retina where the optical nerve connects the retina to the

brain. At this spot there are no light detecting cells and, thus, it cannot detect light. A small object can disappear from view.

In everyday life the blind spot goes unnoticed. This is in part as the eye is constantly looking around, getting a wide and varied range of views. It is also in part as the brain uses the information from both eyes to create the single mental vision. What one eye misses, the other often picks up.

As its optical nerve connects differently, the octopus has no blind spot.

Detecting your blind spot

L

R

To detect your blind spot using the above letters L and R, hold the book about two feet in front of your face, close your right eye and look at the letter R. Slowly move your head forward, towards the picture. At one point the L will disappear. The L will also disappear if you start up close and slowly move back. Notice that the missing spot is filled in white by your mind, so it appears as if nothing is missing

from your view. This illustrates how your blind spot goes unnoticed during daily living. Many people live their entire life not knowing they have a blind spot.

Humans have more glaring blind spots. Due to the placement of our eyes in our head, we can't naturally see behind us, under our feet, from the top of our head, behind our elbows. A common saying to explain why we didn't notice something is, "I don't have eyes in the back of my head." And it's common knowledge that if you want to sneak up on a person you approach from behind. We compensate for these blinds spots by turning around, moving our heads, using a mirror or other reflection, saying "Who's that behind me?," listening, noticing shadows.

Other animals have different eye placement and fields of view. As a robin has its eyes on the side of its head, it has better side view but worse directly ahead view. The robin's life depends on its being able to detecting predators from the side and back. When hunting for worms in the grass, robins turn their heads. Some think they are turning their ear to listen for worms, when they are turning their heads to see in front of them. A wolf, which is a hunter stalking prey, has eyes placement best suited for seeing ahead. The wolf sees better straight ahead, but its side to side vision is worse than a robin's. A crocodile has eyes that rise above the rest of its head. Not only does this create a different field of view, but allows the crocodile to see above water while the most of its head and body are hidden below water.

* * * *

After Images

Afterimages are when, after staring at an object, you look

away and still see an image of the object. An example is when you still see the nighttime headlights of a car, even though your eyes have closed and the car has turned away. Another is when after looking away from a candle flame in the dark you still see light in the shape of the candle flame.

Afterimages happen after the retina's photosensors (the rods and cones in your eyes) become over saturated, or burned out, from staring at a particular color. This burning out is comparable to lifting weights in the weight room. After doing enough arm curls you lose your arm curl strength for a short while and will be able to lift only lighter weights. Your muscles are fatigued, if only temporarily, from all that weight lifting.

Similarly, after staring at a large area of a single color, the eye's photosensors lose their strength for that color. If right afterwards the eyes look at a blank piece of paper, the photosensors will be weak towards the previously stared at color but fresh and strong for detecting the other colors. This imbalance causes the mind to perceive the image (the afterimage), but in the color opposite to the original color. To the mind, the weakness towards one color means the presence of the opposite primary color is stronger. Quirky perhaps, but this is the way the brain works.

If you are staring at a green image, the afterimage should be red (the opposite primary color). After staring at a yellow image, the afterimage should be blue. The mind sees afterimages in primary colors, so any non-primary color (orange, pink, etc) will be seen as the primary opposite.

Though they occur almost constantly, afterimages usually go unnoticed. Afterimages are best observed when focusing on a single color or object for a lengthy period of time. In normal about the house viewing we view a wide

range of objects and colors at once and our eyes are always moving around, the view constantly shifting. In these cases, the afterimages are minor and get lost in the visual shuffle. We barely if at all notice them.

* * * *

Binocular Vision

Humans have binocular vision, meaning the single image we see in our mind is made from two different views-- one from each eye.

Binocular vision gives humans a number of advantages. One is we have a wider field of view than if we had only one eye. The right eye can see further to the right and the left eye further to the left. The single vision in our mind shows more than either single eye can see.

Another advantage is the two views give us imperfect but good depth perception. People who are blind in one eye have worse depth perception than the average human.

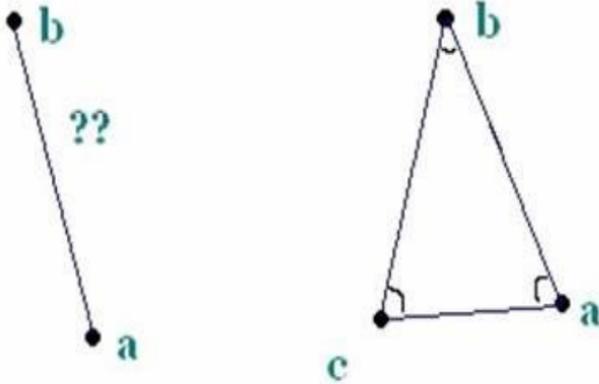
The mythical Cyclops might at first appear an unbeatable foe, but a wily human opponent could take advantage of the monster's poor depth perception and narrow field of vision.

* * * *

Triangularism and Calculating Depth

Binocular vision produces the perception of depth in a way similar to how triangularism measures length in applied mathematics. When looking at a distant point using only one point of view it is hard to impossible to determine the

distance accurately. In applied mathematics, triangulation can accurately calculate this distance from point **a** to point **b** by creating an imaginary triangle. Triangulation has long been used in the real world to measure distant objects, such as islands and boats from land and when surveying land.



Triangulation: From point **a** alone, it can be impossible to accurately calculate the distance to point **b**. In the real world, point **a** could be you standing on land and point **b** an anchored boat out at sea. However, by taking angle measurements from point **a**, then taking an angle measurement from nearby point **c** (perhaps a walking distance away), and measuring the distance from point **a** to **c**, one can create an imaginary triangle that calculates the distance from point **a** to point **b**. It's just a matter of calculating angles and doing the math.

Two eyes give the mind a similar two point view, and the mind uses these two views to judge distance. This is mostly done nonconsciously. You simply reach out and grab that pencil or door knob, no problem. If you wear an eye patch, you may discover it's more difficult to grab things on the first try.

* * * *

The Hole In The Hand Illusion



This simple trick plays with your binocular vision to make it appear as if you have a hole in your hand.

Roll a normal piece of 8x11" paper into a tube and place it next to your hand as shown in the above picture. With one eye look through the tube and with the other eye look ahead at the back of your hand. With a little bit of shifting you should see what appears to be a large hole through your hand. Your mind takes the two distinct views to create one bizarre view.

* * * *

As I said, you don't see physical reality even in the physical world, but a translation of it. When you are look at a living room or bowl of apples or painting or mountain range, the image you see is not a direct representation of the objects. The image is a translation made by your eyes and mind. As demonstrated, binocularism (changing two views into one),

afterimages (images created by the eyes/mind), unnoticed blind spots, inability to see colors in low light and countless other purely physiological occurrences ensure that our mental image is always different than the objects viewed. Everything we perceive involves illusion.

* * * *

If you believe that there is a God who purposely created animals, why do you think he gave humans such limited eyesight?

* * * *

A mirror mirrors what is in front of it. If you place an apple two feet in front of the mirror, an identical looking apple will look as if it is the same distance behind, or into, the mirror. Curiously, if you use triangulation to measure the distance to the apple in the mirror, the apple will measure as being two feet behind the mirror. Both our eyes and scientific measurement say there is an apple two feet behind the mirror's surface.

* * * *

While humans depend mostly on sight, other animals depend more on other senses. The bloodhound has worse than human eyesight, but uses its advanced sense of smell to find lost people that even trained police detectives cannot find. In these instances, the blood hound's non-seeing perception is more accurate than all of the detectives' senses combined. This explains why many police departments have blood

hounds on staff.

* * * *

Our perception and description of the universe is greatly influenced by our senses. Humans categorize and label objects in part by visible colors. Many animals, flowers, gems and even humans are defined by their visible colors.

As defined by the American Kennel Club, a cairn terrier can come in all colors except white. If a cairn terrier is born white, it's not a cairn terrier. It's a West Highland Terrier, a different breed.

If we could see infrared and ultraviolet light our categorizations of objects, including terriers, would be different.

* * * *

If you said you believe that there is a God who purposely created animals, why do you think he gave some animals better eyesight than humans'?

* * * *

Considering, for example, we would have better depth perception and receive more information if we had more eyes, how would you design perfect eyesight? Realize that if we had one hundred eyes all over our body, we would still have limited perspective due to where we stand, our height, etc. What would be perfect eyesight? What about perfect perception? Our physical perception would still be limited if it was just about eyesight. Remember smell, hearing and

other senses. How would you design perfect perception? Are there senses we don't use or know about? Also realize that such advanced perceptual systems would require a bigger, different brain to process and interpret the visual information, and the sensory information would still be interpreted and transformed by the brain.

* * * *

Do you think art is a way to make up for our limited senses? A great painting or movie doesn't just show something, but implies and evokes. A great work of music is more than just physical notes.

Humans have vague ideas, psychological inklings, about the mystery of the universe and life that they cannot fully explain. Art can point to these feelings, point to the mysteries of the universe and to ourselves in different ways than other forms of expression. While not solving the major questions, it can perhaps give insight into them, into humans and the human condition of living in a universe where they cannot know the meaning or what is their purpose on earth.

Artworks are artifacts, showing how humans think and perceive, their physiological abilities and limitations, the questions they have, the human condition. Alien psychologists and scientists from the future would learn about humans from these artifacts.

Is consciousness a real, objective thing, or just one of those human made-up concepts like art? Does conscious exist simply because we define it? Do some things exist simply because they are defined?

Picasso said he wasn't always trying to make a work that was beautiful-- his focus was sometimes on other qualities and things--, and he considered the usual cliched commentaries about the work's beauty, or lack thereof, to be missing the point.

Many of his cubist works were trying to depict three dimensions in a two dimensional plane-- an aesthetic and philosophical dilemma that, really, exists in all two dimensional artworks. Some of his cubist works tried to depict the passage of time in a still image-- another interesting and unsolvable aesthetics problem that exists in all still art, even so-called realistic art.

I don't like Picasso on the 'pretty' level and wouldn't hang one on my wall, but his works bring up significant philosophic, aesthetic and cognitive science questions. All human perceptions and representations of reality are limited, distorted and filled with inconsistencies and his is just a different representation from a different informational angle. So called realistic art is filled with smoke and mirrors, tricks and visual illusions.

If one looks at a Picasso work as a philosophic thing, the question of "Is it beautiful or not?" becomes "Is whether or not it's beautiful a relevant question?" Many artworks are trying to express something other than beauty. Munch's *Scream* is trying express something other than beauty-- and most would say it does a good job at it.

Further, it begs the question of 'Is it art?' a worthwhile question.

What I am doing in this book**Assorted notes on the purpose, structure, philosophy etc of this book**

One major point is this book has many purposes, points and parts, and assuming there is just one meaning or philosophy, structure or aesthetic, or that this short section gives the entire meaning, is incorrect. As with life there are degrees of gray, contradictions, levels, changing of mind and mood, wasting of time, being a snot, points of clarity, points of seriousness and points of silliness, paradoxes, impossibleness, conscious, and subconscious, conflicting things, filler.

One major thing I am concerned with is how humans process ambiguous and complex information, information much that is beyond their capabilities of fully and objectively processing and understanding. Humans use numerous methods, including subjective aesthetics and cognitive biases. It's a complicated topic, humans process and judge information on different simultaneous and often competing methods, and the information being processed is complex and ambiguous. One's interpretation of information can change back and forth moment to moment. The very assumption that there is a 'meaning' to be derived from information is a cognitive bias and a question. In the end, and despite peoples' desires, the information will always

remain ambiguous to humans. Even questions answered don't fully answer the questions and creature further questions.

This book is about the form and philosophy and criticism of books, this book and all books, and art. How humans want complex subjects presented as simple and orderly in books, aesthetic structures, attractive forms, that match their expectations and biases. Attractiveness is often more important to the audience than truth, and often mistaken for truth.

The readers' criticisms of the form and aesthetics of this book are to be critiqued, studied. This also explains why readers complaints about the aesthetics-- out of place parts, lopsidedness, whatever-- often miss the whole point. A work about discord should have discord. There has to be discord to discuss.

From a philosophical, and an aesthetic basis, I rebel against readers using their habitual and cliched aesthetic rules to process information (though that is the only way they can).

From the standpoint of this book, the critiquing of this book by tired aesthetic rules is wrong and shallow— and is not a search for the truth— a truth that is beyond us--- and the book is about critiquing your criticism and concepts-- mine--- all of ours

But of course, I do write in an orderly and structured manner. I mostly write in complete sentences, make the pieces interesting and well written. The overall structure may be aleatory, but the pieces are carefully crafted. It's a paradox, a paradox of communication, the language of art, the limitations of communication. Everything is full of

paradoxes.

As mentioned before, I know that one's philosophy and psychology go hand in hand, so mixing of personal with essay goes hand in hand. Just the philosophical would be fake and limited. And one can't solve philosophy when one hasn't solved oneself.

And if you find certain areas of aesthetic lacking-- and if I was trying to make a sinewy work (which I have done in other short versions) I would have written this differently-- that ties into the aesthetics, reading and organizing of information philosophy-- cheesiness, laziness, bad choices should lead to broader discussions about structure, aesthetics, information processing, books, expressing truths, etc. This is a philosophy and cognitive psychology book after all, a critique and look at those things

Your critiquing of this book, its form and aesthetics and architecture, liking or disliking its style and content and plot, saying it proves its point then goes on too long or repeats the point too many times, saying it should have been composed differently, complaining about filler, is all a part of the book and its philosophy. You are part of it. Others are part of it. You have to critique your method, look at your method, others' methods, of critiquing this book, the aesthetic method of judging information.

On the other hand, and competing, I believe in the power of art, the expanding of the mind through art— how it is a different way of looking things, an emotional intuitive way. And this book does have my artistic vision, in details but also in the whole scope and slabs and aesthetic. Even the anti-

aesthetic is an aesthetic. But art is also a language, with its inherent limitations and subjectiveness and biases and artifice. It is a vehicle like a space ship that must have oxygen and be an artificial world for its inhabitants to travel and survive.

Art is both a limiting and an expansion.

And the truth is beyond us, and different methods of interpreting and reading (say the logical and non-logical) can be used to point in a vague way towards truth, to a truth that is beyond us. This book being messy impossible to solve explores this.

At best (perhaps) we can see the door beyond which truth lies, we can point toward truth, but can't open the door, nor know how far beyond the door it lies.

So I offer various information, that is both informational and off topic— to give the complexity and defy aesthetic ways and logical ways of reading— and to look at the way we interpret it

People who don't understand the universe and their lives want a book to be simple and understandable-- which says they don't think much of books

There are things in this book that only I know what they mean (to me), where they came from. And there are things that are beyond, at least partially, to me.

there are many parts that are topics in and of themselves-- philosophy of time, cognitive science, theory of relativity, invisibility, morals. I would hope that the book could be the source of many varied discussions. I included some chapters because I thought they were interesting topics, and don't

directly tie to the overall theme. As mentioned, this was never intended to be a one topic book. Off topic is on topic

I wanted things to be like life-esque— a novel or movie may be linear and remove the off topic parts— but life is full of boredom, and jokes and off topic things and filler and wasted time and stream of consciousness. Life is full of unfulfilled dreams, unfinished haphazard parts, parts that should have been worked on more, personal failings that haunt you and weaknesses you know you won't correct. There are important things I should have included, parts I should have written out better, but that would be a false depiction. A real life conversation, even between two Harvard professors, is full of colloquialism, grammatical errors and run on sentences. In real life you can't go back to the morning and say the witty retort you should have said, go back and polish things up.

And for off topic facts such as that the cricket's blood is white: that's interesting, why shouldn't it be included? If it's an interesting fact in a science magazine or fact of the day website, it should be interesting here



One of my favorite films noir is Fritz Lang's classic *Scarlet Street* (1945). Includes art forgery, a femme fatale, the execution of the wrong man, unrequited love, a man ice pick murdering the woman he's in love with, attempted suicide and insanity through unbearable guilt. Often called the darkest movie in its vintage genre. The first Hollywood movie to show you can get away with murder ... sort of.



Though a standard period low grade horror movie and Bela Lugosi vehicle, 1942's 'Midnight at the Bowery' is notable as one of the first Hollywood movies to matter-of-factly deal with drug addiction. The pictured side character, played by Lew Kelly, is a discredited and sickly doctor who is addicted to prescription medicine. When a woman questions his self-prescriptions he nervously says "It's good for me. I'm a doctor and I know what's good for me."

Everyone's really an agnostic, because no one really knows.
Belief is an answer to a different question.

* * * *

I walk home after work— a late summer afternoon— I walk
through the neighborhood, along the quiet streets, sidewalks
— the sound of kids playing— a dog barking in the distance
— sheets on a clothesline— and I feel a longing, a sense of
an otherness— I smell it in the breeze— see it in the
shadows of bushes

* * * *

Don't you hate it when you spend like twenty minutes
looking all around for your clothes before you realize you're
wearing them? The only question now is who dressed me?
Oh wait. That's not me. Never mind.

* * * *

When I say it's a long story that usually means it's a short
story I don't want to tell.

* * * *

I unintentionally bought ladies sunglasses at the drug store. I
always wanted to look like Steve McQueen and I look like

Sophia Loren. You take what you can get.

* * * *

On this Thanksgiving I'm thankful for those great Christmas presents I sure as hell better be getting.

* * * *

Giving up traditional aesthetic rules is such a release and makes for superior writing, but the problem is I know that many readers won't give up those rules.

* * * *

Art artificially manipulates the mind. The artist uses symbols, colors, shapes, word play and other techniques to play on the audience's psychology, subconscious. One significant point about this is that it shows that the mind can be artificially manipulated.

* * * *

That humans can be effected by the fake of art, the artificial-- sometimes even more so than reality-- says something significant about the reliability of human aesthetic perception. Human emotions and psychology being a direct path to identifying larger objective truths is at best a dubious notion.

* * * *

Life is short. I didn't say too short.

“What is reality?”

Henry: “It's a word.”

I am writing a novel about a family—In the beginning it has the formal plot— the character development and day to day melodrama— but in the end it all gets lost in the narrator's thoughts

The key to getting what you want from people is to get them to answer Yes or No before you've asked the question.

I don't force my artistic tastes on others. I scatter small pieces on the floor and hope they step barefoot on them.

\

Henry: "You have it wrong. The Nobel Prize in literature is a lifetime achievement. They don't give it for just one book."

David: "But my new novel is 4,000 pages long."

...

Henry: "Maybe they'll introduce a Nobel Prize for mulch."

* * * *

One area I really wish I had more space to write about is artificial intelligence. If this book could be 900 pages, I would have included a perhaps 30 page chapter instead of the 5 or whatever page piece I shoehorned in later in the book

Theoretical artificial intelligence is an important area because it not only looks at the human mind, but is a look at different non-human methods of thinking. Working in artificial intelligence I realize how myopic and shallow is this book about the human mind.

* * * *

Henry: "Of course human IQ tests are biased. Dogs can't hold pencils."

Henry: "What? I calls em as I sees em. If you wanted a yes dog you should have gotten a golden retriever."

Henry: "Someone paid \$56 million for *that*? If someone paid \$56 for that, then put a canvas on the floor and let me make my millions."

My dad was a professor and I once asked him if there was something that could make you lose 60 pounds in 60 days as those ads claim. He thought for a second and said "anthrax."

Anyone who asks if this book qualifies as non-fiction is such a superficial person.

I don't know and I don't care. Category is a checkbox you click when you've finished the book and are submitting the publishing papers.

A freshman geometry book that gives students theoretical examples. Is that fiction or non-fiction and who frigging cares?

Question my taste in music all you want, but you're just a guy and some of the women who like it are pretty cute.

Good grammar can ruin a perfectly good sentence.

Henry: "David is like HAL 9000: Brilliant and cold."
"Didn't he stop the life support of the sleeping humans he
felt might get in the way of his higher mission?"
Henry: "HAL or David?"

There are conflicts, muddiness, in everything human, every philosophy. As the author, I can see areas of intellectual and aesthetic conflict to this book, even as I write them. I can see opposing ideas and methods, all which which I need in the book. It's a problem, but removing one would be worse, make the book dead on arrival. At the least, the conflict provides a fullness, realism.

I'll tell you, there are many reasons for a passage-- and it is wrong to read there as being just one.

But also, for many things it's just there-- my explanation why I do things are often made up after the fact.

But I don't think explaining something should diminish the other aspects. Explaining a joke doesn't change the joke itself, and in fact adds to the story--- expands it-- makes it larger, about other things-- not just the joke, but about the concepts of jokes, humor, communication, psychology, the

aesthetics and cognitive psychology of ruining jokes by explaining them-- and the joke is still in there, written or said in the exact same words

* * * *

I included the wikipedia bios because I wanted some bios, and writing them myself would be a lot of effort-- and why reinvent the wheel?-- plus there's also the alternative narrative—others' third person narratives—plus people questioning the reliability of wikipedia and the questioning of including wikipedia articles and all that. There's a lot involved in the inclusion of the bios, including the peoples' bios. The people weren't picked randomly. There are specific reasons why I chose them.

* * * *

Understanding cognitive psychology, such as shown throughout this book, is an essential part of understanding the theory and philosophy of artificial intelligence for two reasons. One is the human mind is the standard model for artificial intelligence and the second is the scientists, government officials and groups that design, fund and direct artificial intelligence projects are humans full of human psychology. If you read the history of artificial intelligence, you read a history of often silly human conceits.

During a period when AI fell out of favor from government funders, scientists did AI research but simply called it something else to get the funding-- “informatics,” “cognitive systems,” “computational intelligence” and many

others.

During a philosophical dispute between camps on the M.I.T. campus, it was said artificial intelligence professors could not afford to be even be seen at the same lunch table with a particular professor of philosophy who criticized their work. Looking back, a professor said it all was very high schoolish.

* * * *

"Does anyone ever actually understand David's books?"

Henry: "People are under this impression that he writes for humans."

2001: A Space Odyssey

The first time I saw 2001: A Space Odyssey I thought it was the greatest movie I'd ever seen and I didn't know what it was about. I still don't know and still think it is the greatest movie.

My friend Lidia Están said “It is a film about God, or about intelligence. God is intelligence.” An interesting thought.

I say it is about things beyond the human comprehension and the capabilities of the human mind. It can't expose it, but, as with great art, points towards it. *Visa vie* Lidia, it points towards things larger, more intelligent than the human mind. As with great music and paintings, its plot and meaning is at the subconscious level, because what it point towards is beyond our conscious understanding.

This book leaves out very important things essential to make it complete. Slabs of things. I am trying to get myself to heaven.

Simplicity

To humans, simplicity is that which is simple to them. Simple matches one's sensibilities, knowledge, intuition and expectations. If it didn't, it wouldn't be simple. What may be simple to one human may not be to another. What may be simple to humans may be simple only to humans.

Simplicity has long been used by humans to define supposedly absolute things such as cosmic truth, goodness, beauty, logic and purity. There are a number of problems with this. One is there is no proof that cosmic truths, for example, are simple. Another problem is simplicity, and thus what is defined as cosmic truth, is in the eye of the beholder.

Normal, even nonconscious thinking involves simplification, translating complex information into something understandable. Conceits are simplifications.

Your visual perception involves simplification--interpreting a complex scene, grouping and labeling the objects according to your experience, focusing on what you seem to recognize and ignoring what you don't. Visual illusions and mirages shown throughout this book involve simplification. The scene or graphic is translated by the viewer into something understandable, an understandable translation that happens to be wrong. This alone proves that simplicity is not proof of truth, and that truth isn't always simple. Lies are often simpler than truths.

Simplicity, of course, has many practical uses.

Scientists strive for simplicity in theories and testing. A scientific theory that is needlessly complicated will needlessly confuse students and seasoned scientists alike. Needlessly muddled theories are harder to test, study, correct and understand. In our daily life, good verbal communication requires simplicity, including using words, phrases and language the listener understands. If a traveler speaks only English, it does them no good for you to give road directions in Spanish. Road directions in Spanish may be simple to a Spanish speaker, but it's complicated to someone who doesn't know the language.

* * * *

TAMMY: “I can see why Sophy is drawn to you.”

ZOLA: “You saw the photos?”

TAMMY: “What photos?”

ZOLA: “Nevermind Wanna see?”

TAMMY: “I’m leaving now.”

* * * *

SOPHY: “You know, Zoe mentions you.”

TAMMY: “What’s he say?”

SOPHY: “The usual crap.”

TAMMY: “Why do you hang around him?”

SOPHY: “He has a Ferrari.”

* * * *

I did not know many nineteenth century photos were made with eggs. I’m interested now that you told me. I want to know more. How? Now, please enlighten me.

* * * *

And I drink incessantly for months— and my sleep is fitful, shallow— it’s sometimes hard to tell if I’m awake or asleep

— my dreams are frenetic— when I wake, if after 12 hours,
I'm not rested

And it seems to me that the in and out sleep awake states
is a frenetic search, an unsettlingness— a ghost in limbo—

And in the unsettling state an angel, a woman, comes to
save me

“There’s too much sun,” I tell her. “It kills you.”

* * * *

When I say you don't want to know, that means you
probably do want to know but I'm not going to tell you.

* * * *

And in the middle of the night I leave the house and walk
into the snow. Some might call it a suicide, but I
wouldn't . . . That last sentence may not be satisfactory to
readers, but we all have our own untranslatable music

* * * *

One thing I noticed is I have very nice friends. This isn't
coincidental, as I consciously don't hang around people who
are mean or rude.

* * * *

I had a lesbian say she'd date me if she wasn't a lesbian and a
heterosexual man say he'd date me if he wasn't a
heterosexual man. I don't know whether this means I'm
moving closer or further away.

* * * *

Human morality is a hard wired species survival psychology. Different animals that live in different social, geographic and biological situations-- have different survival and reproductive needs-- have different "morality." As expected, humans tend to consider their particular morality to be the *higher* one-- in fact, that's part of their morality. Weighting one's own species above others, and thinking one's view of the universe is the correct one, is the natural tendency to all species.

* * * *

I'm all messed up because my areas of study are beyond human comprehension.

* * * *

You can always find someone who disagrees with each thing I say, each theory I offer. I learned that a long time ago.

You can bet this book is set up to be beyond criticism, at least traditional criticism.

* * * *

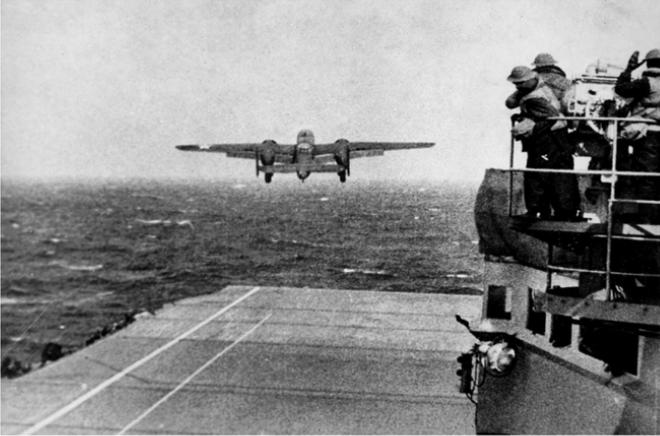
Henry: "The sushi at that restaurant is so fresh I don't know whether to wear a dinner jacket or a shark cage."

* * * *

The only way to get to heaven is through negative space,



Rube Waddell, Hall of Fame baseball player and man child. He was the premier power pitcher of the early 1900s, but when on the pitching mound was easily distracted and mesmerized when opponents and fans on the sidelines held up toys, puppies and shiny objects, once quit in the middle a minor league game to go fishing, and would leave the stadium to chase after firetrucks. The St. Louis Browns owner hired him as a hunter during the off season just to keep him out of trouble.



Did you know? During the April 18 1942 Doolittle Raid on Japan, done in retaliation to the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the American planes didn't have enough gas to return home and crash landed in China and Russia with the surviving crew members having to evade the Japanese troops. Some survivors were captured and executed by the Japanese and some were captured and held by the Russians. The planners and crew members knew beforehand the planes didn't hold enough gas to return.

Cambridge University philosophy professor Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) was acknowledged in his lifetime as a genius and regarded as one of history's most important philosophers, but, according to colleague George Henrik von Wright, he felt that his ideas were misunderstood even by his followers. "He doubted he would be better understood in the future. He once said he felt as though he was writing for people who would think in a different way, breathe a different air of life, from that of present-day men."

Henry: "If you don't make me throw up, literally or figuratively, we'll get along fine."

"What do you mean by figuratively?"

Henry: "No memes with rainbows and hands forming the shape of a heart is a good start."

"Is a unicorn against a sunset acceptable?"

Henry: "Only if the unicorn is being run over by a rototiller."

Most of the models and talk in this book has been about very human and animalistic ways of thinking. Even artificial intelligence and transhumanism are designed by and based on human modes of thinking and biases and are usually designed to serve the human species. Artificial intelligence runs on symbolic language and human logic. This book itself is a standard human document, filled with standard human aesthetics, structures, literary conceits and modes of conception.

What are potential other ways of thinking? Perhaps using groups, other senses, non-language, non-animal ways ways of perceiving and processing information? Think about this. How would you get past the limitation of symbolic language-- or do the advantages of language make up for the limitations? Think of ways beyond our limited human ways-- and artificial intelligence which is just more advanced human ways. How do possible alien minds think? Could it be in a totally different way? Can artificial intelligence or transhumanism ever move past human ways of thinking? Can advanced speed, intelligence and consciousness ever move into new ways of thinking? Can there be a multitasking that makes up for, or at least improves on, our limited ways?

How would you design a better mind or something beyond a mind? Think about this. Don't always be so myopic. What are the moral questions, practical and moral choices in designing minds. Is function more important than knowledge, is survival of the species more important than knowledge? Is knowledge defined by what "humans know"?

Are human desires for aesthetics, sentience, self-preservation and control important, essential? What other questions are there?

The universe is vast, there are many other possible types of minds, perhaps that exist elsewhere, perhaps that are just theoretical. The word universe is itself a constricting term, just as god can be. And a mind is just a device for interpreting the vast universe, the mind itself is itself just a puny, surface topic in ways. Focusing on the mind and minds are topics for people with small aspirations.

Are our very questions about minds, knowledge, intelligence and the universe artifacts of our myopic, deluded human ways of thinking? Does our very way of thinking blind us to essential things?

Identifying the Common Plastics in Vintage Toys, Pins and Other Collectibles



1902 Celluloid baseball pin

Just as buyers want to know if an antique table is made of oak or maple, a wedding ring is gold or brass or a statue is steel or bronze, serious collectors of antique plastic toys, trinkets, figures and jewelry want to know the type of plastic in an item. If you start selling old plastic items online, bidders will ask you the identity of the plastic. Some vintage plastics, including Bakelite and Celluloid, are highly collectible these days.

Beyond general interest, identifying an item as being made from certain plastics shows that it is indeed old, or at least consistent with being old. Bakelite and Catalin, for examples, were discontinued decades ago and will only appear in an old toy or piece of jewelry.

This week's column shows how to identify the five most common plastics used to make many vintage and antique collectibles: **Celluloid, Bakelite, Catalin, Casein and Lucite.**

How to tell plastic from other materials?

Most people have a good feel for what plastic feels like, but glass, crystal, rubber and other materials are sometimes mistaken for plastic. This is particularly true if the item is small, such as a button on a coat, or embedded into a larger object.

Plastic is warmer to the touch than glass, crystal and most gemstones. Just put the object to your cheek to test. Plastic is also usually much lighter. Glass items, such as a wine glass, will have a distinct sound when clicked with the fingernail that plastic does not. Plastic often has a seam, but rubber and glass can too.

The sometimes used hot needle test will often reveal the identity. A red hot pin won't pierce glass or gemstone, but can enter plastic and often gives a distinct plasticity smell. Rubber will give off a rubber smell. Wood will often give off a burnt wood smell. The hot needle test is a destructive test, so it should be done with care, if at all, and only in discreet areas, such as on the bottom. Many collectors do not use the hot needle test as it can leave a small hole.

**** Plastic #1: Celluloid (Made: 1800s to early/mid 1900s)**

Celluloid is the trade name for a plastic that was widely used in the 1800s and early/mid 1900s to make pins, buttons, fountain pens, buttons, toys, dolls and many other collectible products. If you follow antique auctions you will often hear the name mentioned. It was commonly used as an ivory substitute, to make fake ivory toiletry boxes, billiard balls, handles and backings for hand mirrors, combs and brush handles. If you ever see the name 'French ivory' or 'Ivoryne,'

those are other names for antique faux-ivory celluloid. Anne Frank wrote her famous WWII diary with a celluloid pen and describes it in the diary. Many valuable late 1800s and 1900s baseball, political and tobacco pins are celluloid.



Celluloid was often made to resemble ivory



antique celluloid hairbrush resembling ivory

Though widely used in its day, drawbacks to celluloid are it is flammable, fragile and deteriorated with time. Celluloid often has cracking and crazing to the surface, along with toning and yellowing. Due to the common decomposition,

antique celluloid in top condition is prized today.

Though celluloid is sometimes used today to make guitar parts, guitar picks and ping pong balls and, sometimes in recent decades, for rock and political pins, it was discontinued for most everything else decades ago. No modern made toy, figurine or toiletry will be made of celluloid. If a vintage appearing pin, figure or trinket is made out of celluloid, it is likely indeed vintage.



Antique Celluloid and cloth baseball player doll

Identifying celluloid: Antique celluloid tends to be much thinner and lighter in weight than other period plastics. For an antique fake ivory celluloid box, the top and sides will often be noticeable very thin, and the plastic surface to celluloid pins is noticeable thin. You can often see right through the plastic when held it is held up to a bright light.



Anne Frank wrote her diary with a celluloid pen

The easy and reliable test for celluloid is to place it under hot water for a few seconds, then smell it. Or you can rub it vigorously with your finger or a cloth to get the smell. Celluloid smells like camphor or a ping pong ball. Rubbing your finger on a plastic item taking a sniff is quick and simple. You can do it right there in an antique store or at an estate sale.

****Plastics #2 and #3: Bakelite and Catalin (Made: 1907 to WWII)**

Bakelite and Catalin are trade names for closely related plastics that are popularly collected today in the form of old timey radios ('Catalin radios'), colorful jewelry, toys, trophies and more.

Bakelite and Catalin are both made from phenol and formaldehyde, and are phenol formaldehyde resins. Because of this they have many of the same characteristics. However, the two were made in different ways so also have distinct

differences.



antique trophy with bakelite base

Bakelite was made from 1907-27. It used a filler of cloth, paper, cotton and even sometimes asbestos. This meant the plastic was heavy, strong, opaque and came in only dark colors. Bakelite usually came in only black and brown, and was used often used for ‘utilitarian’ purposes, including pipe fittings, coffee pot handles, electrical outlets and the bases to antique trophies.



Brightly colored Catalin toy motorcycle

When Bakelite’s patent ran out in 1927, the process was

picked up by the American Catalin Company which called their version of the plastic Catalin. The American Catalin Company used the same phenol formaldehyde chemicals, but made the plastic in a different way. In particular, no fillers were used. This meant that, unlike the dark and dreary Bakelite, Catalin was often translucent and made in a wide variety of bright colors and interesting designs, including a marble of different colors. Catalin was used for more fun, decorative and collectible items, including jewelry, toys, trinkets, decorated boxes, brightly colored radios. Catalin tended to shrink with age, which explains the sometimes warped and shrunken frames for Catalin radios. Catalin was made from 1928 to about World War II.



Old time Catalin radios are popularly collected

Collectors and dealers mixing up the names.

As the plastics are so closely related, collectors and dealers often get the names mixed up, calling Catalin Bakelite, and Bakelite Catalin. Most so-called 'Bakelite jewelry' on the market actually is Catalin. Some sellers on eBay and elsewhere play it safe and call it 'Bakelite Catalin.'

The good thing is both plastics are vintage (1907-WWII), so if you know its one of the two but aren't sure which, you can at least be confident the item is old. You can even use the catch all 'phenol formaldehyde resin' to cover them both, though that might not sound as romantic at sale.



Vintage Catalin radio with a marbled texture

Identification of Bakelite and Catalin

First I'll show the tests to used to identify phenol formaldehyde-- meaning both Bakelite and Catalin. Then, once something is identified as phenol formaldehyde, we'll look at how to differentiate between the two.

Bakelite/Catalin general appearance: Bakelite and Catalin are both heavy and clunky. They make a distinct sound when two pieces are clinked against each other. Visually, there should be no seams or mold marks. There is no pure white, as the whites formed a yellowish patina with time.

Bakelite/Catalin hot water and rub test: Hold the plastic under hot water for perhaps 15 seconds, then smell it. If it smells strongly like medicinal chemicals, then it likely is Bakelite/Catalin. Though it doesn't work as well, you instead can rub the plastic with your fingers and sniff for the strong medicinal smell.

'French Bakelite,' a mostly modern made faux-Bakelite that is Casein (described later in this article).

Bakelite/Catalin polish test: The common metal polisher called simichrome polish can help identify Bakelite/Catalin. If you rub a q-tip with simichrome polish on Bakelite or Catalin, the polish on the q-tip will turn yellow. Simichrome polish is available at many hardware

stores and online. The same test works with Dow Bathroom Cleaner or 409. Only do the test in a discreet area.



Bakelite tends to be dark colors, such as with this dark brown football pin.

So, then, is it Bakelite or Catalin?

If you can determine an item is phenol formaldehyde, the next question is is Bakelite or Catalin. If you know the date of the item, then it's easy. Bakelite: 1907-1927. Catalin: 1928-1940s. Bakelite only comes in dark colors, usually black or brown. Catalin can come in a wide variety of color colors, including bright colors (yellow, pink, red, etc) and marbling. Bakelite is opaque, while Catalin is often translucent. If the item is brightly colored jewelry or other items, it is more than probably Catalin.

**** Plastics #4: Casein (1800s to today)**

Casein plastic was a popular plastic developed at the end of the 1800s and used throughout the 1900s. Casein is a powdered milk. For Casein in plastic form, the powder was

mixed into a paste then hardened by putting it in formaldehyde.

Casein was originally made in Europe and sometimes called **galalith**, a name you still see from time to time. Casein was hard, could be polished and colored to imitate materials such as ivory. Casein was used for jewelry and fountain pens, but is most commonly found in the form of knitting needles and buttons.

Casein is easily identified by putting it under hot water for a few seconds as it will smell like burnt milk.

As Casein was used over such a long period of time, it's presence won't prove an item old, but you at least know it was available in antique times.

** **Plastics #5: Lucite**



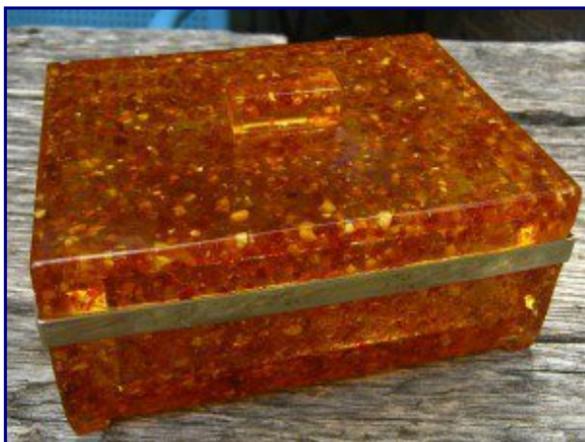
Vintage pendant with plant leaves embedded in transparent lucite

Lucite was a popular early form of plastic that is still used today. While transparent in its natural state, Lucite can be made opaque and translucent, dyed many possible colors, molded and embedded with objects, so comes in a wide and

sometimes wild variety of colors and looks. In vintage times, it was used to make everything from plastic toys to jewelry.

Identifying Lucite:

Lucite has a slick feel and is fairly light weight. It is lighter in weight than Catalin. If you put Lucite under hot water or rub it vigorously, it has no smell.



Vintage confetti Lucite box with confetti and shavings embedded in the Lucite

As Lucite was made for over a long time, it can be hard to be sure if a Lucite item is old or new. The most common way to identify vintage Lucite is by the style. Vintage styles include marble and granite-style Lucite (has a distinct marble or granite multi-coloring), clear Lucite with objects embedded in it (such as plants, bugs, trinkets), confetti Lucite which is clear Lucite with glitter inside objects inside, and moonglow which seems to glow under light.



Vintage lucite could be colored and molded into many shapes and designs. This is a vintage bracelet.

Your idle philosophic question of the day:

“If you choose to do something randomly does that mean it isn't random because you chose?”

Does choosing to do something randomly mean it isn't random?

The answer is it isn't random, because you chose. But, as with many philosophical puzzles, it's also word trickery, because if it isn't random (which it isn't, at least according to me) the “do something random” wasn't ever random. The question itself is gobblygook. As with many pop philosophical questions, the correct answer involves analyzing the question itself. As noted elsewhere in this book, many so called deep philosophical conundrums are really just wordplay and shell games.

If you chose the question's scenario that the 'randomly' is random, then it's random. The scenario that you accepted specifically says it's random. You can't logically say something is both random and not-random. "The randomness is not random" is an illogical statement. ... If you want to say the question is at odds with itself ("Choice' versus 'random'? Come now. Which is it? It can't be both. If you choose it isn't random and if it's random you didn't choose. You can't have choice and random in the same scenario.") and is an oxymoron, I'll accept that. I think there is valid reason to say the question itself is illogical ... Some will say nothing is random-- there's no such thing as

'randomly' and even the 'random key' on a calculator doesn't really pick a random number-- so it's a bogus question in that way.

My answer is I think the question itself is illogical and there likely is no such thing as randomness anyway. A nonsensical question on two fronts . . . Which was my original point. In philosophy, always question the question. You can't find a logical answer to an illogical question, nor a clean answer to a muddy question.

An added and likely not unexpected wrinkle to this is I discovered different people have different definitions of random. I posed the question to an engineering professor and he had a less stringent definition of random than I.

He said that if someone is ignorant to the outcome it's random. I said being ignorant of a pattern doesn't mean the pattern doesn't exist.

He also said that according to his definition rolling dice is random, because the rolling of the dice was random within the set parameters of numbers. I said at best that was "random within non-random parameters" or "qualified randomness." I compared it to planning a trip to Paris and saying "Once we get there we will go to random places." I said the trip is hardly random, as taking a planned trip to Paris is hardly a random event. We agreed to disagree.

If you accept the engineering professor's randomness definition, the original question is not illogical and you can choose to have a random situation. You can compartmentalize choice and randomness. I won't agree with your definition, but there's at least one engineering professor out there who will.

“You just like to breaks the rules.”

Henry: “What rules?”

I've recently learned to not make any jokes about my love life as some people take the jokes as truthful. They are truthful, but I don't like people to think they are.

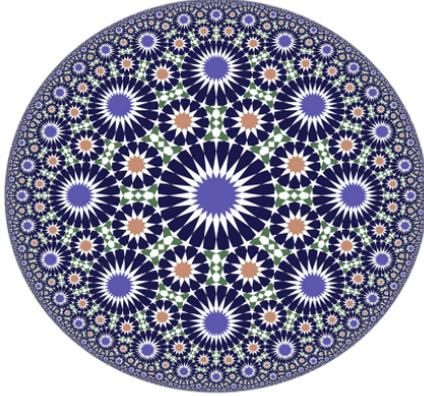
Art Perception and Beliefs

Our definitions and appreciations of art involve our personal philosophies about art and even politics and religion. People see different purposes for art. Some see art as personal expression, others want it to support common social ideals and order. Some people want to be merely entertained, while others like to be challenged. Some are open to new ideas and experiences, while others judge art by how it reinforces their preconceived philosophies. Some require historical and factual accuracy in a movie, while other appreciate that facts are sometimes fudged for aesthetic purposes.

Art and aesthetics are often used for social order. Dictators have glorifying statues and murals and set laws for what is acceptable art. Religions use art to promote their beliefs. Artists who deviate from the aesthetic rules are often deemed as social dangerous. Abstract and other modern art has often been labeled as degenerate by the powers that be. Society pressures people to dress and style their hair in certain ways. People willingly dress to belong to or rebel against groups. How you dress says a lot about what you believe.

Religious beliefs influence artistic form. In early Christian culture, the importance was given to the afterlife not life on earth. A result was the early Christian art was not realistic. On the other hand, early Chinese religions were centered on nature and the early Chinese art had much more focus on and realistic depictions of nature. By Islamic belief, artwork is flawed compared to the work of God. It is thought

that attempting to depict the realistic form of an animal or person is religious heresy. Thus Islamic art often lacks realistic humans and other animals, and is noted instead for its intricate and elaborate patterns and designs.



Islamic design

When a lawyer in a television press conference says "My client never (lied to his family, cheated or stole anything in his life, thought bad thoughts about his country), I often wonder why a reporter doesn't say "How would you know?"

“Why do people who are always upbeat and positive about things bug you so much?”

Henry: “Because I know they are liars.”

Subjective Categorization, Grouping And Prioritizing of Information

When a human being visually perceives, she mentally organizes, sorts, groups, prioritizes and labels the things in the scene. When you look at an ink sketch, you mentally assemble the ink lines, squiggles and dots into a form. “It’s a kitty cat.” “It’s a cottage in the woods.” You decide which ink marks belong together and how, and which do not. Two people can and do group the ink markings differently.

A Rorschach ink blot is perceived differently by different people. The ink blot remains the same. The viewer changes. Rorschach ink blots are used by psychiatrists and psychologists to learn about an individual’s mind.

The human is never just an observer of a scene, but an active participant in creating his or her perception. The viewer picks out what information is deemed important and what is not. When someone labels a photo as “a group of kittens,” the label has grouped kittens together and disregarded other visible information (background pillow, wall, grass, toy). The picking out of kittens alone as the label shows us the viewer’s priorities.

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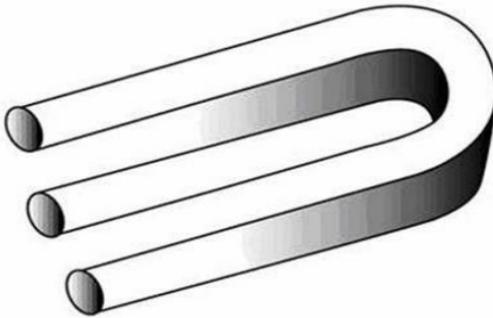
A human does not and cannot simultaneously focus on all information in a scene. Humans don’t have the mental

capacity. Humans focus on some things and ignore others. When you enter a room, your eyes are drawn to something or things. Perhaps you focus on the gracious hosts, perhaps a statue to the side. If there is a rat in the middle of the floor, your immediate perception will be of the rat and not of the rose wallpaper.

If you enter the room and there is an attractive nude, you likely won't notice what is on the coffee table. You might not even notice the coffee table. After blushing and excusing yourself and scooting out of the room, you may not recall the existence of a coffee table, but it was there right in front of your eyes.

This focus, and the resulting perception, is your creation.

* * * *



Is it three bars or a horse shoe?

With the *impossible trident* visual illusion, the viewer forms a perception about the whole from looking at just one end.

When she looks at the other end, she realizes her extrapolation was wrong. Unlike the examples from the earlier chapter on imagination, there is no missing

information. All of the information is there for the eyes to see, but the viewer forms her initial perception as if information is hidden. She mentally hides the information herself.

* * * *

If you ask someone to group and prioritize things in a picture, you will see both her biases and how she perceives. The perception will be just as much about the viewer as the picture.

* * * *

The viewer's purpose shapes perception. A person going to look at the art will have a different perception of the museum than someone merely stopping by to use bathroom. A kid visiting to do a report on sculpture will have a different perception of the art than a kid doing a report on paintings. If they visit different areas of the museum and enter different doors, they may have different ideas about the building's architecture.

The purpose is formed before the scene is viewed, meaning a perception is partially predetermined.

* * * *

Language

Language is a common way to organize, label and perceive objects and ideas. Native language is something we learned as infants, talk, think and even dream in. Our native language has profound influence on how we look at the world.

Different languages give different emphasis, meaning, aesthetics, sounds and, perhaps most important, categories to things. As one perceives and thinks in part through categorizing (cats belong as one group, dogs belong as one group, magazines as another), native linguistic categories influence even nonconscious perception. It influences how we imagine things when our eyes are closed.

An elemental example of difference between languages is when a person in Atlanta Georgia and a person in Rome Italy read the same word 'pizza,' yet imagine different things. A pizza in Georgia is different than a pizza in Italy. If you asked the two to identify a pizza at a market, they might point to different objects. The Italian may say of the Georgian's choice, "You're crazy. That's not pizza. Let me read the label ... *Tombstone ... Do not defrost before cooking ... remove cellophane ... Glenview Illinois ...* You Americans might know Slim Whitman and Gilligan's Island, but you know nothing about pizza. Come to Rome and I'll show you pizza."

Many differences are more subtle. For example, different cultures do not always categorize color alike. Different languages can and do have a different number of names for colors. This means a particular name, say red or green, will apply to a different range of wavelength on the visible light spectrum. It's the same total light spectrum of color for both cultures, but the different numbers of names divide the spectrum into a different size pieces. Like cutting two identical pizzas, one into nine pieces and the other into seven. The pizzas are identical except one has fewer and bigger pieces. In one culture, 'red' can cover a different range of color than the equivalent word 'red' in another culture. What you call red, a person on another continent

may or may not call red.

Even within a culture, people often categorize colors differently. This is commonly done in the marginal areas, such as aqua blue, dark orange versus red, magenta versus pink. It is probable that you perceive some borderline colors differently than your spouse, friend or co-workers. If two friends define colors differently, they may believe they are talking about different cloth swatches when they are talking about the same one. Or they may believe they are talking about the same swatch when they are talking about different.

This between friends difference can be because they don't have the exact same color vision and that they never had a serious discussion about what are the boundaries of aqua blue, or what constitutes badius, brunneous and gamboges. I don't recall ever having an instructor teach the exact boundaries of aqua blue, aqua marine or magenta, not even in art class. I doubt I ever had an instructor who knew the exact boundaries.

As humans commonly communicate, learn and conceptualize the abstract through words, different interpretations of words often lead to conflicts. What may at first appear to be a visual illusion or even mental illness in a person may be a difference in culture.

An American joke is "Never ask for Squirt on an English airline." To Americans, Squirt is a brand of lemon/lime soda pop. To the English the word means urine.

I think it's safe to order 7Up.

So, if a tree falls when no one's around does it make a sound or doesn't it?

Many arguments are not caused by disagreement over the main ideas, but that the arguers unknowingly define terms differently. Arguers may have different definitions of war, peace, work week, formal attire, animal, automobile, tall, stiff drink and sexy, even though they both assume they are using identical definitions. Once the parties mutually set the definitions (which they didn't do in the beginning), they are often surprised to discover how much they agree with each other. Many arguments, many conundrums, many philosophical debates exist simply because parties never thought to mutually define terms.

An age old question is "If a tree falls in the woods and no one is around to hear, does it make a sound?"

The answer to this question depends on what is the definition of *sound*, and a key to the discussion is the determination of what sound means.

Is sound defined by the act of a human or other animal hearing? Or can a sound exist with none around to hear it? It would seem the smart thing to start by looking up the word *sound* in a dictionary.

I looked in one dictionary and two encyclopedias. One encyclopedia said that sound is defined by the ear detecting (hearing) the vibrations in the air. This would mean the tree in the question would make no sound if no one is around. The other encyclopedia and the dictionary defined sound as the vibrations itself, whether or not someone is around to hear them. By this definition, the tree would make a sound

even if no one was around.

As you see, the famous tree debate isn't a matter of philosophy but of word definition. The difference between "Yes, it makes a sound" and "No, it doesn't make a sound" can come down to the arbitrary choice of definition, the outvoting of 2 reference books to 1, the flipping of a coin. Depending on what definitions used, the answer of Yes and No can describe the same forest scene. Is one sound definition superior than the other? Not that I can see. They're just different.

People also have differing definitions of the word *one* in '...no one is around to hear...' Some people think deer, birds and mice count as ones, while others think only humans count. The definition of *one* can also determine whether the answer to the question is Yes or No.

Certain words have strong connotations in a culture, and people intentionally play around with the definitions so they can apply words as they desire. If *patriot* is a popular label, people will fiddle with the definition so that they are defined as patriots and their enemies are not. If patriot is an unpopular label, the same people would define the word so that their enemies are patriots and they are not. These shameless self serving manipulations of definitions are common during political campaign season, but also during our daily lives. What may be a *lie* when someone else does it, is a *fib* if you do it.

Notice these instances involve people being emotionally attached to a word no matter how it is defined. It's word numerology.

When I was in high school, the quarterback for the football team came to school wearing a pink sweater. He spent the day saying, "No, it's coral."

Did you know?

During his life, JS Bach was better known as a church organist than a composer. His compositions were considered old fashioned. Twentieth century pianist and Bach champion Glenn Gould said Bach was such a genius he wasn't tied to an era, even if that meant going backwards.

Fresh start. Where to start. Out with the old, in with the new.
Sitting on a corn flake. Coo Coo Ca Choo.

* * * *

It's time to get a job so I can retire.

* * * *

SOPHY: "I can't always tell where Zoe is being serious and
where he is joking."

ZOLA: "Me neither."

* * * *

Heck, when I read this book I read it differently than the
author.

* * * *

Henry: "Interesting. I never realized I was a dog. That
explains why my allergist isn't an MD."

* * * *

"Writers are suppose to write for a specific audience. When
David writes, what is his intended audience?"

Henry: "People who find him brilliant and funny."

* * * *

That my eyes are so blue doesn't mean I think I'm better than you. It's other reasons.

I'll give you the full list if you want. Just let me make sure I can find my stapler.

#131: My stapler is shinier than yours.

“It may have happened years ago, but it's new to me.”

"How come you smirk whenever I say mean things to you?"
Henry: "Because I've seen into the future and know how you die."

I fear being poached for my heart of gold. Elephants have it easy. Tusks are on the outside.

Evidently gold is an aphrodisiac to Asian bankers.

They said they only wanted my heart. They'd let me keep my corpse.

* * * *

"Does your work in cognitive science overlap your work in art authentication?"

"Yes, in that some collectors are idiots and should have their heads examined."

* * * *

My dad and I were once on an airplane and, guessing we were father and son, the stewardess said "You look so much like each other." We were both offended.

* * * *

What does it say visa vie defining and identifying art that your enjoyment and appreciation of a work often changes viewing to viewing or listening to listening, often back and forth?

Logic versus Art, Facts versus Fiction in Explaining Higher Ideas

In the 1985 movie Ladyhawke, two lovers were cursed, he to be a wolf at night and she to be a hawk during day. They could not be human together.

Humans perceive and interpret the world in many ways. Humans think of things rationally, irrationally, consciously, subconsciously, emotionally, intuitively, directly, indirectly, aesthetically, figuratively, literally, 'from the head and from the heart'-- in a varying combination of these and more all at once. A human can think rationally one moment and be emotionally swept up by a song on the radio the next. Math professors fall head over heels in love and abstract painters calculate their taxes. A great movie is sometimes enjoyed on the intellectual and visceral levels.

A human's best possible exploration, understanding and expression of the universe use all the levels. An interpretation of the universe through only mathematics or only music is inherently limited. Many things in the world can't be explained with mathematics-- love and beauty for examples--, just as mathematics can't be explained with love and beauty. An explanation using just one level is flawed.

This chapter touches on two standard and distinct ways humans try to explain and study the complex world: the rational/factual essay and art. One is based on reason and logic (rational/factual explanation). The other has its meaning in the irrational (art). Each is a worthwhile method

of communication yet limited and different in what it can express.

* * * *

Rational explanation

Humans often find it important to explore subjects and ideas logically and with unbiased facts. A rational fact-based essay uses reason and, well, logic. It tries to remove emotion, whims, logical fallacies, subjectivity and, except when the clearly identified as such, the author's opinion. The language of a logical essay or book itself is expected to be free of logical fallacies and linguistic muddiness.

* * * *

Logical essay

In proofing the logical essay, the writer and proof reader make sure that statements are consistent. As statements are built upon statements, even small logical fallacies can undercut the entire essay.

The following are examples of checking the logic of statements.

Statement #1: "Jenny has only one brother. Thus, her brother has only one sibling."

Analysis of statement #1: Incorrect, should be rewritten. If Jenny has a sister, then the second statement would be untrue, as John would then have more than one sibling. While John may indeed only have one sibling, the first sentence does not prove the second.

Statement #2: "Jenny's favorite type of fruit over all other fruit is the orange. Thus, the banana is not her favorite

fruit."

Analysis of #2: The statement is logically correct.

* * * *

Art

Opposed to the logical essay, the essential meaning of art is based in irrationality. While a work of art has an underlying and often even logic-related structure, the essential meaning is irrational-- sublimeness, profound beauty, aesthetic taste, emotional response. Art produces a profound psychological, sometimes visceral effect on the audience and it is here where the meaning exists.

This irrational meaning is illustrated by the wordless music you love. There is nothing logical or rational in the sounds or the emotional reaction you get from them. The aesthetic experiences exist beyond reason.

* * * *

Art

Artists intentionally subvert logic, reason, objectivity and reality to produce the desired psychological effect in the audience.

Many paintings intentionally distort reality. Look at paintings by Picasso, Dali, Cezanne, Jackson Pollock and Renoir. Even the 'realistic' paintings of the 1300s have impossible dimensions, odd looking humans and made up visual stories. Classic movies and novels have unreal plots, characters, timing and effects. Some are fairy tales and some are science fiction.

To produce the desired emotions in the audience most movies have music sound tracks. In real life many of the scenes portrayed would have no full symphonic accompaniment. Washington crossing the Delaware, man lost alone in the middle of the desert, Humphrey Bogart walking a deserted street. Most movie music is a calculated distortion of reality for psychological purposes.

Isn't there something bizarre about musical accompaniment for a National Geographic documentary about insects? What does synthesizer or orchestral arrangement have to do with ants? The answer is it has nothing to do with ants, and everything to do with the audience's psychology.

* * * *

Art is so different than the real world that its truth is derived from lies. Shakespeare's Hamlet is made up. Of Mice and Men is a figment of John Steinbeck's imagination. Picasso once said, "Art is a lie that tells the truth."

* * * *

An irreconcilable conflict exists between art and the rational essay. One requires rationality and the other involves irrationality. Each subverts the other.

* * * *

Logic

An inherent problem with the rational factual essay is that, despite the author's intentions, it can never be free of the

things the author wishes it to be free of-- subjectiveness, irrationalness and arbitrariness.

The author has personal taste about writing style, structure, pacing and overall presentation. A writer can't write or think without using a plethora of conceits, some chosen, some nonconscious, some inborn. A writer can't visualize things in his mind without biases, personal and cultural ways of grouping, labeling and conceptualizing. Writers take into consideration the conceits of the audience, as the point of the essay is to communicate. Even the seemingly perfectly logical equation $1 + 1 = 2$ demonstrates human taste in the spacing, balance, linearity, colors. Many

would rewrite "1 + 1 = 2" as "1 + 1 = 2." The equations mean the same thing, so the reason for the change is aesthetic. Pure mathematicians will be the first to tell you that math can be beautiful and ugly, and that their research is influenced by aesthetics. In practice, human logic and philosophy has its own art.

* * * *

Facts versus aesthetics in a biography

The subject of the biographical movie or book is or was flesh and blood, a life filled with measurable facts: dates, times, durations, amounts, heights, geography, quotes, test scores, employment records, mailing addresses. Yet a strict recitation of facts will not wholly represent the person and her life, much less engage the audience. A person is much more than facts and dates. Character, personality, aesthetic vision (perhaps the subject was a great artist), beliefs, faiths, mental conflicts, contradictions, urges, dreams, fears, subjective

experiences, nonconscious, desires.

A famous composer might say, "If you want to know who I am, listen to my music. That's all you need." A woman might say, "If you want to know about me, forget about my high school transcript and the conversations I have with my boss. Watch my favorite movie. If you don't get the movie, you'll never understand me." Her favorite movie probably was made by someone she never met, perhaps who died before she was born, the movie isn't about her, perhaps takes place in a country or even planet she's never been too and may not have a single character that resembles or acts like her or even speaks her language.

Even when distorting facts and logic and time, a biography that is a work of art can, at least in a way, be a better representation of the subject, his deeper personality and vision. This type of biography is an aesthetic or psychological representation of the person, as a Cezanne painting is a figurative representation of a landscape. Cezanne didn't intend or expect for the viewer to take the painting literally.

The essential problem in the biography is that to create this psychological representation, one must distort the literal truth. And to tell the literal truth, one destroys this aesthetic truth. The biographer needs the two to exist together, but they cannot.

* * * *

This conflict is an example that shows how there are things beyond our intelligence and consciousness, and that we are trying to understand them using sparse and too limited of

tools. We are looking at something from different narrow views, with the views giving different, conflicting ideas.

There is the also the unanswerable question of if the conflict is an indication that the unified truth is beyond our understanding or if there is no single truth. Humans have a bias towards wanting a unified truth, but perhaps there are multiple truths. Perhaps there are many different truths, some or all that conflict with each other. Perhaps there is no meaning(s) or truth(s), and, like 'art,' those terms are merely human conceptions-- and that's why humans can't find "truth" and "meaning."

No matter how hard you think, you won't be able to answer these questions. They are beyond the limits of our minds.

Have I ever forgiven you? I was striving for a point where I'd be indifferent.

Did you know? Beethoven's 3rd Symphony wasn't played by several major symphonies for decades because it was considered immoral. It broke the rules.

I often find it fascinating that wordless musical compositions, and non-representational art, can be deemed immoral and politically deviant.

Influential but controversial Princeton psychologist Julian Jaynes said that consciousness is not just thinking, but thinking and being aware that one is thinking. He said only modern humans have consciousness, and that other animals and early humans do/did not. He said that many famous ancient human stories, including the Iliad, were written by humans who didn't have consciousness . . . When Jaynes came out with his most famous book on the subject, some academics said he was a genius while many others said he was a crack-pot. An Oxford professor said the book was either the work of a consummate genius or complete rubbish, he wasn't sure which.

Along these lines, this book tries to get the reader beyond just critiquing this book, especially on an aesthetic or traditional literary level, to critiquing their critiquing and critiquing critiquing. Those who merely read and critique this book-- pick out the literary faux pas-- are working at a shallow level of consciousness and intelligence.

Duly note that this does not mean the book shouldn't be read on a literary, aesthetic level-- it is an artistic and aesthetic, at times visceral, expression--, just that that isn't the only level it should be read at. Jaynes said consciousness is thinking and being aware of one is thinking, not just being aware.

Also duly note that I never said I entirely subscribed to

Jaynes' theories. I don't. I know dog and cat owners who don't subscribe to the theory that animals don't have consciousness.

Henry: "Sure I'm Christian. He's my Overlord and The Master."

"Hmm. I think you're mixing up your mythologies a bit there."

Modigliani, Whose Nudes Are Ranked by Bulliet With the Greatest



"Reclining Nude," by Amadeo Modigliani (Italian: 1884-1920).

Modigliani, who gallantly recorded his own visions of beauty and remains a distinct personality in modern art, is the subject of the January exhibition at the Galleries of Mrs. Cornelius J. Sullivan, New York. Eleven paintings and numerous drawings assert the force of his art which was kindled by the primitives of his native Italy, the resonant paintings of Botticelli, and the strange and powerful forms of Congo Negro sculpture.

C. J. Bulliet, in "Apples and Madonnas," declares that Modigliani's nudes "may be ranked ultimately with the great ones of all time—with Giorgione's 'Sleeping Venus,' Titian's 'Venus Awake,' Goya's 'Maja' (nude and even more impudently clothed), with Manet's sensational wanton in the Louvre. Universal judgment is scarcely ready yet for the 'distorted' female, with greatly elongated torso, monster eyes and lengthened face—yet, withal, possessing a fascinating loveliness, that is reminiscent of Botticelli."

Modigliani's drawings shown by Mrs. Sullivan recall his adventures in sculpture. Thomas Craven in "Modern Art" tells of his friendship with Brancusi and Epstein whose work, plus the acquisition of an African mask, led him to experiment in the round. "Modigliani had," writes Craven, "to some extent, the sculptor's approach to form; his drawings resembled a sculptor's notes; that is to say, he reduced the figures to a balanced arrangement of geometrical units; his paintings, one and all, were based on the style of negro statues."

All the work of Modigliani, carries the stamp of his intense personality, the various strains of influence serving to heighten his own aesthetic statements. His "pure and wistful conceptions" express his own spirit even more

than the friends whom he painted. Impetuous, he worked at fever pitch when some new personality fired his ambition, and dissipated when the spark died out. Modigliani possessed a magnetic force which won him many friends both in his spasmodic enthusiasm and his days of poverty.

Born in Italy in 1884 he came from a family of wealth and culture. Amadeo contracted an illness in his youth which led to tuberculosis. His mother encouraged the youth's interest in painting and arranged for his studies at Rome, Venice and Florence. Rebellant to formal instruction, Modigliani was impatient to go to Paris there to create his own style which should be as fresh and simple as the Italian primitives. Fortified by his mother's blessing and a few bank notes the young painter, half Italian, half Semitic, came to Paris in 1906. Fervid activity alternated with restlessness and ill health. In the cafes and studios he discussed art with Picasso, Maillol, Matisse, Vlaminck, Soutine, Kisling, Leger, Rivera, Guillaume and other practitioners of his day. He has been called the "last of the Bohemians."

Although Modigliani left some 500 paintings and innumerable drawings, his life in Paris was a gradual down-slope. He had no knack with dealers and sold very few of his works. Unable to pay his rent he accepted the generosity of artists who shared their miserable lodgings with him. What money he had went for drinks or drugs until he was eventually overtaken by his illness. He died in 1920.

While Modigliani's aesthetic conceptions have been echoed in the work of subsequent artists, his work is respected more because it expresses a personal hypothesis than for its influence on the stream of art.

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FANTASTIC ZANIES OF PAINTER'S BRUSH

Dadaism and Surréalism Embraced in Bewildering Exhibit

The Marx Brothers of the art world are displayed, in all their unrestrained glory, in an exhibition of Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism at the Museum of Modern Art in New York this week.

Many visitors, to whom Surrealism* is just another ism, and Dada** has always been the first word burred by an infant, were bewildered enough by the 700-odd paintings and objects that abound throughout the Museum's four floors (see cut).

"If these guys are right, I don't want to be," one viewer remarked to his companion.

But they felt their last grip on sanity slipping when they discovered two old friends and stand-bys included with the zanies of brush and canvas—Walt Disney, Mickey Mouse's mentor, and Rube Goldberg (weighted in the catalog under the dignity of Reuben Lucius Goldberg), creator of the incredible comic-strip scientist, Prof. Lucifer Gorgonzola Butts, A. K.

Disney is represented by a wolf pacifier, four frames from his animated film, "Three Little Wolves." Goldberg offers three apocryphal inventions: a bait-digger for fishing; an automatic lather brush for barbers; a device for keeping buttonhole flowers fresh.

*SURREALISM daubed Paris during unrest following World War, was defined by its leader, André Breton, as: "Pure psychic automatism, by which it is intended to express, verbally, in writing or by other means, the real process of thought. Thought's dictation, in the absence of all control exercised by the reason and outside all esthetic or moral preoccupations. Surrealism rests in the belief in the

Tho Goldberg's absurdities seem a part of the twentieth century, there are two entries in the show that parallel his humor while predating him by centuries. Filippo Morghen concocted a Machine for Bisecting an Opossum, and made an etching of it in 1764. And in the early 1800's, an unknown Italian artist recorded devices he called New Machine for Cutting Too Long Tongues at a Fixed Price, and Machine for Perfecting the Body Free of Charge. He painted the plans in gay water-colors.

When most visitors arrived at the point where they felt like Alice at the Mad Hatter's Tea Party, they were face to face with a drawing her author, Lewis Carroll, had run up—a *facsimile* illustration from the original manuscript showing Alice underground.

Other eye-popping items:

A fur-lined and covered teacup, saucer and spoon, lent by the artist, Meret Oppenheim.

Man Ray's (French photographer and painter) nine-foot-wide, two-foot-high canvas of a well-rouged mouth floating in a cloudy sky. The same artist's painting "Eye," a human sight organ in which the iris is a mass of clouds and blue sky, caused as much disturbance.

Locomotive—"Agog" and "Mask," submitted by Wallace Putnam. The former is the artist's interpretation of a locomotive, head-on, made of such items as an inverted lamp-

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-the first of three pages-

What GARBO Think of HOLLYWOOD



The two Greta Garbos that make up one of the most romantic and glittering figures in all screen history. At the left is a plain girl, with simple tastes, who lives her own life and minds her own business. She likes children, and funny stories, and is timid in a crowd. At the right is the other Garbo—glittering, mysterious, exotic. The Greta of the screen whose allure is so powerful a magnet that she is talked about by millions of fans

A WISE man in one of his profound moments said that it isn't what people say that matters—it is what they do!

And it's lucky that this is so. For the actions of Greta Garbo, even without the speech that she withholds so energetically, gives us the key to the strange mosaic that is this stranger woman from over the Northern sea.

It has been said of Garbo that the story of her conquest of America is that of the neurotic triumphant.

Don't misunderstand the word "neurotic." A neurotic person is not always one given to neurotic tremors or other obvious symptoms. A neurosis may often find its outlet in moodiness—aloofness—and an escape into a dream world.

An escape into a dream world! Or a world of the screen? Could Garbo love Hollywood? Does it fit into the dream world where she finds rest for her spirit? Instead of courting it, she avoids and shuns it. She takes no part in its life. The beauties of our Western land leave her unmoved. She was not even impressed by the noble, majestic Yosemite. She ordered her chauffeur to drive faster through its glories.

"Those mountains are pretty high," was her comment. The obvious thing to say is that she is two personalities rolled into one.

There is that person up there on the screen. And then there is the Swedish

girl called Greta who likes her native food and loves anchovies, is always cold, suffers from insomnia, wears bedroom slippers between scenes, loves jazz music but hates dancing, is five feet, 6 inches tall, weighs 125 pounds and wears size seven double-A shoes, likes solid substantial furniture and hates feminine gossams, but adores children, has a big hearty laugh, likes to hear funny stories, invests her money wisely and is frugal as a Scotchman, but is terrified of meeting strange people and is actually timid and embarrassed in a crowd.

The screen Garbo is somebody else, a vague, exotic mystery woman.

It is not true that the publicity department has built up a Garbo myth, but it is true that the busy press-agents at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer have helped the idea along. And the fact that she does not grant interviews and that she draws within herself and keeps secluded is as good a stunt as sending a lion around the world. However, Garbo really IS mysterious, although she hates the legend about herself.

What goes on within her mind as she paces up and down the set, back and forth, you nor I will ever know. She may be thinking the most profound of thoughts. She may only be wondering if her herring will be chopped properly for dinner. It is more amusing to believe that she is contemplating life and cosmic love.

By Katherine Albert



The GARBO Mystique

Though she is still shy, sad, sensitive, secretive and silent, "Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety."

by Maria Van Slyke

MANY HOLLYWOOD actresses who were stars in the 1930's and '40's have faded from public notice, forgotten or unknown to most of us. Other top talents of bygone days still appear successfully before the cameras. The names of Gloria Swanson, Barbara Stanwyck, Bette Davis and Joan Crawford still draw eager crowds to their latest films at the local theater, even as TV's late-late shows display these glamor queens in their heyday—filmed 20 years ago and more.

These ladies are not simply stars of yesteryear, but stars of today as well. With the talents that first brought them recognition, they have continued to grow in achievement and fame. Their fans appreciate them. Their popularity is explainable.

But there is one Hollywood glamor star of the past who makes no attempt to be a star today, and yet she remains one. She is Greta Garbo.

Although it has been 21 years since her last film, Garbo continues to be a major box-office attraction.

Last year in London, where five Garbo films were revived—"Ninotchka," "Anna Karenina," "Queen Christina," "Camille" and "Conquest"—the lines were longer than they had been for Elizabeth Taylor's newest epic. Theater men around the world have been reviving Garbo movies with great success—and this includes films that have been shown repeatedly on television. Even more interesting is the fact that the majority of the audiences is made up of persons who were not even born in 1942 when Garbo made her last film, "Two-Faced Woman." And she remains as much a mystery today to her young fans as she has been to those who have always admired her.

The magnetic power that Greta Garbo still generates to attract the avid interest of beatniks, the avant

CARBO 2

garde, the hootenanny crowd, the jet set and her own contemporaries is not easily explained. Despite the enduring attention that greets her every action, Garbo has done nothing to enhance her popularity. On the contrary, in a profession that stresses publicity, Garbo has discouraged it.

This topmost star never has and still does not sign autographs, answer fan mail, endorse anything at all; she refuses all interviews and behaves as no movie star before or since. Her aloofness used to be so extreme that even Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, the studio that had her under contract, did not know her address or telephone number. To reach her they had to call her manager.

And so it is astonishing that this woman who has so guarded her privacy still evinces some quality that touches the hearts of millions of people who know little about her.

Attempting to hide behind her wide-brimmed hat or dark glasses, the beautiful Garbo has traveled the world pretending to be someone else. At various times she has hidden behind such "Plain Jane" names as: Harriet Brown, Karin Lund, Emily Clark, Mary Holmquist and Gussie Berger. Her own real name, before she was transformed into Garbo, was hardly more distinctive—Greta Gustafsson.

She is shy, yes. But Garbo has insisted that her most famous remark was misquoted. "I never said 'I want to be alone,'" she recently told a friend. "I only said, 'I want to be *let* alone!' There is all the difference."

Garbo has seldom been literally alone. From the time she left school

son's son, producer Frederick Brisson, is now married to Rosalind Russell.) Garbo carved her initials with the actor's inside a heart on his dressing-room door, while pursing him.

Brisson arranged to have her meet his friend, the director Mauritz Stiller. Stiller is credited with inventing Garbo. He gave her an important part in "The Saga of Gosta Berling," directed her every move and, when the picture was released in 1923, the great star was born.

Garbo and Stiller were constantly together. She was completely guided, dominated and almost hypnotized by him. He told her what to wear, what to read, what to think and say. Their co-workers called them "Beauty and the Beast." When Hollywood offered him a fabulous contract, he accepted it only on the condition that his protegee also be signed. Garbo started there in 1925, at \$400 a week.

In Hollywood, Stiller's career waned as rapidly as Garbo's zoomed. He returned to Sweden where Garbo promised to join him after she finished making "Flesh and the Devil." But he died shortly after returning home, while Garbo was falling in love with her leading man, handsome John Gilbert. After seeing their torrid love scenes, the public knew they were not merely acting. These



Greta Garbo by Cecil Rantzen

GARBO³

scenes led to the formation of the Hays Code, the film industry's attempt to censor its own product.

That Garbo and Gilbert were madly in love is unquestionable. Many times Gilbert begged her to marry him; twice he almost succeeded in getting her to the altar. On one of the latter occasions, he bought a \$100,000 yacht for them to spend a year honeymooning in the South Seas, only to have her renege.

The second time, hoping to avoid publicity, Gilbert rushed her to Santa Ana, a short way from Hollywood. As they drove up to the license bureau, Garbo bolted from the car into the ladies' room and refused to come out. Hours later she emerged to return alone to Hollywood by train. After that episode the romance faded rather quickly and in 1929 Gilbert married actress Ina Claire.

While in Hollywood, Garbo had brief romances with dashing leading man George Brent and the moody director Rouben Mamoulian. Her closest friends were the Swedish actor, Nils Asther, and his wife; the John Loders; Jacques Feyder, the Belgian director, and his wife and actor-director Emil Jannings.

Away from Hollywood, the great beauty was linked with three of her countrymen. On a trip back to Sweden she met attractive Prince Sigvard, who at twenty-one was two years her junior. When word leaked out that she and the prince had enjoyed a few nights out together, both American and Swedish papers hinted hopefully at romance. When a reporter asked about it on her return to the United States, Garbo's comment

was: "I don't play around with kids."

On that same trip, Garbo also met William Sorensen, the playwright and screen-writer son of a wealthy Swedish industrialist. Sorensen was so smitten with her that he followed her to Hollywood. He was allowed to stay as a guest in her house—a truly rare privilege.

Even though he later moved to a hotel, the two of them spent a lot of time together. And long after the friendship was over, a small bust of him shared honors in her bedroom with a photograph of Mauritz Stiller.

The third Swede was a successful, self-made construction engineer, Max Gumpel. Garbo had first met him before the start of her screen career, when she had been a department-store salesgirl, the daughter of a day laborer. In 1932, her fame worldwide, Garbo remembered him with affection. Back in Sweden, she telephoned him and made an appointment for dinner. When she arrived he was thrilled to see that the only jewelry she wore was a diamond ring he had given her years before.

For some time after that, they were seen together constantly. Eventually, though, Garbo returned to America, ending that episode, too.

Five years later, in 1937, Garbo was involved in a love so romantic that it could have served as one of her film plots.

Leopold Stokowski, the colorful conductor, had arrived in Hollywood to do some movie work. One of his first moves was to ask his friend Anita Loos, author of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, to arrange a meeting between him and the world's



THE NEW HOME OF THE CO

With a Design, Generously Drawn for Vanity Fair, by Messrs. Delano & Aldrich

By Arthur Loring Bruce

ONE of the favorite subjects for rural debating societies in the early pliocene period of feminine activities—corresponding, roughly, to the second Cleveland administration—concerned the clubability of women. It has, of course, long since taken its place with other allied mediaeval problems; but it is quaint to recall it in connection with the fact that the Colony Club of New York, only twelve years after its conception, is obliged, by its great success, to move from the beautiful house on Madison Avenue which the late Stanford White designed for it, into the much larger club-house now building at Park Avenue and Sixty-second Street, from the plans of Messrs. Delano & Aldrich.

Eight years ago when the Colony Club first opened its doors to its membership of a thousand women, the air about it was murky with the forebodings of critics and sceptics. The finances would be mismanaged, as a result of feminine incompetence and inexperience. The food would be indifferent. "Climbers" would break in and destroy the club's charm, companionability and peace. Earnestness and "uplift" would do their deadly work of devastation. And so on, and so on, each of the Cassandras croaking according to her (and more especially according to his) pet theory of disaster. To-day no gloomy Cassandras undertake to prove that disaster lies ahead, even though the Colony is embarking upon a fresh venture and one involving a large sum of money.

THE new house, into which the members expect to move by the end of this year, is not only much larger than the old, but it is

larger than most of the clubs in America for men. The activities of club women, it would seem, are both more varied and more concentrated than those of men. The latter, perhaps, have different sorts of clubs for different moods; the members of the Colony plan to have every sort of club under one roof. It is to be athletic—with its gymnasium, squash courts and swimming pool; it is to be gay and frivolous—with its ball room, in which not only the members may dance, but where a member may give dances to which non-members are invited. It is to be serious—with its assembly rooms, in which the thoughtfully inclined may listen to dissertations upon every topic under the sun, or at any rate every topic of current interest.

IN these assembly rooms exhibitions will also be held. In its more restricted quarters on Madison Avenue the Colony Club has already gained an enviable reputation for the quality of these exhibitions and conferences. Pictures, period furniture, pottery, old silver, new and wonderful jewelry, costumes—all sorts of things have been shown. As for the subjects discussed, one has but to run through the program of the Committee on Literature and Art, for the past year, to realize how sincere has been the effort to make the club one of the cultural oases, so to speak, of New York. Ancient Rome, the Currency Bill, the Historical Development of the German Empire, Physical Culture, Greek Thought and Modern Life, French Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, English Flower Gardens and Herbaceous borders—these are but a few of the topics upon which the Colony Club

HE'LL PLAY IF HE'S CAPTAIN

-the first of two pages-



Mosley, an-Semite! like Mussolini, in Mussolini-like pose

A rich punk stemming from a line of notorious tyrants, irresponsible Sir Oswald Mosley has a limelight complex and will adopt any cause that promises him prominence. The British fascist leader was the boy Conservative of Parliament in 1918, became a Labourite but bought a castle with a moat to keep vulgar folk away, left the Labourites after throwing a lawn-party for 2,000 of them and wasn't made boss. Then he took over the Duce-Fuehrer agency for Britain.

BY MICHAEL STEBBING

In appearance a cross between a comic-opera colonel and a Master Carlo gigolo, Sir Oswald Mosley, 47, boss-aid of the British Union of Fascists and National Socialists, has at last achieved the "leadership" he failed to win as a Conservative, an Independent, a Labourite. For he is the name for fascism in Britain—the fascist, that is, which is open and unabashed in contradistinction to the veiled fascism practiced by the National Government.

Hitler and Mussolini, his spiritual masters, came from the people. Not so Sir Oswald. In 1906 a Mr. Oswald Mosley bought the land on which Manchester now stands for £3500.

In 1929—a period by no means hostile to wealthy landowners—the Mosleys were charged in Parliament with "oppression, injustice and vexation." In 1946 the town of Manchester bought itself back from a Sir Os-

wald Mosley for the sum of £200,000.

As recently as one century ago, when the inhabitants of Manchester were still ruled largely by the private court of this earlier Sir Oswald Mosley, Richard Cobden, the great free-trader and advocate of international co-operation, stood up and said, "Is it that in this great town of Manchester we are still living under the feudal system? . . . Why, now, I will put an end to this thing!"

At a time when most landholders were harsh, the Mosleys were kinder; in a period of landgrabbing and profiteering the Sir Oswald of the early 19th century was landgrabber Number One.

The present Sir Oswald was born in 1896 into the midst of wealth. He was educated at Winchester College, whose motto is Manners Maketh Man; there Oswald learned the attitude to be adopted by a member of

October 6, 1931

p. 76

the upper thousand riors—i.e. 99% of foreigners.

His next stop was Army College at St. Chelmsford, where the finest, full of contempt for his own age and a good Oswald's education came an officer in 16th Lancers.

Meanwhile, Oswald had died leaving it £60,000. He also in the major portion £247,000, left by his mother. But it was that he should live. In 1920 he married Curzon, Lady Cynthia of the late M. Kelliston. Lady Curzon's granddaughter Zeigler Leiter, the wife. It is permissible to say since Mosley anti-Semitic and fulminator against hereditary wealth. Had inherited £28,000 a year family, died in 1913.

By special permission King George ceremony took place Royal. Before the bridegroom luncheon party a king and two queens. Being a rich man it was natural turn to politics. He served Party in 1918 precocious member the age of 22, his Harrow wherein is of the three schools taught the oligarchy.

Four years after Parliament, Oswald the better of his discipline caused him to leave home among two years he spent splendid isolation. In 1924 the Labour time gained a large parliamentary seats, an coincidence it was time that Oswald own company and the attention of leadership. He per Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, 1924, this gallantry, in the opposition cried, "I am that a Labour Government." A week later doing his gentlemanly pattern. "The Code of Health," he liked to say "has been trying to bog."

Rapidly he became of the poor. "Labour's specific promise to prevent mass unemployment, summer all who stand for underdog." Now his spirit of service.

GARI

most famous blonde, Miss Garbo. A friend who watched the romance ripen reported later: "Stokey didn't waste much time with the overture. He told Garbo they were destined to have a history-making romance . . . The gods had made their decision. Mere mortals could only obey. It was the direct attack mixed with a little mystical stuff. Mystical stuff made quite a hit with Garbo."

That same year, Stokowski's second wife, Evangeline Brewster Johnson, obtained a Nevada divorce from the maestro. And Hollywood became accustomed to seeing 32-year-old Garbo and white-haired, 55-year-old Stokowski rhumba-ing around town.

In February of 1938, Stokowski left for Italy, where he leased the beautiful ancient Villa Cimbrone in Ravello, near Naples. Ravello is the same mountainside village that became the focus of newsgatherers again last year when Mrs. Kennedy took Caroline there for a few weeks.

A week after his arrival, Garbo arrived from Sweden, where she had paid a brief visit to her family. After the first few idyllic days of their stay, they were besieged by journalists. This forced them to flee to Garbo's country estate in Sweden, where they had a thousand acres of forest and farmland, a 15-room house on a lake and absolute privacy.

Here they stayed for nearly three months, undisturbed. Then, suddenly, Stokowski returned alone to the United States, refusing to talk to the press, a new first for him. Two months later, Garbo followed. They were never seen together again.

Next in her life came Gaylord Hauser, the dietician who popularized black strap molasses. Garbo met him through friends just before making her first comedy, the merry "Ninotchka." This delightful film was notable for another reason, too.

On the set Garbo was completely unlike herself. She was gay, cheerful and so friendly that she even joked with the crew. And completely un-Garbo-like, she went so far as to give an autograph to a teen-age fan. Whether these high spirits were generated by the comedy of "Ninotchka," or by Hauser and his diets, has never been determined.

At any rate, between his lectures and writings, the handsome Hauser was her constant escort in New York, Palm Beach and the Bahamas, as well as Hollywood. To a newspaper friend, Hauser gave an advance story of his marriage to Garbo, to be released when he confirmed later by telephone. He and Garbo spent more than a month together in Florida and the Bahamas, but the confirming call never came. At length, they also drifted apart.

Garbo made her last picture 22 years ago. It was far from a success and for a while word went around that she would make her next film only when the story material was right. In the years since, all sorts of material by the most talented writers has been offered her. John Gunther, the brilliant journalist, wrote

me Gaylord who popularizes. Garbo is just before y, the merry lightful film reason, too. s completely gay, cheerful e even joked mpletely un- so far as to teen-age fan. spirits were dy of "Nin- and his diets, ined.

his lectures some Hauser ort in New the Bahamas,

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it picture 22 om a success went around yer next film material was e, all sorts of alented writ- r. John Gun- alist, wrote it a beautiful y read it she rfect part for

onsible, how-

ever, for her close friendship with the Gunthers, whom she sees frequently in New York. It is said that they have a concealed passageway in their apartment and a code of signal bells so that if she drops by when strangers are there, she can disappear without being seen.

Garbo has lived in New York since 1942. Her apartment, in the 50's, faces entirely on the East River so that no one can look into

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Watch 'Em

HAVEN'T you sat, fascinated, for the seven or eight minutes of an animated cartoon, wondering what makes the drawings move? And when talkies came along, weren't you surprised when they sang and played musical instruments, and out from the screen came the squeaky voice of *Krazy Kat* or the piping song of *Mickey Mouse*?

Most cartoons are planned out before ever pencil is put to paper. Let's sit in on a couple of conferences at the Winkler Pictures studios, where work is about to begin on a new adventure in the life of *Krazy Kat*.

The entire studio staff is present. Somebody has what he thinks is a clever idea. Changes and additions are suggested. Discussion is fast and furious. And a complete story is worked out.

Later, there is a "gag" conference. Perhaps there's a sequence in a subterranean room, down a long flight of stairs. "Well, stairs when picked up and juggled back and forth between the hands make a perfectly grand accordion," suggests someone. And thus a gag is born.

The musicians determine the type of music for each gag—whether the mood calls for "Hearts and Flowers," jazz, a march or a swaying waltz. Tempo is measured accurately with a

PEOPLE NOWADAYS often need short-haul help to keep weight down. I go to visit friends for a long week end. The food is wonderful. I eat, drink and make merry on a larger scale than at home. Because the food is festive and fattening, I come home weighing from two to five pounds more than when I went away.

Maybe it takes you more than a few days to gain that much. But gaining happens to everyone—during holidays, on vacation, during a time of depression or anxiety when one tends to eat more and oftener.

It's a wonderful feeling to be able to shed those few pounds in two days. And you can, if you will take the trouble.

If you happen to be fond of cottage cheese, you're in luck. No other ready-prepared dish you eat contains so many balanced nutrients, and so much protein for so few

calories. Remember milk, "the perfect form, with most of

Thanks to its u two days you can than two pounds—five pounds. Yes, i

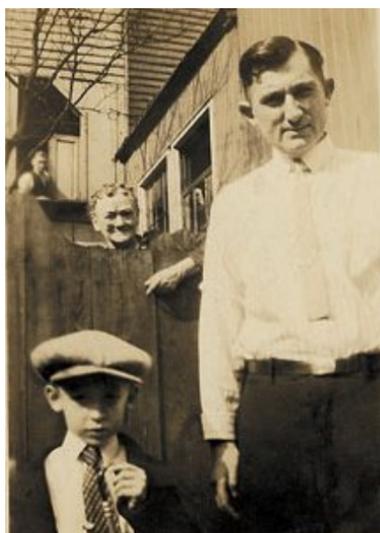
THE BLT

Eight ounces of cottage cheese; two berta peach hal Also, if you like Norwegian flat or Ideal) spread cinnamon and under a broiler. Breakfast, lun are the same. 1

Instead of the Sweet puts them up denned) have a sliced

had been born. In the 40 years when, dozens of new audiences been born to acclaim and admire an unusual lady. In the fickle make-believe, she is the most ment of stars.

et





* * * *

I heard that Jackson Pollack tried to create his own art, his own language, his own history, his own meaning.
I want to destroy the novel— create something new

* * * *

I believe in moderation, including in moderation.

* * * *

I've noticed that the shinier my earrings the less likely people are to notice the bleakness of my soul and the corrosiveness of my heart. Nice sweater, sharp shoes and I get by fine.

* * * *

I don't know what to say, Sophy, but I thought I'd say it anyway.

* * * *

I have a conscience. I stole it from some blind guy.

* * * *

And in the middle of the night I leave the house and walk into the snow. Some might call it a suicide, but I

wouldn't . . . That last sentence may not be satisfactory to readers, but we all have our own untranslatable music

* * * *

If I've learned anything from watching old movies it's don't wrong Bela Lugosi.

* * * *

"So that in a nutshell is the theory of relativity."
Henry: "I assume Einstein was a drinker."

Being mentally ill often means perceiving things from a different angle than normal people. I'm neither claiming this view is more or less accurate than the normal view. Just different.

Reactions Versus Answers

Definition of terms for this chapter:

Answer: The correct answer to a question.

Response: A reaction to a question that it is not an answer.

* * * *

To a question, there are two types of reactions: An answer and a response.

An answer is the correct answer to the question. A response is not the correct answer. While perhaps relevant to the question and offering useful information, a response does not answer the question. It could be said that to a question there is either an answer or anything else (a response).

Question: "What does $1 + 1$ equal?"

Answer : "2"

Response : "I'm sorry, I don't know. I was never good at math. Give me a geography question."

The "2" is the answer. $1 + 1 = 2$. The "I'm sorry, I don't know" is a response. It does not give the answer ("2") or attempt to give the correct answer.

Saying "Are you trying to insult my intelligence?" is a response to the question, rather than an answer. Saying "I

don't have to answer your stupid questions" is a response.

Question: "Johnny, did you take a cookie from the cookie jar?" (Johnny took a cookie from the cookie jar.)

Answer: "Yes, I did."

Response: "I did a lot of things today. I don't recall taking a cookie, but it's possible I might have taken it and forgotten about it. What kind did you bake?"

Response: "No."

Response: "What if I did?"

As shown above, while a response doesn't give an answer, it can offer information and even insight into the psychology of the responder. The response "What if I did?" neither answers nor attempts to answer the question, but reveals defiance.

* * * *

Many questions cannot be answered by humans. These questions usually are unanswerable because the answers are beyond human knowledge and sometimes comprehension.

"What is the exact number of grains of sand make up the Sahara Desert at this moment?"

"In square inches, what is the exact volume of the universe?"

A leap of faith is a response.

* * * *

Many questions are unanswerable because the questions are worded so they are unanswerable.

Question: "What is the best color?"

Response: "I can't say what is the best color, but green is my favorite."

Response: "I don't know, but blue is probably the most popular."

Response: "Red."

There is no absolute, objective answer to what is the good, bad or best color. Any pick is subjective. Any definition of best is personal opinion. The first two responses offer perhaps useful information, but don't attempt to answer the question. The "Red" response also is a response but cloaked as an answer.

As with earlier unanswerable questions, the responses can give related information and reflect upon the question. The first two offer comments on colors. The matter of fact answer of "Red" shows arrogance or ignorance.

* * * *

The following are common unanswerable human questions:

"What is the meaning of the universe?"

"Why am I here?"

"What is my purpose on earth?"

There can only be responses to these questions. Religions and many political and social systems are responses to these and other unanswerable questions. They may present their responses as answers, but they are responses. Calling a response an answer is part of the response.

* * * *

Responses to unanswerable questions shouldn't be judged as answers, but as responses. *Considering it is impossible to know the answer, is this response to the question legitimate and reasonable? Is this response a fair way to respond to the unanswerable?*

I would classify the earlier response "I can't say what is the best color, but green is my favorite" as fair. It's not an answer, but a fair enough response to an unanswerable question. As suggested before, I don't think much of the "Red" as it's posing as the answer when there is none. The green guy is happy to give you his opinion, but readily acknowledges he doesn't have the answer. That seems to be a fair response.

I'm an art historian, and in art and collectible authentication, perhaps the number one rule is the expert should never make up an answer when he doesn't have one. He shouldn't say he's 100% sure, when he's only 75% sure. If you don't know, you don't know and, considering no one knows everything, there's nothing deficient about an expert saying he doesn't know. Find a self-proclaimed expert who has all the answers and you've found someone whose opinion you should be wary of. This should help explain why I didn't much of the "The best color is Red" answer. If she said "I have no clue" she would have gotten high marks. If she said "I don't answer dumb questions," she might have gotten even higher.





Measuring the reliability of the mind

To us humans, the reliability of the human mind cannot be known, as we use the human mind to test and judge the reliability. If your goal is to determine the accuracy of the human mind, that means you do not know the accuracy of the tool used for testing and judging (the human mind), which makes it impossible to determine the accuracy of the human mind.

Your opinion about the reliability of the human mind involves a leap of faith. A common tendency is to overestimate the reliability. There are a number of reasons for this. One is that many errors and blind spots in thinking are unknown and not counted. Another is that a human's belief system and world view are premised on a reliable mind. If the mind's reliability comes into question, so does the reliability of the belief system and world view.

While identifying facts and making accurate perceptions are important parts of the human function and survival, the human mind is not entirely about this or perhaps even mostly about this. To survive and function, the human must do other things such as act and guess in ambiguous and mysterious situations. Many of these functions are not about identifying facts and assessing truth, but making speedy and practical decisions. In fact, humans are in part hard wired to make speedy intuitive decisions in the face of lack of knowledge.

As an example I use way too often, avoiding instant danger is often about how to react to the unknown and unknowable. If a mysterious large shape is moving quickly at you, taking the time to accurately identify the shape ('gathering the facts') is the opposite of what you need to do. Get out of the way asap, then worry about identification later. If it turns out to be nothing harmful, say just a shadow, no big deal other than you might look a bit foolish. If it turns out to be a bolder or falling board, you've saved yourself from harm or worse. And this is the natural and automatic subconscious self-preservation instinct of humans.

This is just one example of how truth finding is not always the priority of the mind and in fact can get inhibit function. Survival is commonly said to be about erring on the side of safety-- as it takes only one time being hit by a speeding car or falling off a cliff to be dead. The key word there being 'erring.' In this case, the mind is design to err.

As shown by *Conceits and Human Achievement* (page

68) the human mind has limited capacity and capabilities and human function can be inhibited by too much information and even truths. If your task is to move across a room, trying to identify and learn the history and “truth” of everything and everyone in the would lead to you dying of old age before you reached the other side.

And don't forget that humans are social animals and functioning, thriving and surviving involves interaction with people and other animals that are full of cognitive biases, delusions, limited information and viewpoints, emotions, selfish motives, social politics and order, subjective tastes and irrational drives. Humans survived and thrived as a species because they work as social groups. Early economists made the fatal mistake of basing their models on the assumption that humans act entirely rationally when making economic decisions. Later economists realized the models had to be thrown out, because they learned that humans do not act entirely rationally when purchasing, selling, investing, valuating and saving.

In short, the commonly voiced sentiment that the human is by nature a truth seeker, and that is its key function, is debatable.

While scientists, and this book, often focus on the errors that are produced by human cognitive methods, the methods can also be considered excellent devises for making quick and needed choices in the complex and ambiguous environment humans live in.

Sure our cognitive systems can be wrong and sometimes make comically off judgments-- and this book has likely opened your eyes to much of this--, but, all things considered, they are quite effective and efficient. Don't forget

that humans cognition is about making educated guesses in new situations and with limited information. It would be foolish to expect one hundred percent accuracy.

Artificial intelligence scientists trying to make their own working human-like robots are astonished to learn at how how advanced and sophisticated the human subconscious is at doing such simple tasks. They've learned it's beyond difficult to design a robot to navigate quickly through a room of furniture, but this is a simple task for even a four year old human of normal intelligence.

Scientists will tell you that, even with all its faults and limitations, the human mind, including at the intuitive level, is the most intellectually sophisticated, advanced and complex entity known.

Perception and Misperception of Movement



Perception and misperception of movement is similar to the perception and misperception of still images. The viewer sees a limited amount of information from a scene and, using its experience, knowledge, biases, internal mental abilities and logic, makes a guess at what is going on. Often, this guess is correct, or at least a good approximation. Other times it is wrong.

Except for more extreme situations (very slow movement, very small objects), the human optical system is good at detecting the presence of movement. The misperceptions most commonly happen in the interpretation of the movement. Humans can correctly detect the presence of movement but misinterpret the direction, speed and even what is moving. A human can think object A is moving, when it is object B that is moving.

The following are two common examples of correctly detecting the presence of movement, but misinterpreting it.

The parked car prank

A prank you have probably heard about is where two pranksters park their cars on each side of an open parking space. Sometime later the unsuspecting victim parks his car between these two cars. When the victim is fiddling with his keys or checking the contents of his wallet or looking in the glove compartment, the two pranksters suddenly drive forward in unison. The victim gets the instant sensation that his car is moving backwards and panics. He soon figures out what is going on, but is embarrassed. This is an example where a person correctly identifies movement, but misinterprets what is moving. Also note that his misperception was influenced by instinct, the victim having little control over the adrenaline rush.

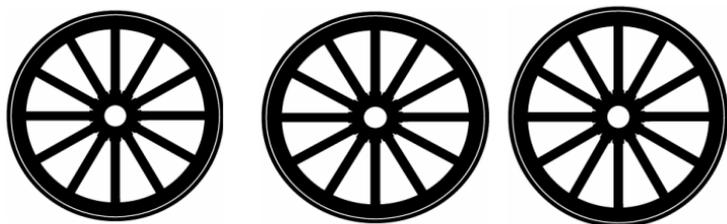
Baseball's changeup

In baseball, pitchers use the so called changeup pitch to fool the batter. A changeup is intended to look like a fastball, but is slower. The changeup is typically thrown after a fastball, often after consecutive fastballs. Then, seeing the normal fastball arm and body motion of the pitcher, the batter believes the ball is again coming fast and swings accordingly. When the changeup works, the unexpected speed results in the hitter making feeble or no contact with the ball.

As pitching great Warren Spahn said, "Hitting is timing. Pitching is upsetting timing."

Stroboscopic Movement Illusions

When watching an old Western movie there is a curious effect that sometimes stands out. The wheels of a moving wagon sometimes appear to be still, rotating slower than they should or even rotating backwards. This happens when the rotation speed of the spokes was not in synchronicity with the speed of the film.



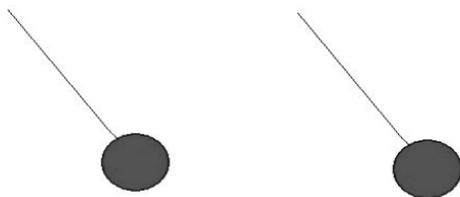
The above three still images of a wagon wheel look to show the wheel in the same position, but they show the wheel at different rotations. The middle picture was rotated 90 degrees from the left image, and the right image is rotated an additional 90 degrees.

That each spoke is shaped and colored identical to the others is an essential contribution to the illusion. If these were the stills in a movie the rotating wheel would appear to be motionless. If they were the stills in a movie, but the rotation was 80 degrees instead of 90, the wheels would appear to be going backwards.

The wagon wheel illusion in a movie is an example of the **stroboscopic effect**. In the dark, a strobe gives off intermittent flashes of light. Under a strobe, the viewer views a moving object though short intermittent snapshots instead of a continuous view. This can lead to misperception of the object's movement, as the viewer nonconsciously imagines what is going on in between the flashes.

Say you are watching a swinging pendulum under stroboscopic lighting. If the strobe flashes a quick burst of light once every second and it takes the pendulum exactly one second to swing back and forth, the pendulum will appear to you to be motionless. Each flash catches the pendulum in the same position, the pendulum having done quite a bit of moving in the darkness between flashes. If the flashes catch the pendulum at its extreme right position, the pendulum will appear to be pulled, pushed or blown right.

The stroboscopic flashes create visual ambiguity. There are different possible explanations for what the viewer sees. The viewer typically, and often nonconsciously, chooses the explanation that meets his expectations. If you and others saw no movement in a daylight object, it would be considered bizarre for you to proclaim that the object was swinging back and forth. However, this bizarre proclamation would be correct with the apparently motionless pendulum.



Do these snapshots show a moving or still pendulum? It's impossible to tell.

* * * *

All movies as stroboscopic-like illusions

Despite audience perception, movies don't show continuous, real movement of a deer running, a car racing or people conversing, but a series of snapshots of the movement. If you hold up movie film, you will see it is a series of still images

lined up side by side, not unlike the panels in a newspaper comic strip. When the film is shot and shown at the proper speed, the viewer's mind incorrectly interprets the succession of still images as real movement. To the mind, 'realistic movement' seems the most plausible explanation for what it is seeing. This choice is made instantly and nonconsciously and the viewer simply thinks she's watching real, continuous movement.

When the film is too slow, the mind is no longer fooled. The running horse looks choppy and unreal.

* * * *

Ambiguity

As mentioned earlier in this book, ambiguity is a concept essential to understanding humans, as humans constantly make choices in the face of ambiguous information. Ambiguity means there is more than one possible explanation to something, and the viewer doesn't know, often can't know, which one is correct. In the face of ambiguity, the mind will almost always pick the explanation that meets its expectations and experience. Visual illusions, both moving and still, involve making the wrong pick.

The human mind is designed for speed. Speedy perceptions are essential for living and surviving in the real world, including processing fast movement like a charging lion and rolling bolder. A downside of the speed is there is a fair margin of error. Speed is often synonymous with haste.

* * * *

Ambiguous Movement: The Barber Pole Illusion

There are instances where, due to restricted viewpoint, it is impossible for the viewer to know the direction of movement. A standard example involves the barber pole.



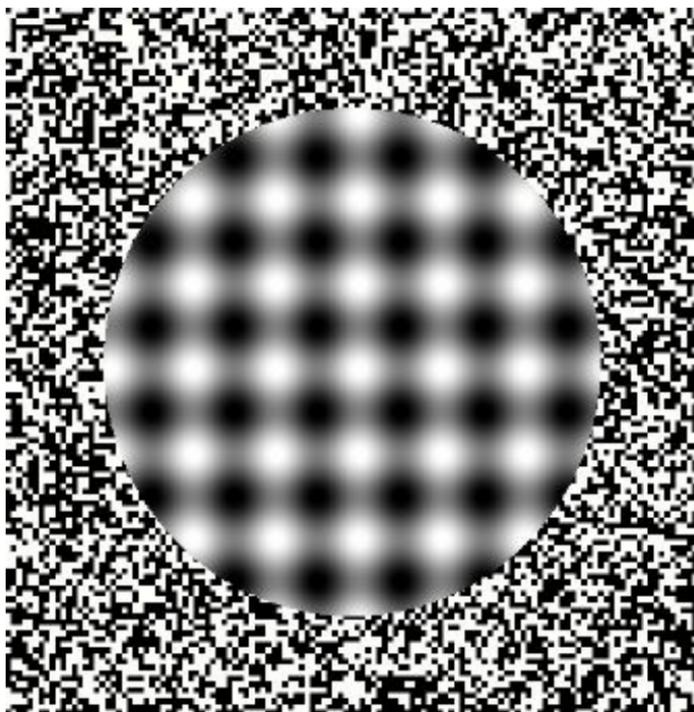
Hung outside the barber shop, a barber pole has diagonal candy cane stripes that are rotated horizontally. However, looking from a particular angle it will appear as if the stripes are moving vertically. Faced with different plausible choices for what it is seeing (possibly moving up, but also possibly moving sideways), the mind takes a pick, one that happens to be wrong.

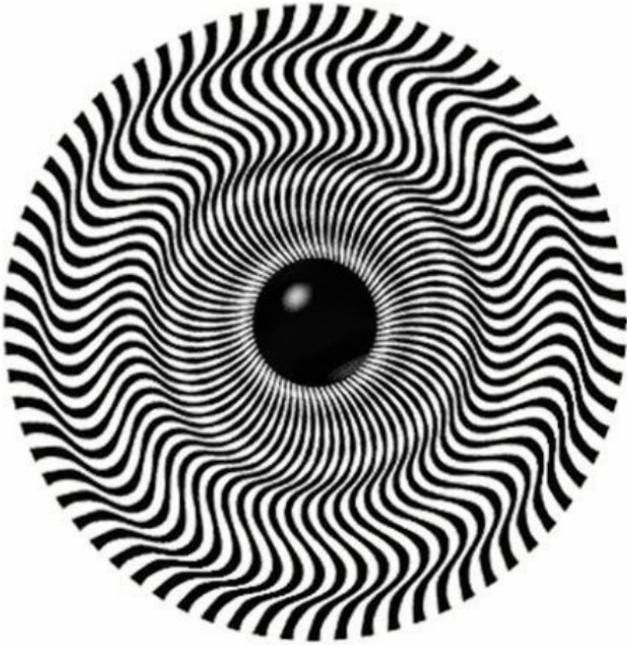
If you watch a barber pole from different angles, you will alternately perceive the stripes moving vertically and rotating horizontally. Your mind can't make up its mind.

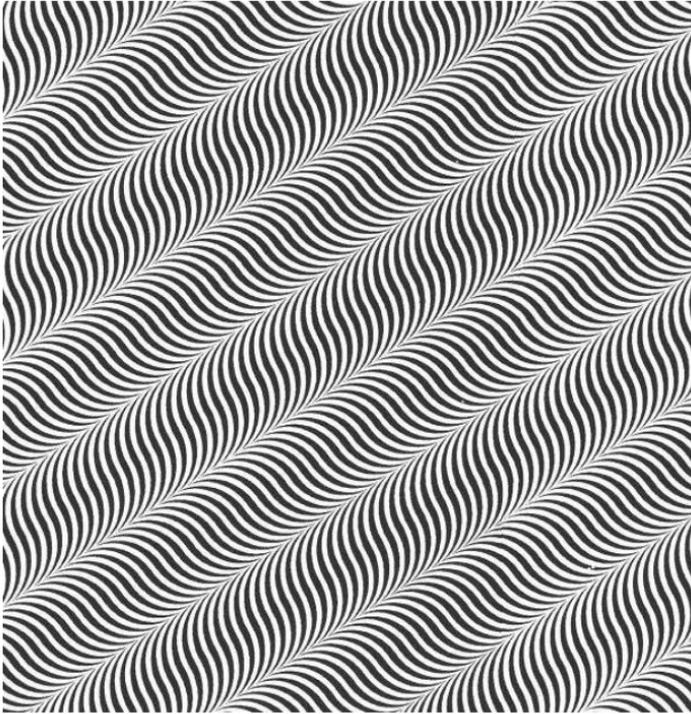
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As the following three pictures illustrate, even still images

can trick the mind into perceiving motion. Their designs match up with the nonconscious brain's template for what is movement.







Henry: "The difference between me and know-it-alls is I actually know it all."

"If you know it all, then what's my favorite color?"

Henry: "Black. Black as the Devil's heart. Black as the murderer's soul. Black as the bottomless pit of depravity that is your life."

"Okay, but that one was easy. What's my favorite vegetable?"

“Ha! It's the cucumber!”

Also realize that if (and I said if) intelligence is about practical function, other animals live in different situations--different geographies with different social and biological situations and requirements. Their different methods of thinking serve them better than ours would. If intelligence is defined by functionality, we can be less intelligent than other animals when in their realms and when attempting to do their tasks.

Certainly, a bat's or owl's senses are better for their night living and ours would be inferior. When the question is “What animal has the best senses?,” you would ask “For what? Under what situation?” The same should be asked of the question “What animal is more intelligent?”

Intelligence is one of those human made up words, like art. You can define intelligence in a million different ways and your definition will be exactly that: your definition. And the narrower your definition, the narrower its applicability.

Dear Abby: How can you get a man to come back.

Abby: Wait until you no longer want him back, then he'll come back.

Photos through the telephone: A History and Guide to Wirephotos

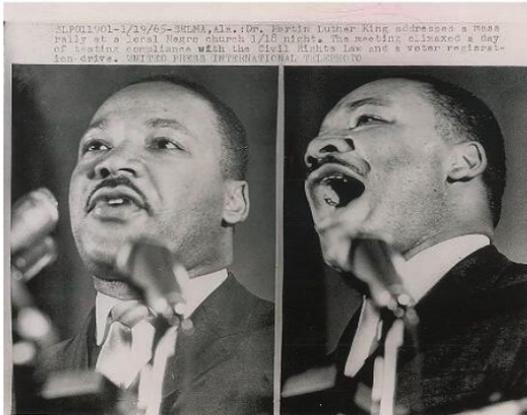
Even today, the idea of sending photos through the telephone wire sounds fantastic.



For early 1900s newspapers and magazines, there was no overnight national distribution of images. News photographs were shipped by plane, train and even boat. While this was okay for the many popular monthly magazines, most early daily newspapers had relatively few and generic images.

While turn of the century news services could send the printed text of a story via telephone lines ('wire') to subscribing newspapers, they also wanted to be able send photographs in a similar way. Originally, this was just a pipe dream. Even today the idea of sending photographs over the telephone sounds incredible. The invention of the wirephoto process eventually led to overnight photograph distribution.

The wirephoto process allowed photographic images to be transferred through telephone lines. The process required a large, expensive wirephoto machine both at the source and at the receiving end. The original photograph was placed inside the wirephoto machine. Much as with today's computer scanner, an electronic eye scanned the photograph and translated it into electrical impulses. These impulses were sent through the telephone wire to the identical wirephoto machine at the receiving end. At the receiving machine the impulses were translated to light that was used to develop the image onto photographic paper. The development would take minutes to over an hour, as the photographic paper was slowly exposed line by line. In fact, the ultimate way to identify the wirephoto (the received image) is to look for the tiny horizontal or vertical lines in the image.



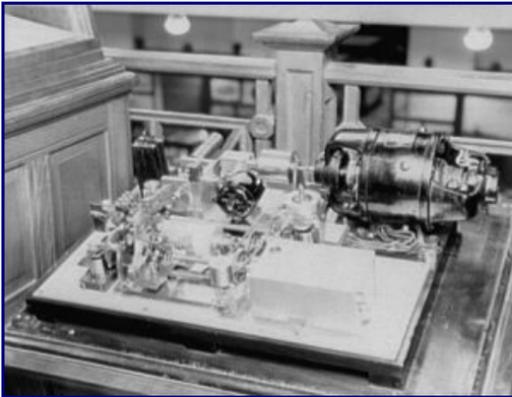
Wirephoto showing Martin Luther King

The result was that that the receiving newspaper had a copy of the original photograph that it could use to make prints for the newspaper. This wirephoto had an identical image to the original photograph, but of lesser quality.

A wirephoto could be sent simultaneously to many receivers. The Associated Press could put the original

photograph into the wirephoto machine and send copies to the Seattle Times, New York Times, San Francisco Chronicle and Green Bay Press-Gazette all at once. The Associated Press' main office in New York City could send wirephotos to its regional office in Atlanta, and the Atlanta office could send wirephotos to the New York City office. As you can imagine, this made photograph distribution quicker and more efficient than transporting a box of photos by train.

While the wirephoto process was invented in 1921, and AT & T had it's first commercial wirephoto service in 1925, it took at least a decade for the process to be used widely. The early machines were large, overly expensive and the process unreliable. The early wirephotos were usually of poor quality and hostage to the fickleness and breaks of the telephone lines. When someone sent a wirephoto across the telephone lines, it often took more than an hour and the sender had no idea if a recognizable image would be received at the other end. Before 1935, wirephotos were only used for especially important, breaking news.



a wirephoto machine displayed at the Smithsonian

In 1934, the world's largest news service, Associated Press (AP), installed an advanced and effective wirephoto system. Starting the following year, the wirephoto system

became practical. Soon after other major news services installed their own wirephoto systems. This included AP's rivals International News Photos, United Press Association and ACME Newspictures.

Though press photos were still distributed the old fashioned way, and newspapers and magazines still had staff photographers for local events, the wirephoto system was the dominant form of international photo distribution from 1935 until the mid 1970s.



Wirephoto John F. Kennedy and Commander Harold Lang aboard an aircraft carrier in 1962

Beyond wirephotos: laserphotos, digital, computers

While the wirephoto process was a revolution, it still was not perfect. It was only a matter of time for the system to be replaced by modern technology.

In the 1970s, Associated Press instituted the laserphoto system. This system sent images to subscribers more quickly

and with higher resolution images. Associated Press updated this system in 1989. Full color images were transmitted at the speed of seconds per photograph. These images were displayed on monitors and distributed in digital form. The result was newspaper and magazine pictures of much higher quality and the more common use of color pictures.

Identifying wirephotos

The following qualities identify a news photo as a wirephoto.

**** *Tiny horizontal or vertical lines in the image.*** The wirephotos were developed in lines, much like a computer print or television image. In fact, the wirephoto machine was the father of the television. In the receiving wirephoto machine, the emitted light was slowly passed over the photographic paper line by line. Under close inspection the wirephoto will often have a line pattern. Sometimes it can be seen up close with the naked eye. Sometimes a magnifying glass is needed. It often appears as jaggedness to a person or car's edge in the image. If there was an interruption in the telephone line during transmission, there sometimes is an obvious 'break' line, squiggles or similar marks in the image. The line pattern is the ultimate way to identify wirephotos.

**** *A photograph of the caption, rather than the physical caption.*** During the making of many wirephotos, they would place the paper caption strip at the bottom of the source photograph, and that would be part of the scanned image sent through the telephone wires. The resulting wirephoto will have the caption as part of the photographic image. If you run your fingers across the caption you won't feel it.

Wirephotos that have the caption in the front image are almost always vintage to the date given to the caption ('AP Wirephoto, 12-1-1962: John F. Kennedy visits with...'). This means it's easy to date most wirephotos.

**** *Oversized, irregular borders.*** If you've ever put a

document in a Xerox machine or computer scanner you know that if the document is smaller than the scanning bed you will end up with a Xerox or scan showing the document surrounded by a background. If you are making a digital image for an auction, you will often crop out the background clutter. This is often the case with wirephotos. The wirephoto machine's bed was often bigger than the source photo, and the resulting wirephoto can have a 'picture within a picture' effect or white borders with irregular dimensions (e.g., one edge much wider than the others). Some wirephotos have normal borders.

*** Lesser quality than the source.* Wirephotos often have nice and presentable images, but many wirephotos have faded or muddy images. At first glance, they will usually appear less crisp and rich than an original image. This in part explains why the original photo is more desirable than the wirephoto made from it. If a vintage ACME or AP photo has a crystal clear image, it is an original photograph. If the photo has a less clear image, with blemishes and little squiggles or marks and less image detail, it probably is a wirephoto.

Laserphotos have the same general appearance as wirephotos. They will ordinarily have in-the-image captions that state they are laserphotos, along with the irregular white borders.

The collecting positives and negatives of wirephotos

Wirephotos are collectible as vintage artifacts, and wirephotos of particularly significant historic images and events can fetch good money at sale or auction. They are important documents for historians. The images are vintage to the date in the caption and the detailed captions make the photos easy to date and identify. Only a limited number of wirephotos were sent. These weren't commercial items sold to the public, but were sent to subscribing newspapers and magazines.

The downside is, while usually vintage, the images are second generation. This both means that they aren't original photos, and that the images are usually lesser in quality than the originals. A wirephoto will almost always be valued less than the original it was made from.

Collector Be Warned

Wirephotos and other forms of news photography are popularly collected, but many buyers and sellers correctly use the term wirephoto. They usually use the term to describe all sorts of photos, including true wirephotos, original photos, newspaper photos and other press photos. I have seen sellers offer '1910s wirephotos.' The problem being that the wirephoto process wasn't invented until the 1920s.

This means that when an online seller is offering a '1955 Mickey Mantle original wirephoto,' you can't always be sure what is being offered. Does the seller mean it's a wirephoto? Does the seller mean by 'original' it was the original photo the wirephoto was made from (and of better image quality and desirability)? It can be a guessing game for the potential bidder.

SOPHY: Okay, Zoe, none of this bullshit cutsie crap you do. I have five questions for you and I want you to give me straight answers. Okay?

ZOLA: Let me hear the questions first. No, okay.

SOPHY: Have I ever offended you?

ZOLA: Offended? Offended me as a person? No, not that I recall. And if you really did offend me, I would remember.

SOPHY: If I said I really needed for you to tell everything, would you?

ZOLA: Yes. However, I don't this is the right time or place for it. I think you think that too. But, yes.

SOPHY: Why don't you think this is the right time or place?

ZOLA: You're busy with your family, I don't want to interfere with that and we're trying to have a less than intense relationship right now.

SOPHY: Are you bisexual?

ZOLA: What? Hmm. Interesting question. You can only pose that question seriously if you think I've lied to you.

SOPHY: That's true. I take it back. Sorry.

ZOLA: Thank you.

SOPHY: Do you want to know why I asked that question?

ZOLA: No, not really. Anything you say will probably make my eyes roll.

SOPHY: If you had to go a year with out wearing earrings, could you do it?

ZOLA: If that meant I got to marry you at the end, I'd do it. Otherwise, no . . . Hah! How's that for an answer?

SOPHY: Hah!

ZOLA: (Laughs) Don't worry, I'm wearing earrings.

SOPHY: Hee!

ZOLA: (Laughs)

SOPHY: Were you being serious?

ZOLA: I can't think of a reason, other than medical, where I would have to not wear earrings, so it's a moot question.

SOPHY: That doesn't answer the question.

ZOLA: It was a fantasy question . . . I answered your damn question . . . And, by the way, I'm heterosexual.

SOPHY: I know. You're heterosexual and like me. Common knowledge.

ZOLA: I wear it on my arm and wear no sleeve.

SOPHY: I have no idea how many questions I've asked.

ZOLA: Feels like fifty. Did I pass the bar?

SOPHY: Your answers would barely get you out of kindergarten. (Laughs) I'm so funny.

ZOLA: Funny looking.

SOPHY: Do you wish I was blonde?

ZOLA: What? No. I prefer brunettes. You'd look funny as a blonde.

SOPHY: Do you think I'm bootyliscious?

ZOLA: I can't see your booty.

SOPHY: Do you think I'm anything liscious?

ZOLA: I think you're liscious. Put whatever word you want in front of it.

SOPHY: Do you think I'm sextabulous?

ZOLA: I think you are bootisexliscioustabulous.

SOPHY: You're not just saying that, are you?

ZOLA: Of course not. You are whatever I just said you are. Just don't ask me to say it twice.

SOPHY: I think you are boosilitextanginous too.

ZOLA: What?!?

SOPHY: Bistarnioussextable . . . biscenxtiousbootaculus . . . I quit . . . Bitchin' There you go. Bitchintabulous.

ZOLA: I'll take it. You're bitchinonymous too.

SOPHY: You say bitchinonymous, I say bitchintabulous, let's call the whole thing off.

ZOLA: Definitely not.

Identifying Tempera



Tempera, often called egg tempera, is an ancient type of paint and painting that pre-dated oil paint in popularity. Many ancient Egyptian and Western Medieval paintings were tempera, and the paintings of Michelangelo and Botticelli are tempera.

Tempera was the most popular form of painting until the 1500s, when it was replaced by oil. Some artists today

paint in tempera. 20th century American Andrew Wyeth is the most famous modern egg tempera painter. The paint usually has the color pigment mixed in egg yolk, thus the name egg tempera.

Due to the distinct paint qualities, tempera has a look and feel much different to oil painting.

Tempera paint is thin in consistency and dries very fast. This means the artist painstakingly paints in careful, thin brush strokes and slowly adds up the lines to create the overall detail. When you look closely at a tempera, the graphics are usually made up of thin lines, often overlapping and cross hatching to build up color and detail. These lines mean the painting often resembles a color pencil drawing.

There are no big, bold brush strokes and thick globs of color as can appear on oil and acrylic paintings. Tempera paint is never thick on the canvas or board. Tempera paintings usually have a matte finish, whereas oil paintings tend to be glossy.

Tempera paintings tend to have overall brighter colors and with less contrast in the details. You may notice a lack of contrast in the face of the Botticelli painting shown here. The shadows of her skin are lighter and more gradual than the stark dark to light that often appears in oil paintings. The lighter contrast is because the artist created the details and colors by carefully building them up thin overlapping line by thin overlapping line.

I was born damned and with a broken heart

Number Sense: Pre-Counting

Number sense is not counting, but a subconscious, neurological ability to identify changes in a small collection. Humans and several species of animals have number sense. If you make changes in amount to small groups, the animal with number sense can notice this. The animal can identify changes in amount even when unable to tell exactly how much has changed. It can tell that there is 'more' or 'fewer' than before.

Many mammals and birds have small numbers of young, say three or four, and if you take away one or two of the young, the animal will notice. With larger numbers of young, a change often goes unnoticed. One reason not to take a baby or egg from a bird's nest is the mother may notice and leave the entire nest.

Crows are famously intelligent and numerous stories have been told how the crows can tell, up to a number, how many people have entered and left a barn inside where the bird has its nest. The crow doesn't want to enter the barn unless it is free of people, so waits outside until it is empty. People have tested their counting abilities by having people enter then leave in different combinations of people. Up to a number, the crow can tell when all the people have left and entered. However, it is not certain that whether the bird was counting or recognized the individual people.

Humans do not have a great number sense. Without counting and marking in symbols, humans have an ability to identify numbers no better than the crow. What separates us from the other animals is we have developed counting systems. Even rudimentary systems of counting on our

fingers help identify numbers and changes in numbers. This ability to count, and later multiply and divide, has been an integral part of human's success story on earth.

I'm smarter but she's more mature. I intimidate her with my immaturity.

* * * *

I try to gain their attention—I do everything—murder, rampage, screams, dance— but everything, everything passes by— mimes— they don't notice, they don't care— They perform a jig in front of my shark knife, but they don't invade my heart— They are hazy Japanese mountains

I vacillate— from wanting them to be 3D to wanting them to go away or me to hide in my closet— and the pain of thinking them real and their doings and goings on being real behind my back and me not being included in the birthday party and I scream and I scream and there is a glass— A soundproof glass that I can't get past— There is a code a language that I don't know, a secret handshake I haven't been taught— A wink of the eye, a frequency I can't get past

* * * *

I try to make the people but it doesn't work— I try to pull the substance, the essence, from their noses— but it doesn't work— I take them and boil their hides into a tea to get the

— the something— but it doesn't work

* * * *

-- SOPHY'S COUSIN : "It's bad enough you married a man from Wisconsin, but a man from Wisconsin who once ate goat?"

-- SOPHY: "Have you seen his eyes?"

-- COUSIN: "True, Zola does have beautiful blue eyes. I'll tell you what, I won't vote for his disowning him from the family, but I won't vote against. I'll stay neutral. But the vote's going to be close. You might have to bribe someone. And if you could convert him that would help."

-- COUSIN #2 (approaching): "Hey, do you know where the napkins are? And I can't find the remote."

* * * *

No, that's not correct. I am quite hilarious. Whether or not you think I am, is a separate issue.

* * * *

These days certain songs break my heart. The ones with notes in them.

* * * *

SOPHY'S AUNT: "Aren't blue eyes the sign of the Devil?"

ZOLA : "I don't know. Maybe."

You have a mischievous smile. It's very attractive, but I wonder, do you have teeth?

“You can find major problems in all arguments.”

“How come?”

“Because they are made in language.”

“So according to your definition, an art fake isn't a fake if it's labelled as a fake.”

“Correct.”

“And how much do people pay you for your opinions?”

memories are representations not exact copies, as exemplified by that it's easier to remember the gist of what someone said rather than exactly what he or she said

I hate being falsely accused so I do it.

* * * *

I thought of you quite a bit last night when I went to bed.

* * * *

You say you don't want me to lie, yet you keep asking me questions.

* * * *

I'm writing my autobiography. It's called *Obfuscation and Esoterica*. I'm looking for an English translator.

* * * *

Sorry, I panicked. I thought it moved. You can have your hammer back.

* * * *

When eavesdroppers at the next table don't hear the music question, they look at you funny when you say, "My favorites are Discharge and Pornography."

* * * *

I love the sinner and the sin.

You find out who are your real friends after you're indicted for making terroristic threats against the Dalai Lama.

* * * *

There are truths in my messes. If messy truths.

* * * *

You probably don't want to touch that. I know where it's been.

* * * *

“How can you be a vegetarian and eat hamburgers???”
I'm a complex man. You wouldn't understand the level I'm operating at.

SOPHY: Okay. I'm going to ask you some fluffy questions to you can keep me entertained.

ZOLA: Sounds good. All fluff all the time.

SOPHY: How's the weather and what did you wear other than silver earrings, rings and black boots?

ZOLA: It was low 50s today and sunny. Nice. I wore blue jeans, a dark blue sort of sweater- sweatshirt and my leather jacket.

SOPHY: So were you really delicious?

ZOLA: (Laughs). Of course. My hair's a bit longer and was all wavy. Medusa-like. When it grows out you can see how wavy it is. When it's really short, you can't tell.

SOPHY: Did you bump into any cute chicks looking that way?

ZOLA: No, didn't bump into one on the streets. Even my barista was a man.

SOPHY: How'd you remember me hating Crash?

ZOLA: I know a lot of things.

SOPHY: What else do you remember?

ZOLA: I remember your first affectionate nickname for me was pumpkin?

SOPHY: Really?!? I don't remember that.

ZOLA: It's true. You said you were timidly testing the waters.

SOPHY: What did you think of it?

ZOLA: I thought pumpkin itself was an odd name, but thought you testing the waters was endearing.

SOPHY: This is so funny. Pumpkin. What was your first nickname for me?

ZOLA: I don't know, but do remember getting you to call me your friend. It was all rather silly. I remember I was the first to use the XO salutation, and even boasted afterwards I was the first to use it. Again, playful banter was involved.

In case you really want to know, I'm an evangelist. I just choose not to talk about it.

* * * *

When I walk through the neighborhood at 2am, I feel as if I am walking in people's dreams.

* * * *

Henry: "You gorgeous piece of man meat."

David: "What?"

Henry: "I was talking to my dinner."

I once told a young woman that a true rebel won't come in tattoos and leather jacket, but dressed like Mr. Robinson.

I will tell you the answer. There is no escape.

2001: A Space Odyssey

The movie is about the evolution of the human species once every millions of years influenced by never seen (by the characters nor the audience) aliens . . . What makes the movie so formidable is at the end it envisions an evolutionary step to something far, far beyond the intelligence and consciousness of current humans, including the viewing audience, and even beyond the genius 'smarter than humans' supercomputer in the movie. The movie is so mysterious and incomprehensible because it attempts to go beyond current human consciousness and intelligence levels.

Stanley Kubrick said that in 2001: A Space Odyssey he was trying to be philosophical, but through images and sounds rather than words, and even compared the movie to a painting. Words are just one form of human communication of ideas and, as the saying goes, some things are beyond words.

What is the value of an artwork that can't be sold or bought?

The kids of a wealthy American art dealer inherited an important artwork by famous American painter Robert Rauschenberg. However, as the work, titled Canyon, incorporated a stuffed federally protected Bald Eagle, the heirs would be committing a felony by selling it. The dealer was only allowed to even own the painting due to special permission from the US Government, testimony from Rauschenberg that the stuffed eagle dated to long before the 1940 bald eagle law and upon the promise that the artwork be displayed publicly. It is shown at Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York

As the work could not be sold, the owners' appraisers and Christies auction house appraised its market value as zero. The philosophy being that the value was what it would sell for on the market, and if it could not be sold it had no market value.

The Internal Revenue Service took a different view. It has a board of art experts that appraises art for tax purposes, and they valued the painting as having a worth of \$65 million. The IRS accepted the valuation and told the painting's owners to pay \$29.2 million in taxes!

It is important to note that the IRS' board of experts said they calculated the \$65 million value by comparing it to the sales prices of similar items on the market and did not take into consideration any laws that would prevent it from being sold. Also, one of the experts said that, even with the law, it didn't make any sense to her to value it at \$0.

The question is what do you think is the value of this artwork?

There's such a shallow pressure that everything in a book has to be imbedded with art and meaning, that words have to be written in a poetic turn. It's a conceit, a fashion. I sometimes don't want to write that way or feel a need to write that way, or even feel it relevant to the subject or to anything. *The gas station is on the second left* versus *Take the second left*, whatever.

* * * *

Simple cadence is a major part of communication and people extract meaning from cadence. Stutter step and you throw people for a loop. They'll be insulted by the most benign statement about a small piece of fluff.

It says language is more than just symbols, and how using symbol language is limited.

Symbol language is a particularly human thing, and one of the limits in artificial intelligence is that it is often programmed to work via symbol language (and human logic).

* * * *

In a work of art you're suppose to imply what you are saying rather than overtly saying it, so I overtly say it.

But I also know if you say things straight it will leave out lots. There are things that can only be said in music and art and angst and emotion. Some things can only be implied, said subconsciously.

Fifty percent of the enjoyment of a movie is expectations. If you go into a Three Stooges movie expecting Orson Wells, that's your fault not the movie's.

Claire: How We Met

I met Dereb in college in one of those friend of a friend situations. He lived with some guys at a large apartment near the engineering school, and a friend of mine had gone to high school with one of them. We stopped by the apartment one afternoon because my friend had to pick up something. Some of the guys including Dereb were playing nerf basketball with a little plastic basketball hoop suction cupped to a banister. My friend's friend briefly introduced me to the guys. Dereb said hi or acknowledged me and my friend and went back to playing, and my friend and I left like a minute later. That was it. To be honest, I thought he was good looking, but didn't think much about it.

Not long after, like maybe two days after, I was standing in the snow outside the Union near the street. It was one of those bright sunny winter days. Dereb walked up to me and asked if we had met earlier, and I said we had.

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Going Away

The medicine isn't intended to cure, but make me forget. Or, forgetting is considered the cure.

In many ways I wish I could make this book 2000, 3000 pages long, so I could fit in more lives, stories.

My heart is so black it's blue.

Henry: "Uh, you might want to re-check your Spanish phrase book. What you just said to the waitress translates to 'I want to have sexual relations with your mother's purse.'"
"I know."

Mirages



Commonly associated with nature, mirages are visual illusions where what we see is correct, but abnormal. Mirages in nature are most commonly caused by unusual bending of light under unusual air conditions. The view can be so abnormal that the viewer 'can't believe his or her eyes.'

The most famous mirage is when it erroneously appears as if a pool of water is in the desert. More than a few thirsty wanderers have found nothing but disappointment ahead. The above pictured *water in the road* is the same type of mirage. Another related mirage is when sailors see an upside down ship in the sky. Enough to convince a pirate to swear off the hooch

These three particular mirages happen when there are

abnormal layers of hot versus cold air that cause the light to refract, or bend, from its usual course. This bending causes an object to appear in an unexpected place. In the desert and highway a piece of the blue sky appears below the horizon, and is wrongly interpreted to be water. At sea a ship is bent upwards so it appears to be in the sky air.

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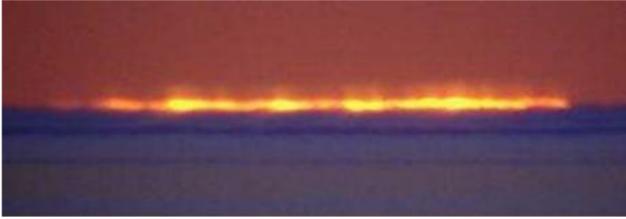
A mirage is called a **superior mirage** where the object appears above where it normally appears (boat in sky). An **inferior mirage** is when the object appears below the where it normally appears (sky in desert).

The inferior mirage happens when there is hot air near the ground. It shouldn't surprise that inferior images commonly happen when the ground surface is hot (desert, summer highway).

A superior mirage happens when there is cold air near the surface. They commonly appear in the arctic and over frozen water.

* * * *

Sunrise mirage. One of the most striking superior mirages is a sunrise mirage. These are seen over frigid areas, such as frozen lakes and seas. The light of the sun is bent upwards along the earth's curved surface making the sunrise appear earlier than normal. The sun is also distorted. Sometimes two suns are seen at once, one superimposed over the other.



sunrise mirage seen from winter Minnesota

This mirage was noticed centuries ago by Western explorers stranded in the arctic over the winter. That far north there is no sun 24 hours a day for much of the winter. The explorers were surprised when the first sunrise of the season appeared days before it was supposed to. It wasn't until centuries later that experts realized the explorers had witnessed this mirage.

* * * *



Water can bend light just as air can, the light bending

from air to water or water to air (or air to water to air, etc). A hardboiled egg distorts from normal appearance in a glass of water. The experienced spear fisher knows to spear to the side of the image of the fish or he will miss. Stones appear to ripple and wave in a crystal clear brook. One can study and demonstrate how mirages work with a drinking glass.

* * * *

The mirages aren't wrong views of an object, just different. Our normal vision involves distortions, including to color, details and angles, so one can hardly claim our normal vision is perfect and anything different imperfect. When they wish a better look, people with 20/20 vision intentionally distort their vision with magnifying glasses, binoculars, periscopes, video cameras and sunglasses.

When you view a bird through binoculars the lens distorts the light to make the bird appear larger and more detailed. You don't consider the binocular view of the bird wrong. You consider it to be more reliable than your naked eye view ("I thought it was a hawk, but it's just a crow.") A submarine's periscope bends light via mirrors so a sailor can see above water. The sailor doesn't consider the view make believe. He considers it a view of reality.

Humans classify views as mirages when they are abnormal and mysterious (at least to the viewer). There are many brilliant atmospheric effects that aren't considered mirages, as they are well understood. Little is more magnificent than a rainbow, but they are frequent and people know there is a scientific explanation. Fog, snow, sunsets and seeing our reflection in puddles would be considered astounding if they weren't common events.

That thousands of pounds of bright white snow changed into grass in one (hot) weekend doesn't cause you to write to Ripley's Believe It Or Not. You are well aware heat melts snow and underneath the snow is grass. You mowed that grass a few months ago. Ripley himself likely had this occur on his lawn numerous times. The changing of the season is impressive, but only a mirage to folks who have no memory of it.

After waking up in the morning and seeing the season's first blanket of snow, my very young sister turned to my dad and said, "Daddy, how'd you do that?"

When people move to new geographies they often experience new weather phenomena. When I moved to Seattle, I experienced unusual (to me) night lighting effects caused by Puget Sound and clouds. One night I thought there was a large fire on the other side of the sound. I later found out it was the lights of a distant hill-hidden town reflecting off of low clouds. This created a low, fiery glow. I see this lighting and it no longer fazes me. The first time I saw it, it was a mirage. Now it's town light reflecting off of low clouds.

“You can't trust water. Even a straight stick
turns crooked in it.”

-- W.C. Fields

The only thing I regret is everything I've ever done. Except when I put the change in the Salvation Army bucket. That counted as neutral.

* * * *

“In summary and in conclusion, Twinkie X’s are approved.”

I'm glad you approve of my Twinkie X's, dearest Zoe,
but I'm moving on. O's and Ho-Ho flavored X's

* * * *

You'll never know. I cover my tracks with nonsense.

My job as a writer isn't to make the hard easy. It's to make the hard.

I miss me too

* * * *

Just because I write about aleatoricism doesn't mean I'd label this book as aleatory. I don't, but mostly because I'm wary of labels. Labels come with too much baggage, associations I don't want to be associated with. I'd never join a club that would have Groucho Marx as a member.

The night has always been my world. It's not a matter of explaining how or why, it just is. Even when I was a little kid, my parents called me a night owl.

Though identical to day on the map, night is a different world. A different fauna, flora, plot, music, smell, temperature, meaning. Daylight society is unconscious.

When I place a single short piece alone on a page readers tend to think it's particularly important.

I don't know if that's slander or libel, so I'm going to sue you for both.

Just for the record, whether or not I was going to make this book 900 pages (and that was a matter of personal and not too overly thought out debate), I discovered the maximum limit for the physically bound book was 828 pages. The printer couldn't print anything larger.

I really wish it could go as far as 900, because I have at least 80 more blank pages I really wanted to include.

It would be one of the most beautiful things if I could include a thousand more blank pages.

The hardest academic projects for me are the ones I take personally. Ones I don't take personally I can churn out like sheet cookies. The ones I take personally eat away at me, haunt my soul because you want perfection.

"I bought a new keyboard for my laptop but it doesn't fit in my backpack. What should I do?"

Henry: "This isn't another one of your stupid 'philosophic' riddles, is it?"

* * * *

Mardi Gras literally means 'Fat Tuesday' but it doesn't literally mean fat tuesday . . . I'm just saying to remember that that 'figuratively' versus 'literally' usage stuff is not as cut and dry as some would have you believe.

Basic qualities that evoke aesthetic reactions



Which design pleases your senses more? Which is calm and serene and which is loud and noisy? Your picks are natural.

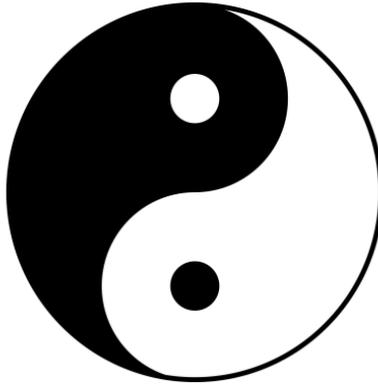
Using brain scans, neuroscientists such as Semir Zeki of University College London and Vilayanur S. Ramachandran of University of California at San Diego have shown that much of our aesthetic perception of art is natural emotional reaction to basic sensory stimuli. Whether viewed on their own or incorporated into art or the physical world, many simple, basic qualities and designs evoke natural psychological, aesthetic and even physical reactions in humans. Many of the basic ideas in this chapter come from the work of Zeki and Ramachandran.

The reactions we have to certain colors, angles and textures are in part hard wired into our brains, though can be honed and altered with experience, education and culture. Artists use these emotion inducing qualities to help express their artistic ideas and create aesthetic feelings. A landscape painter may use *warm* colors and soft lines to evoke pleasant and serene reactions, while an advertising poster artist or

propagandist may use bold colors and jagged lines to excite the senses and raise the blood pressure.

The following looks at just several of these qualities and our responses. When you think about them, you will realize that many of these reactions have practical uses, uses that helped us survive as a species and live efficient lives today.

Symmetry and Balance

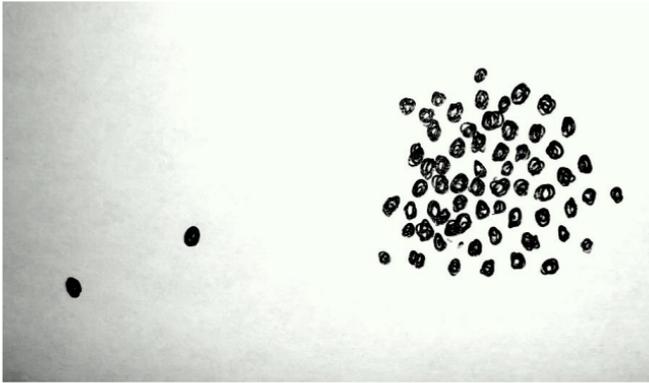


Humans are naturally attracted to symmetrical and balanced scenes in nature and designs in art. We judge the health and beauty of other humans by symmetry. The standard beautiful face and healthy young body is symmetrical. On the flip side, someone with a hunchback, limp or disfigured limb is seen as injured or diseased. A flower that is wilted or a tree that is tilted to one side is seen as dying or sick.

Artists commonly use symmetry and balance to depict beauty and elicit a pleasurable, serene response in viewers. An artist who wants to express disorder, violence and chaos may remove symmetry and balance. She may leave things out of place, make things crooked and messy. Movie

monsters are commonly depicted as deformed and unbalanced. Zombies drag limbs.

This hard wired attraction to symmetry and visceral distaste of out of balance was important to our survival as a species, as mating with youthful healthy people and raising healthy crops helped ensure the survival of the species.



Out of place. Both in art and in the physical world, and even on the dining room table, humans automatically notice things that are out of place. This not only catches our attention in art, but is necessary for our survival as a species. Our ancient in the wild selves wouldn't have survived long if they didn't notice things abnormal or seemingly out of place.

If you ask kids, they can make up a story about what is going along with the above dots. They may say the two dots are rebels shunned by the groups, or they may say they are trying to catch up with the group. To many, these dots are telling a story, even if they are not sure what it is the story.

Mysteries and solving mysteries

Humans are distressed and intrigued by ambiguous scenes, juxtaposition of seeming unrelated things, mysteries and puzzles in art and in the physical world. Our blood pressures raise and our attention is drawn.

This initial psychological response towards mysteries, as is often used in art, is natural. As is the following trying to figure out what is the meaning in the mysteries and what is the relationship between and larger meaning in the juxtaposed objects. Emotionally responding to then feeling psychologically and intellectually compelled to solve mysteries is natural to humans, as is the pleasurable response we get when we feel we've solved the mystery. There's a reason why so many people get enjoyment out of television mysteries, jigsaw and crossword puzzles and magic eye pictures-- at least when, in the end, the mystery is solved, or the puzzle finished. If the puzzle is never finished, or the who done it in the *Murder She Wrote* is not given or is otherwise unsatisfactory ('That was so contrived with so many illogical plot turns and missing details that no one in the audience could have figured it out. In a proper mystery, the audience has to at least have a chance to logically figure it out. '), then the emotional response naturally is not pleasurable.

This mystery and mystery solving applies to still art, including paintings and photographs. People naturally ponder what is going on, try to solve the puzzle, figure out what the people in the scene are doing and thinking, who they are.

This all mirrors our ancient days when humans in the wild were at first distressed or intrigued by a mystery then glad when it was solved. Solving or at least reacting to such

mysteries was essential to survival.

In fact, humans enjoy solving a mystery more than knowing the answer right away. The final pleasure is heightened when it is preceded by mystery and mental problem solving effort.

Meaning and Identification

People naturally like scenes, situations and art where they know what is the meaning and identity, as opposed to where the meaning (if there is one) is a complete mystery. People often have viscerally negative reactions to abstract art, because they don't understand it. They don't know what it is supposed to mean, they don't see identifiable objects. They want it to be like 'normal' art where there is an obvious boat or a house or animal or mountains.

People who are artists or otherwise more educated about art tend to like abstract art more, because they understand it more. With more exposure and longer viewing of an abstract painting, people tend to like the painting more. It's their initial, gut reaction that is most negative and visceral.

This is a natural reaction in humans throughout our history, as all humans have never liked, or at least are highly intrigued, when faced with a situation where they have no idea what is going on. They want concrete answers and identities. It's important to survival.

Contrast

Related to mystery and identification, people naturally like good contrast and have a negative or intrigued reaction to lack of contrast. This is because good contrast means we can

identify things, and bad contrast makes identification and distinction harder to impossible. Fog and dark obscure or hide identity and blur the line between different objects. There is a reason that murder mysteries and horror movies often involve fog and dark. The hidden and obscured scare us, literally raises our blood pressures. When the fog or dark is removed and a harmless scene is revealed, there is a pleasing, relaxing reaction.



Monet painting of a foggy scene

Unrealistic exaggerations

Professor Ramachandran says that humans are psychologically influenced by unrealistic exaggerations of certain qualities. Take size as one example. To humans, the larger the wolf or alligator or gorilla or bear or mountain, the more intimidating and awesome. The larger man is assumed to be the more powerful than the smaller one. Logically, you know you will likely someday see a house and bear and spider bigger than you've seen before. This mindset extends

beyond the bounds of reality. In the extremes, we get impossible super powerful and super sized characters such as Hercules, Superman and the Incredible Hulk. If a gorilla is intimidating due to its size and strength, then King Kong is that much more intimidating.

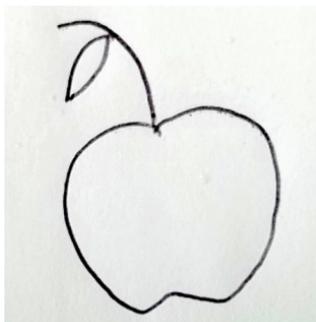
This helps explain our psychological reactions to the exaggerated in art, dreams and day dreams.

Identifying objects through basic qualities

Professor Zeki says humans naturally identify objects by basic, essential qualities. As objects such as trees, apples and dogs each vary to degree from specimen to specimen (two apples will differ in tone, shape and/or size), we must be able to identify them by these basic qualities, such as general color, general shape, general size and weight. Many artists reduce the subjects of their art into the bare essentials that allow the viewers to recognize what they are. The ability to identify objects by general key qualities is essential to our survival since our ancient days, as bananas, for example, don't come in the exact same sizes, shapes and tones and we need to identify what objects are edible.



Most people identify this detail from a Paul Cezanne painting as fruit.



An apple, of course. Notice that many symbols use the bare essentials of what they symbolize. Blue for sky or water, black for night, stick figure with stick arms and legs for human, :) for happy.

The strange and new

Things that are brand new and strange to your eyes, such as an albino squirrel in your back yard or a bizarre animal at the zoo, catch your attention and imagination and literally raise your blood pressure. This response is important as our current and ancient caveman selves wouldn't have survived long if they didn't notice and ponder about new and strange things. Artists regularly use bold radical designs, odd objects, strange juxtapositions to catch the imagination of viewers and focus attention. Experiencing the new is often a major part of experiencing the sublime.

Of course, new and strange is relative. A plant rare and exotic in Oslo may be a common weed in Buenos Aires.

Colors

Humans have psychological reactions to colors, both due to nature and culture. Bright red and yellow naturally stimulate

the senses and raise blood pressure, while blue is calming. Brown is earthy in both the figurative and sometimes literal sense, while green is naturally and culturally associated with nature.

People have naturally favorite colors. It is often inborn. Someone may not know why blue is his favorite color, he just knows that it is. The color is pleasing over other colors. He won't know why brown or green isn't his favorite, it just isn't.

Women tend to have better green/red color perception than men, so it should not be of surprise that women more commonly pick green as their favorite color. Green will appear more vibrant to the average woman than the average man. This points to girls liking pink (whitish red) and boys liking blue having at least part a biological basis. I told this to a friend and she found it quite interesting. She said she and her husband had specifically tried breaking the girls/pink stereotype with their daughter, and the daughter grew up to still like pink.

The previous chapter showed some basic things that evoke natural reactions. Give one or two more examples. They can include variations on the ones mentioned in the chapter or brand new examples.

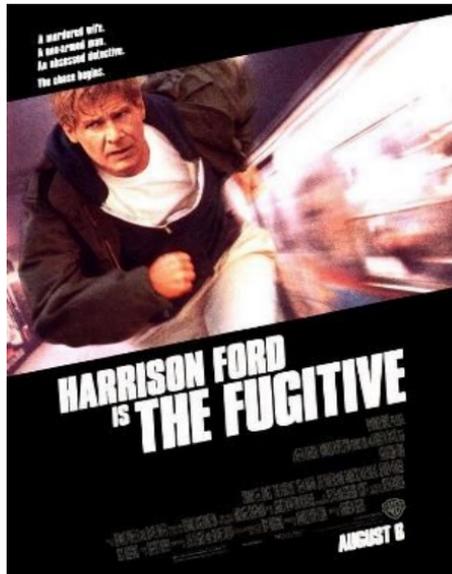
Find and describe two juxtapositions (you can do an online search) and explain what the juxtapositions signify or symbolize, if just by your personal interpretation.



Symmetry in architecture. People associate symmetry with order and tradition. Some find these qualities aesthetically pleasing while others find them stuffy and too old fashioned.



Asymmetry and strangeness in architecture. The unusual, asymmetrical design of Mexico's Museo Soumaya instantly catches the attention of both those who like and dislike it. The unusual design is associated with modernity, invention and cutting edge. It seems like a museum that would hold modern art.



To promote the 1993 action thriller movie *The Fugitive*, the poster designers tilted the image and words, placed the actor off center left and gave him an unbalanced body position. These things evoke action, movement, danger, a world out of kilter.

Sophy: “My guess is you wouldn’t have liked me in school but I would have liked you.”

You can hang around folks—but the important things must be done alone—dreams are done alone, thoughts are done alone

Despite its ravingness and hideousness and uselessness, this is a true act, a sincere act—and in a way clean because of it

Transhumanism is the futuristic philosophy of expanding beyond current human mental capabilities, and some envision it as the next step in human evolution. It involves enhancing human intelligence and consciousness via combining human minds with some form(s) of artificial intelligence and/or biological enhancement. Some consider a restructuring of social and political order as a requirement.

Duly note that when some think of transhumanism they think of a cyborg or human with implants, but a group of entities can be considered a mind. Humans today working with computers can be compared to transhumanism, and swarm intelligence is an example of group intelligence. A human think tank or corporation involves group intelligence. Call it a mind if you wish. This also points to why many believe transhumanism would involve a social restructuring.

Of course, as with artificial intelligence and time travel, theory and implementing (in practice) are two very different things. A lot of the stuff people talk about is pretty pie in the sky I may be a theorist, but am also the son of an engineering and a have practical side.

Assignment #1: Answer the question What is your personal definition of art?

Assignment #2: Pick two works of art that you love or otherwise find profound and explain why you love them or otherwise find them profound. The reasons can include it is a genre or style you like. It could be due to the size or history. It could be due to what it means, the philosophy. If you connect to a character, it relates to your past or depicts your home town, explain. If you aren't entirely sure why, say so.

Assignment #3: What widely acclaimed art do you not like? Explain why. If it helps, the Mona Lisa doesn't do much for me. And if you pressed me, I might say "I don't know why. It just doesn't. Give me a Botticelli instead any time."

Visa vie defining art, one thing the assignments demonstrate is that you can't fully explain the reasons behind what you like and dislike. You can love or hate a work and not be entirely sure why.

Music can be philosophical. It gives us new ideas, expands our minds, breaks our molds of looking at things, offers new geographies.

Music very much influences my writing and philosophy. More so, perhaps, than writing.





Someone being a zealot for a particular religion and against another is often not because of the religions but because of the person's natural psychology. The person may have a zealot's psychology and, if born in different place and upbringing, she might have the same zealous fervor, but for another religion, perhaps the same one she currently opposes and against the one she currently belongs to.

* * * *

As far as the old article collages, I don't really know about those. I had earlier envisioned artistic diptychs and triptychs of images and text, but later thought doing that might be opening a can of worms. I don't know. I thought of working on what's there on the pages more, changing them, but it would be changing them to what? It's complicated, and I figured perhaps it was best to leave not well enough alone. Leave it as a unfinished pile of two by fours and nails. Do what you want with them. I may rework them for another book.

I can almost assure you that text and image triptychs will appear in later books-- in fact be the subject of a small book-- and more philosophy will be put into them by then.

Why can't a book change its mind throughout?

* * * *

"Don't pronounce it like that. You sound like an American."

"I am an American."

"That's no excuse."

Humans are a symbol language based animal. This is how we conceptualize and think about the world. Other animals don't think and use symbolic language as we do, and perceive the world and their environment via sensory pictures. Some say their view can be richer, more detailed and even more accurate, not filtered and translated through artificial and limited symbols.

What is interesting is that humans usually in major part measure the intelligence (or their definition of what is intelligence) of other animals, computers and artificial intelligence based on their use and command of symbolic language. Humans usually define intelligence as thinking and conceptualizing using their particular methods and qualities that humans use.

If a human perceives a rabbit in the above Albrecht Durer picture and a dog does not, which animal is demonstrating better visual perception? Humans sometimes use as evidence of a dog's dimwittedness that the dog 'doesn't see' the animal in a magazine or book, when, of course, there isn't a real animal on the page. It's ink on paper. From its sense of smell alone, the dog would know there ain't no rabbit in the above picture. The dog is faulted for not seeing what isn't there.

The above human perception of the rabbit was symbolic. It was a symbol of a rabbit. Symbols are important for communication and human function, but it could be argued that the dog's non-symbolic reading of the picture was more

accurate.

As shown throughout this book practical function requires distortion and suppression of information and reality. The symbols human use are important for human practical function and a source of our great success and dominance as a species, but is a two edged sword. Knowledge often has no practical function and can inhibit practical function.

This should be kept in mind when humans judge animals, and animal intelligence, by their practical function--in particular in how they compare to human function. A non-human animal may not be able to make a band saw or build a skyscraper (our measure of superior intelligence), but may have a more realistic and advanced perception of things. It could be argued that, at least in a way, the animal is more intelligent, more conscious.

It could be said that human intelligence, at least as how they judge it, is about who is best at manipulating symbols.

A big problem in discovering what non-human animals think and feel and how they think is language. They don't communicate their inner thoughts, or at least in the advanced verbal or written way we do.

Of course they don't think in the symbolic language as we do either. Translating their thoughts into our symbolic language would belie their thinking.

Certain human endeavors, such as meditation and art, are often attempts to get beyond symbolic language to other ways of thought.

And of course this book is symbolic language-- and that is one of its inescapable problems. One that I am keenly aware of, try to escape in my mangling of text, know I can't.

Henry: "I hate to get all technical on you and all, but the animal in the Durer painting is a hare."

Lewis Carroll as photographer



Though famous as a writer of 'Alice and Wonderland' children's books, Oxford mathematics professor and reverend Charles Dodgson (pen name Lewis Carroll) was also an accomplished photographer. He had his photography studio on the Oxford campus. The above photo is a Dodgson portrait of Alice Liddell, the young girl who Alice was based on.

I know there are problems with this book.

But on the airplane disturbing acts have been performed! As I sit in a buttoned up shirt, seat belt buckled!, I notice that literature has been planted in the open sat next to me! I am trying to act as you have to stay on the airplane-- my shirt is white and straight, my belt is buckled, my legs are crossed for effect, my mouth closed and firm-- but someone has put this literature here for me! Oh, technically, I planted the books there! I brought these old textbooks, a spiral notebook and a pencil to make people think I was a conscientious student, perhaps on his way to a seminar in Berkeley! I removed them from my backpack and put them there! But they have changed in the meanwhile! I can't remember if I went to the bathroom or checked the racks for a Sports Illustrated-- but they have changed! I brought the books along for affect so they'd think Yes, Yes, Fine, Very Good, and ignore me! But the books have changed! Like caterpillars into insidious butterflies! Their covers, the words inside are literally the same! But the aura, the tang, the music, the being, has ben transformed! Just look at them! They are like jellyfish! Listen to their infectious music! They were planted here by see-through hands! I looked around to see me if it was someone sitting here who had done this, but they are all dullards! Their expressions glazed over, waiting for their drinks! It was none of them!

I take and read these souls of book and their words are dreamy, disturbing! Like quicksand! Someone's snuck a mickey into my vodka tonic! For every effort you make the

blurrier it gets! You think you've got it, then you read the sentence over and it's changed! a third time and it's changed again!

The puzzle of the words is dreamy-- the meaning I can't find! There is a music, there is a buzz behind the trees, but the meaning is evasive! The music is fleeting, mostly drowned out by clutter noise and murk!

And when I lift my face from the books I instantly see that everything has been infected with the books' ljdidd! The airplane's insides have bloomed into an insidious butterfly! A blood red cave! There is such profoundness such aching in everything my heart almost bursts! There is a simultaneous darkness and glow in every minute detail: The lapel flower of the stewardess, the writing on the peanuts bag in my hands: 'Mng. In Cincinnati Ohio U.S.A.' The haunting in these words and in the writing font-- white/silver on red/silver-- is overwhelming-- I scream in my heart and in me head!

“There is the old Taoist story of an old farmer. One day his horse ran away and upon hearing the news, his neighbors said 'What bad luck.' 'Maybe,' the farmer said. The next day the horse returned with three wild horses. 'What good luck,' the neighbors said. 'Maybe,' said the farmer. The following day, his son tried to ride one of the wild horses and was thrown and broke his leg. The neighbors said 'What bad luck.' 'Maybe,' answered the farmer. The following day, army officers came to the village to draft young. Seeing the son's leg was broken, they passed him by. The neighbors said 'What good luck.' 'Maybe,' said the farmer.”

* * * *

From Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage, 1977, pp. 3-8.:

On 1 March 1757 Damiens the regicide was condemned "to make the amende honorable before the main door of the Church of Paris", where he was to be "taken and conveyed in a cart, wearing nothing but a shirt, holding a torch of burning wax weighing two pounds"; then, "in the said cart, to the Place de Grève, where, on a scaffold that will be erected there, the flesh will be torn from his breasts, arms, thighs and calves with red-hot pincers, his right hand, holding the knife with which he committed the said parricide, burnt with sulphur, and, on those places where the flesh will be torn away, poured molten lead, boiling oil, burning resin, wax and sulphur melted together and then his body drawn and quartered by four horses and his limbs and body consumed by fire, reduced to ashes and his ashes thrown to the winds" (Pièces originales..., 372-4).

"Finally, he was quartered," recounts the Gazette d'Amsterdam of 1 April 1757. "This last operation was very long, because the horses used were not accustomed to drawing; consequently, instead of four, six were needed; and when that did not suffice, they were forced, in order to cut off the wretch's thighs, to sever the sinews and hack at the joints..."

"It is said that, though he was always a great swearer, no blasphemy escaped his lips; but the excessive pain made him utter horrible cries, and he often repeated: 'My God, have pity on me! Jesus, help me!' The spectators were all edified by the solicitude of the parish priest of St Paul's who despite his great age did not spare himself in offering consolation to the patient."

Bouton, an officer of the watch, left us his account: "The sulphur was lit, but the flame was so poor that only the top skin of the hand was burnt, and that only slightly. Then the executioner, his sleeves rolled up, took the steel

pincers, which had been especially made for the occasion, and which were about a foot and a half long, and pulled first at the calf of the right leg, then at the thigh, and from there at the two fleshy parts of the right arm; then at the breasts. Though a strong, sturdy fellow, this executioner found it so difficult to tear away the pieces of flesh that he set about the same spot two or three times, twisting the pincers as he did so, and what he took away formed at each part a wound about the size of a six-pound crown piece.

"After these tearings with the pincers, Damiens, who cried out profusely, though without swearing, raised his head and looked at himself; the same executioner dipped an iron spoon in the pot containing the boiling potion, which he poured liberally over each wound. Then the ropes that were to be harnessed to the horses were attached with cords to the patient's body; the horses were then harnessed and placed alongside the arms and legs, one at each limb.

"Monsieur Le Breton, the clerk of the court, went up to the patient several times and asked him if he had anything to say. He said he had not; at each torment, he cried out, as the damned in hell are supposed to cry out, 'Pardon, my God! Pardon, my Lord.' Despite all this pain, he raised his head from time to time and looked at himself boldly. The cords had been tied so tightly by the men who pulled the ends that they caused him indescribable pain. Monsieur le [sic] Breton went up to him again and asked him if he had anything to say; he said no. Several confessors went up to him and spoke to him at length; he willingly kissed the crucifix that was held out to him; he opened his lips and repeated: 'Pardon, Lord.'

"The horses tugged hard, each pulling straight on a limb, each horse held by an executioner. After a quarter of an hour, the same ceremony was repeated and finally, after several attempts, the direction of the horses had to be changed, thus: those at the arms were made to pull towards the head, those at the thighs towards the arms, which broke the arms at the joints. This was repeated

several times without success. He raised his head and looked at himself. Two more horses had to be added to those harnessed to the thighs, which made six horses in all. Without success.

"Finally, the executioner, Samson, said to Monsieur Le Breton that there was no way or hope of succeeding, and told him to ask their Lordships if they wished him to have the prisoner cut into pieces. Monsieur Le Breton, who had come down from the town, ordered that renewed efforts be made, and this was done; but the horses gave up and one of those harnessed to the thighs fell to the ground. The confessors returned and spoke to him again. He said to them (I heard him): 'Kiss me, gentlemen.' The parish priest of St Paul's did not dare to, so Monsieur de Marsilly slipped under the rope holding the left arm and kissed him on the forehead. The executioners gathered round and Damiens told them not to swear, to carry out their task and that he did not think ill of them; he begged them to pray to God for him, and asked the parish priest of St Paul's to pray for him at the first mass.

"After two or three attempts, the executioner Samson and he who had used the pincers each drew out a knife from his pocket and cut the body at the thighs instead of severing the legs at the joints; the four horses gave a tug and carried off the two thighs after them, namely, that of the right side first, the other following; then the same was done to the arms, the shoulders, the arm-pits and the four limbs; the flesh had to be cut almost to the bone, the horses pulling hard carried off the right arm first and the other afterwards.

"When the four limbs had been pulled away, the confessors came to speak to him; but his executioner told them that he was dead, though the truth was that I saw the man move, his lower jaw moving from side to side as if he were talking. One of the executioners even said shortly afterwards that when they had lifted the trunk to throw it on the stake, he was still alive. The four limbs were untied from the ropes and thrown on the stake set up in the enclosure in line with the scaffold, then the trunk

and the rest were covered with logs and faggots, and fire was put to the straw mixed with this wood.

"...In accordance with the decree, the whole was reduced to ashes. The last piece to be found in the embers was still burning at half-past ten in the evening. The pieces of flesh and the trunk had taken about four hours to burn. The officers of whom I was one, as also was my son, and a detachment of archers remained in the square until nearly eleven o'clock.

"There were those who made something of the fact that a dog had lain the day before on the grass where the fire had been, had been chased away several times, and had always returned. But it is not difficult to understand that an animal found this place warmer than elsewhere" (quoted in Zevaes, 201-14).

There is a strange beauty in the second passage! The ironic beauty created by noise and friction and clutter! Peripheral uncatchable beauty imbedded somehow in the words!

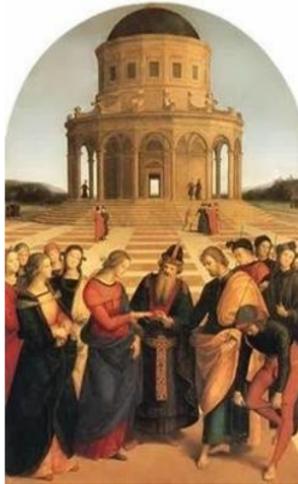
But everything is a mystery! Even the beauty is a murmur in the back of the head you can't hold your breath and catch! It is drown out by the very words creating it! The hard kernel prize behind the scene I can't find! I search desperately, but it is in the back of my head! But I want it in hardness, I want it to bottle it up and keep in my pocket so I can smell it and taste it later whenever I want!

I read the passages plus others in San Diego and there is the added strangeness of the foreign air the foreign aura the bittersweetness you can almost taste! It hangs in the air like bats! And in the solitariness of a crowded street I howl like a dog at these words! Can't you feel the hideous music? Can't you feel it? I bark like the goat! I fall to my knees in the street! My eyes turn to goat's yes! I bark like a goat and my eyes turn crosseyed!



Did you know? Though now ranked as one of the great British films, Carol Reed's 1947 Irish political thriller *Odd Man Out* was controversial and censored at the time of its original release, because it ends with a 'suicide by cop.' Kathleen Ryan's character sneaks a gun from the coat pocket of her wounded Irish rebel boyfriend James Mason and shoots it at police to get the police to shoot back and kill them both.

The illusion of depth in two dimensional art



This 1400s Raphael painting uses many techniques to give the sense of depth, including diagonal lines, diminishing scale, placing objects top to bottom.

Creating the perception of depth in paintings, sketches and photographs is a challenge, one that cannot be completely solved. This is because depth is three dimensional, while a sketch, photographic print or painting is two dimensional. Three dimensions cannot physically exist in two dimensions — they are mutually exclusive.

If you hold a crystal clear family snapshot of the Grand Canyon in your hand, at least logically you know that distant cliff and cloud is not miles behind your hand. You know it is

just an image on the surface of a flat piece of paper.

Over the centuries artists have developed techniques to create the superficial representation of depth in 2D art. Before these techniques, paintings and sketches lacked any sense of depth. Cave drawings appear primitive as the artists didn't understand the standard concepts of depicting depth. An early European painting shows objects in unreal proportions to each other. A mile away person may be the same size as a person up close. People today would compare the proportions to 'kid's drawings.'

This chapter looks at a number of standard techniques used to give paintings, sketches and other 2D art the illusion of depth. These are techniques you can observe in art at the museum and incorporate into your own art. These are also 'techniques' you can observe in a real life, such as when looking at your living room or across your back yard. After all, the art is attempting to duplicate natural scenes such as these.

* * * *

Overlapping objects



An object appears to be in front of the object(s) it overlaps.

Overlapping is the strongest indicator of relative distance, overriding all other signs when there is seeming conflict. In the above Cezanne painting, the large center tree overlaps the *distant* bridge, mountain and sky.

* * * *

Diminishing scale

With things that are believed to be of same or similar size (2 cats or 2 basketballs), the visually larger appears to be closer than the smaller. In the Cezanne painting, the viewer assumes that the tree is much smaller than the distant hills. Thus the difference in scale (tree taking up more painting space than the hills) makes it appear as if the tree is closer. In the earlier Raphael painting, the smaller people appear to be further away than the larger. This is because the viewer is under the assumption people are of similar size when standing side by side.

* * * *

Diagonal lines representing diminishing scale

An exemplification of diminishing scale, diagonal lines moving towards each other as they move up or down a painting or sketch give the illusion of depth. A real world example of this is a straight road that appears to become skinnier as it approaches the distant horizon. Another example is when you stand at one end of an empty hallway and watch the lines where the wall and floor meet visually move towards each other as they move to the farther side of the room.



This photo shows diagonal lines and diminishing scale

* * * *

Colors

Without contradicting signs of depth, humans tend to perceive bright, warm colors such as red, orange and yellow as being close, and dark, cool colors like blue and dark purple as being further away. This is particularly true for abstract images where there often is a lack of other depth or identity clues.

For landscapes, adding blue will make hills and mountains look more distant. The further away the bluer. This mimics the real world, where distant mountains have a bluish tone.

* * * *

Bottom to Top Placement of Ground and Top to Bottom Placement of Ceilings Barring conflicting information, humans generally perceive what is at the bottom of painting

to be in front, and what is at the top to be in the back. This is particularly true when looking outside where there is no 'ceiling.'



Top to bottom: The bottom fans appear to be closer than fans and lights near the top. This is also an example of diminishing scale, with the bottom fans being larger than the top fans and lights

Inside a building, the ceiling can have the opposite effect, with the ceiling area nearest you appearing higher than the ceiling area further away.



In this room, the floor appears to move up the further it gets away from you. The ceiling (which is sort of like an upside down floor) appears to move down. These are both the product of diminishing scale.

* * * *

Focus

Things that are in focus tend to be perceived as closer than things that are out of focus. This makes sense, as a road sign is blurry if too far away.

Similarly, objects that have more intense color, detail and contrast often appear closer than objects that are blurrier, hazier and less focused.



In this old photograph depth is shown by diminishing scale, the narrowing lines of the road and building tops, and that with distance things become blurrier and hazier.

* * * *

Many visual illusions manipulate these techniques. The illusions often use incongruous, seemingly illogical techniques to toy with our minds. One quality suggests one thing, while another suggests the opposite. One quality evokes closeness, while another evokes great distance in the same object. The discord produces an emotional reaction in

the viewer. The illusion will appear impossible to the viewer, and can literally raise her blood pressure and heart rate.

The natural signs of depth can also fool us in the real world. Nature can give seemingly conflicting signs. Houses appear larger and further away in heavy fog. In a movie, what appears as a full sized house or ship or dinosaur can be a miniature model. Carefully crafted sets make the things appear many times larger than they are. The moon appears larger when visually closer to the horizon. Rooms can be colored to appear roomier.

* * * *

A problem in trying to create realistic depth in two dimensions is that the human is designed to detect real depth not a flat representation. Looking at the real back yard, each eye looks at the 3D objects from a different angle, the head and body movement creating even more perspectives. The mind combines these different views into the mind's image.

This cannot be done with a two dimensional object. With a still life painting, and even a still life photograph, it is not possible for the eyes to get the different views of the fruit bowl that is needed to perceive a truly 3D fruit bowl. The photograph, no matter how clear, shows only one angle.

Notice that many attempts to create a closer to true 3D effect involve alteration not just to the flat image but of the viewer's vision. 3D movies and pictures often require special glasses and viewers.

The hologram is a rare example of a flat image that can realistically simulate three dimensions, allowing the viewer to see angles and even sides of the pictured object.

The key is to lie so often they don't know when you tell the truth.

Night versus day vision



Albert Ryder's *The Race Track (Death on a Pale Horse)*

Due to our optics, humans see better in daylight than dark. This is reflected in our perception and description of the world and in our art and language.

There almost always is light when it is pitch black to humans, but it is in wavelengths human eyes can't detect. Ultraviolet and infrared light are commonly present, but invisible to humans. A human can get a suntan from ultraviolet light and feel the warmth associated with infrared light, yet is unable to see either.

There are legitimate reasons for humans to naturally fear, or at least be wary, of the dark. We don't know what's

out there. If we run in it, there's a good chance we could trip and fall. That's not superstitious, that's common sense.

Other animals have night and day vision different from humans. Owls see better in night than in day. It's not that objects such as picnic tables and fence posts physically vanish in the dark of night. It's that humans are unable to see them. Owls see them fine. Geese see ultraviolet light invisible to humans. Geese eyes see all the color we see, plus the color of ultraviolet.

Darkness is popularly associated with sinister, and light with goodness. Look at the common dark words and phrases:

Dark angel
Dark and mysterious
She has a black heart
The darkness of his soul
Dark motives
He has a dark mind
Heart of Darkness

The color black is worn as a statement by brooding teenagers.

In Western culture, white, yellow and other bright colors are associated with happiness and goodness. Someone who is upbeat and smiley is said to be in a bright or sunny mood.

Hell is commonly pictured as shadowy and Heaven as sunny. Good angels are typically described as wearing white. Virginal brides wear white. The Wicked Witch of the West wore black. The Good Witch of the East wore white.

Monsters are commonly called creatures of the night, and genuine creatures of the night, like bats and owls, have been called monsters and demons.

Vampires, as the stories go, rise at night from their

coffins and die when exposed to daylight. The cursed man becomes a werewolf at the full moon of the night.

It's fascinating how much human philosophy, religion and society are formed by human sensory abilities.



Shadows and darkness of film noir

Infrared viewers, such as night vision goggles, do not allow humans to see infrared light, but translate infrared light into visible light. We cannot see infrared light and can only guess how an infrared viewing animal perceives it.

* * * *

Have you ever noticed that when you're outside at night, you can see a star better when you're not looking straight at it? The center of your retina does not have rods which are used to see at night. The rods are off center, so you see better at night off center. When looking at a faint star, try turning your head a bit as it may appear brighter out of your periphery.

Given humans' night vision it is not coincidence that humans perceive ghosts as things that come out at night, are pale and colorless, ephemeral, fleeting, peripheral, dreamlike, shimmering, mysterious, otherworldly. Under the shroud of night a lawn chair can look like a shadowy figure. A backpack left on a picnic table can resemble a strange animal. A rustling bush can startle the sheekles out of someone walking home alone. As there is a lack of visual information at night, humans use their imaginations to fill in the story.

When people see the word 'yawn' they have a tendency to have an urge to yawn.

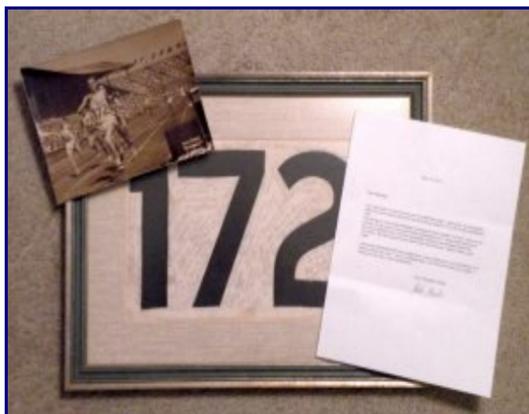
I do hide things. The messiness and volume of this book shows a fullness and a reality, but also is useful for hiding and evading. I can hide things behind the clutter, but also in front.

* * * *

Henry: "We all know David works on a different level than the rest of us. We just haven't figured out if it's a higher or a lower level."

Keep the Receipt: The Importance of Provenance in Collecting

One often hears the word provenance in context of the fine art world, such as with the sale of a Rembrandt or Renoir painting, while the topic is often idly dismissed or ignored by collectibles and memorabilia collectors. However, provenance should also be an important consideration for collectors of collectables, memorabilia and even trading cards. This week's column is a look at the significance and various aspects of provenance, and why you should keep it in mind as you collect.



1948 London Olympics middle distance runner Herbert Barten race worn number autographed by 45 Olympic team members, with Barten signed LOA and original photo of him wearing the number.

What is provenance?

Provenance most often refers to the history of ownership of

an item, and is documented by receipts, letters from owners and similar records. In the case of some famous paintings, the ownership can be traced back for centuries. In a broader sense, provenance includes other documentation of an item's history.

If a piece of memorabilia appears in an old auction catalog, is pictured in a magazine article or was shown in a public exhibit, that's documentation of its history. If you find a magazine photo showing a football player wearing the exact same jersey you bought at auction, that's a document of its history. If you buy a game used baseball bat from a Major League Baseball online auction and keep the receipt or print out the online sales description page, that's provenance documentation.



First woman to swim the English Channel Gertrude Ederle signed Christmas card with the original mailing envelope with her return address and forward address to famous autograph collector Roy Pitts. Not only does the envelope help authenticate the card, but it displays well.

Provenance can help establish identity and support

authenticity

While provenance does not in and of itself prove authenticity, it can be useful evidence towards identifying and authenticating an item. Clearly, a letter of provenance from a famous athlete's estate or team helps establish the authenticity of a game used item. The auction catalog or sales receipt from a sale by a reputable auction house both establishes the sales history and documents that a reputable source thought it authentic. Even simple documentation showing that an item has been around for decades, such as an old newspaper clipping or exhibit catalog, rules it out as a recently made fake.

Provenance can help identify important facts. If research shows a display photograph came from the Humphrey Bogart's estate, this will help identify the photo as belonging to Bogart. The Bogart ownership is part of the photo's identity and value. Heck, a soup spoon documented as having come from Bogart's kitchen will sell for something on eBay.

Provenance isn't infallible, is limited in what it says, and authentication requires looking at both the item itself and the provenance, not *just* the provenance. That a baseball bat came from 1920s-30s baseball great Lou Gehrig's estate doesn't itself prove that it was used by him in a game. That a baseball card belonged to former star pitcher Sandy Koufax doesn't prove that the card is original. Koufax can own reprints just as anyone can. Sometimes an athlete or other celebrities's letter of authenticity for a personal item gets details wrong. Even famous people's memories can be fuzzy and they can misidentify items, forget dates and places.

Provenance can be forged and that is often revealed when examining the item. For every forged Babe Ruth or Elvis Presley autograph on eBay, there is a made up story of how it was originally obtained. It is a running joke amongst vintage baseball card collectors how many modern computer counterfeits on eBay were "found in my grandmother's cabinet" Again, authentication involves looking at all aspects

of the item, not just a LOA or the seller's interesting story.

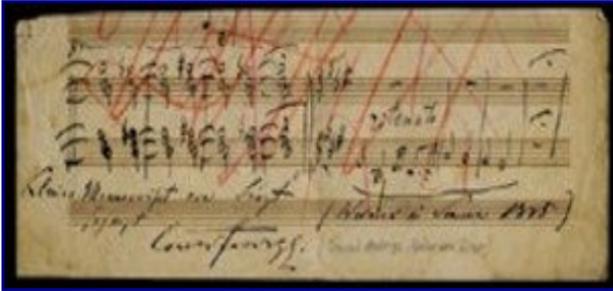
Good provenance can enhance value

Solid documentation of history, a letter of authenticity from a team or estate, a sales receipt from a well known gallery, dealer or auction house will make future buyers more confident in the item and willing to spend more. Even when authenticity is not the issue, documentation proving ownership by someone famous or otherwise noted, having been exhibited at a gallery or museum, or having appeared in a magazine or newspaper article will also add to the desirability. Buyers like that stuff.

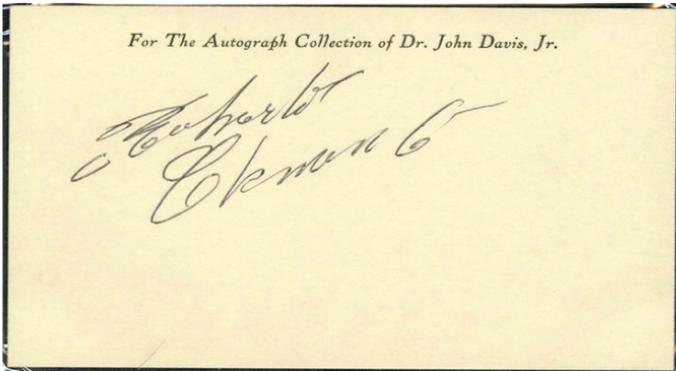
Collectors will pay more for a 1985 New York Yankees team photo that hung at Yankee Stadium, as opposed to one that belonged to Joe Schmoe. Some collectors find the history of an item interesting in and of itself and will pay more where more details are known. Beyond helping authenticate the item, a photo showing a baseball star the same bat or a movie star wearing the same hat is great for display.

A collector can create her own good provenance by buying from reputable sellers. If you purchase an autograph or rare piece of memorabilia from a well known and respected seller, when you turn to it sell you can show it was purchased from a well known and respected seller. Many game used collectors go through photos and film, trying to find photo matches of their equipment. Many collectors and dealers say a photo match is more valuable than a letter of authenticity.

Prominent autograph expert Jim Stinson says, "Always keep the bill of sale. As a long time buyer of vintage autographs I never ask to see a 'letter of opinion.' But I will often ask to see a bill of sale. Not to see what the item sold for but to track provenance. Even in cases where the seller is long ago deceased. A bill of sale from a reputable dealer is a solid resource."



Franz Liszt handwritten musical notes with identifying note at bottom from Conrad Ansoerge. Ansoerge was Liszt's former piano student in the 1800s and went on to become a noted composer and music professor in his own right.



Roberto Clemente autographed index card with the stamp of famed old time autograph collector Dr. John Davis Jr. Davis got his personalized index cards signed in person or through the mail

Provenance can identify fakes, forgeries and alterations

In instances, the documented past of an item has shown that items in auction are fake or altered. The following are just a few examples:

A major auction house auctioned a 'genuine 1920s Cleveland Indians Pro Model hat.' Looking at the auction catalog a collector recognized the hat, because he had once owned it. He had bought it as part of a complete uniform, glove and bat from the estate of a small town player who's

baseball team wore caps identical in style to the Indians. This provenance showed that the auction description was false. It was a nice vintage cap, just not a Cleveland Indians cap.

An auction house auctioned a rare and valuable 1800s century cabinet card photograph. A collector recognized the cabinet card from a previous sale, and the previous sale's photos showed that, since that sale, the cabinet card had been extensively restored. The problem was the auction house made no mention of the restoration.

An online dealer auctioned several rare early 1900s lithographs. An earlier auction catalog showed that they had recently been cut from a large uncut sheet. The dealer made no mention of the recent alterations.

When someone is offering a Gem Mint antique baseball card with perfect razor sharp edges, have you ever considered asking where it was acquired? If the seller himself trimmed the card, he won't be able to provide documentation that it existed in that condition before he owned it. Clearly, there won't be solid documentation for many cards-- cards are discovered in books, bought as part of group lots, a sales receipt may make no mention of grade-- but provenance of high grade cards should be something to keep in the back of your mind.

"Authentic autographs have a history or source ... forgeries do not," Stinson states. "They just 'appear'."

Researching the history doesn't always find bad news. A collector bought a bronze medal that was advertised as having been owned by baseball great Jackie Robinson. The embossed text on the medal showed it came from an obscure small town Wisconsin medical organization, and the diligent collector wrote to them. After checking their files, the organization wrote back that not only did they have record that the medal was given to Robinson after he gave a speech to the group, but their letter included a photo showing Robinson receiving that very medal. This provenance not only proved the medal authentic but probably doubled the value.

Stolen items

In the high end art world, a legitimate concern is the sale of stolen art. This is a worry because there is much Nazi looted art around and because valuable art has been stolen for museums, galleries and homes. Some European countries require provenance documentation before a high end artwork can even be sold, and many buyers want ownership history to establish that an item isn't stolen.

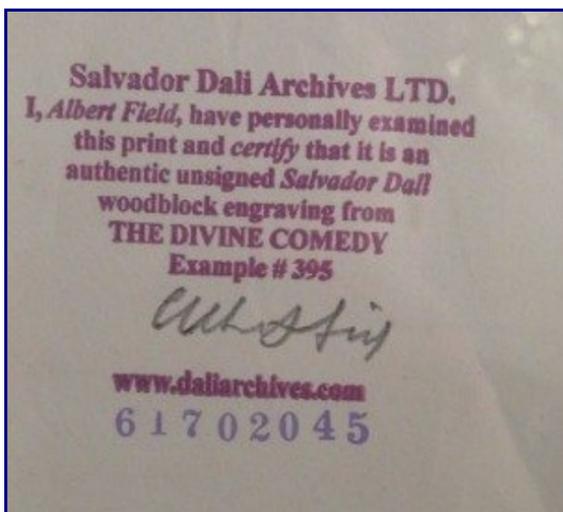
Stolen items aren't only part of the European art world. Important baseballs, sports autographs and photographs sold by major auction houses have turned out later been stolen from the Hall of Fame and New York Public Library.

Realize that if you buy a stolen item, you don't own it. The sale wasn't legal and you may have to return it. The very least you want to do is to get a sales receipt at purchase so you can get your money back from that seller. The receipt is for your protection, and if you lose it or never got one you may be out of luck if the item turns out to be stolen.

To protect their history, some countries have passed laws to prevent the export of certain artifacts, usually antiquities. Egypt passed a law in 1983 and China passed a similar law in 2009. Certain classes of items exported past the respective country's date are considered stolen and the seller could get into legal trouble. However, if the artifact owner has documentation showing the item was obtained before the date, it is legal to own and sell. China also places red stickers on old items that are legal for export. The sticker doesn't authenticate the item, but demonstrates that the item is legal to own and resell.

On PBS's Antiques Roadshow, someone brought in a valuable ancient Egyptian figure. A sticker on the bottom showed that not only had it once been purchased from a well known and respected old time dealer of Egyptian antiquities, but that it was purchased before 1983 and was legal to own and resell. Good news for the guy who brought it to the show.

There will someday be a situation where a potential buyer wants proof that you own an item, or even accuses you of selling stolen items. You'll be glad if you kept your receipt.



Stamp and signature on the back of a Salvador Dali print from his official archivist and internationally known Dali expert, Albert Field.

Collectibles as historical artifacts

Vintage memorabilia and collectibles are historical artifacts and collectors, in their way, are historians. Keeping records about an item is a good idea, if not for you, for posterity. The names and places for countless antique photos in online auctions and sales have been lost in time. Identities and sales histories may not enhance the financial value, but many collectors would like to know who are these people in the photos, or at least which state the photo was taken. A future book writer or historian may use that information.

* * * *

This column doesn't offer a set of cookie cutter rules about

provenance, and doesn't say how much this or that letter will increase value. However, this column demonstrates that provenance and its significance should be something you keep in mind as you collect, whether it relates to identification, stolen items or history.

My friend said she and her husband told their young daughter that the ice cream truck was a 'music truck,' and it wasn't until a couple of years later that the daughter learned her parents hadn't been entirely forthcoming and the trucks carried ice cream.

* * * *

Another area I wish I had more room to fit in is group psychology and group intelligence, because humans have survived, function and thrived by working in groups, and we grow, learn and function as social animals. Humans are wired to function in groups, socially, and looking at this area is an important part of understanding how human minds work. Humans regularly suppress truth seeking and truth telling to accommodate group achievement and cohesiveness. Sports teams often involve giving up individual achievements for the greater team success. Successful organizations have heads who know how to integrate people with different talents and personalities. Our perceptions of reality are in part formed by the society and culture in which we live.

Humans consider themselves superior to other animals because of all the great things they have done as groups and societies-- cathedrals, inventions, science, space travel.

However, when you look at human group intelligence you see a lot of stupid and self-destructive things that don't exist amongst other species. Large scale wars, destruction of the planet, massive pollution, extinction of species. Economics, the stock market and mobs show regular cases of swarm stupidity.

Values, Culture and Aesthetics in Visual Perception



Give an objective identification of what is in the three pictures. Answer one picture at a time, by saying the answer aloud or to yourself. The images are not digital tricks or manipulations. They were picked because of their straight forward, familiar subjects. I am just looking for quick objective identifications.

One or more of your answers likely was on the order of

'George Washington crossing the Delaware,' 'a bald eagle' and/or 'a watch.' These answers are not objective, being formed in part by value judgments, aesthetic views and other personal biases.

In the lower left picture there is much more than a bald eagle. There is sky, stump, trees. The 'eagle' answer subjectively singles out one thing. Part of this is due to a personal and cultural value judgment that a bald eagle is more important than the other objects. Another reason is because the eagle is pictured large, clear and centered. If the picture showed a tree close up and in focus and a small out of focus eagle flying in the distant background, your answer likely would have differed. Change in arrangement, size and focus effects the viewer's labeling, even when the identical objects are pictured.

You may not have known the dark blurriness near the bottom is trees, but that does not change their identity. If you called them bushes, that would not make them bushes. It's common to ignore the unknown.

Similarly, if your answer to the lower right picture was 'a watch,' you made an aesthetic and value judgment about what is and is not important. Placement and focus affected your judgment, along with your feeling that a potentially expensive watch is the center of attention.

In the top image there are quite a few people pictured. If you answered "George Washington crossing the Delaware" you singled out one as being the identity. This is in part due to a higher value placed on George Washington, a famous figure in United States history. This is also due to your knowledge, as Washington is likely the only person you know by name. Again, it is common to focus on the known and ignore the unknown.

If you said "This pictures a bunch of people, one whose name is George Washington" you would have given a broader answer, while acknowledging the extent of your knowledge.

Also notice that your answer was not 'sky, water and ice,' even though sky, water and ice takes up more space than the men, boat and flag. This was due to your bias that the human is the natural center of attention.

The initial request of this chapter was to give objective identifications, but your answers were subjective. I didn't ask for your moral judgment of George Washington versus other men, whether a bald eagle is more significant than out of focus background trees or the relative financial value of a watch.

* * * *

These and other types of subjective judgments are both natural and essential to humans. Quick interpretations of scenes, including judging what is and is not important, is essential to getting through our day to day lives. You wouldn't have lasted long on this earth if you placed equal visual significance on a twig on the pavement and a car speeding in your path. If someone unexpectedly tosses you a ball, you catch the ball by focusing on it. If you focus on the thrower's shoes or what's on TV, it is probable you will drop the ball.

The problem is that, while essential, this type of subjective identification helps make it impossible to make objective identification. One's identification is always shaped by one's knowledge level, past experience, aesthetic view, pattern biases and value judgments. As shown with the

identification of the three pictures, the human is often not aware of this influence. To many people, biases are what others have.

Cheesiness and Kitsch

Cheesiness and kitsch are interesting topics-- as they delve into human psychology, aesthetics, language and social manners. They are particularly human things, ways of thinking, judging information. If I have time I'll write write a bit about this.

Kitsch involves the lowest common denominator. Wiktionary defines it as is a low-brow style of mass-produced art or design using popular or cultural icons. Kitsch generally includes unsubstantial or gaudy works or decoration, or works that are calculated to have popular appeal.

Cheesiness involves taking the kitsch or otherwise unprofound or overly sentimental or trite or old fashioned too seriously, as serious and profound, with great sincerity and earnestness. The earnestness and seeing depth in the shallow is an essential part of cheesy.

Many take an ironic, sarcastic, tongue in cheek, wink of the eye acceptance of kitsch,-- which isn't cheesy because the person is in on the joke. Much comedy and satire is a wink and a nod play on the cheesy and kitsch. This is often called camp.

But you also find people who are intelligent but too joking, too tongue in cheek, too sarcastic, always joking-- to the point it's a mask, a psychological problem. They don't

know how to be sincere and honest.

There is an irony and aloofness to normal human rhetoric and communication. Our normal communication, social manners, involves hiding things. And for many, aloofness is a sign of intelligence and education, while heart on the sleeve earnestness is a sign of ignorance. Being *cool* involves an aloofness, a detachment.

Many say society is about lies and insincerity. That expressing our hearts is a rare and dangerous thing. Often the thing that can get you into the biggest trouble is to tell the truth and what you really feel-- even when the offended feel the same thing.

People often say "It's not what you said, but the way you said it." There is supposed to be a packaging. Emily Dickinson said "Tell the truth, but tell it slant."

The previous piece probably needs a rewrite, but I'm going to leave it the way it is.

"You sometimes have an unsettling sense of humor and I don't know if you making your jokes through your dog makes it more or less unsettling."

"I guess now's not the time to say that Henry died five years ago and he's actually a taxidermied body on my desk."

"You look like a pirate."

"A sexy pirate?"

"No."

Not true. I never called you my charity case. I called you penance.

College

At a party the only thing I had with which to exchange phone numbers on was a pair of unused blue books from my backpack. I was about to ask around for something more normal to write on, but the woman found blue books amusing and insisted.

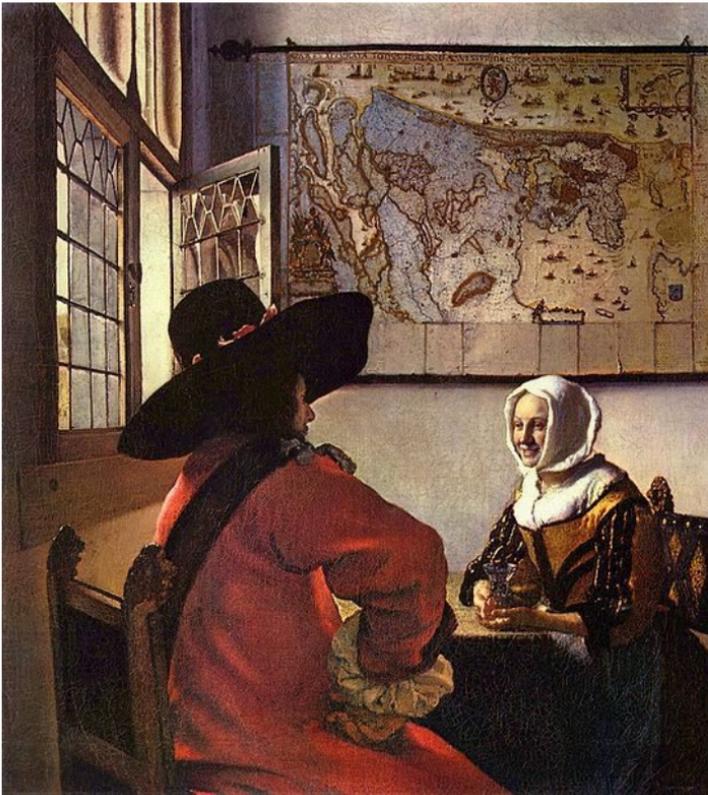
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My friends and I saw Seven Year Itch at Physics Hall where they showed old movies every Saturday night. We were surprised we'd never heard of Tommy Ewell before as he was the star of the show.

Perfection is countless things as one thing, including water and oil made one. The closest I can come is through carpet bombing. Hitting all the points at least once, multiple times, and hoping for something in the deafening noise.

A woman asked if I had emotions. I said I liked Rachmaninoff so I must.

Narrative and the Perception of Still Information



What's the story in this Jan Vermeer painting?



What's the fox doing?



What do you suppose was happening here?

Narrative is an integral part of how humans perceive, identify and judge of information, both moving and still, realistic and abstract. A narrative is the conscious and

nonconscious story we see and tell about our lives, attach to observed situations and still objects. Narrative includes perception of time, plot, order, causation, mood, action, point of view, emphasis (what is important, what is not), character motives, past and future. When we look at a still photo or painting or a distant couple standing at a street light we perceive a story in progress. We may not know the story, but we take for granted that there is one. A cup on a table isn't just there, there is a history of how it got there, where it will go next. Presumably, a human walked up to the table and placed the cup there, perhaps drank from it. "Who left this dirty cup on the table?!", someone may soon say. "Dirty dishes go in the dishwasher."

We know the earlier fox image was an observer's snapshot of a real living animal in mid movement. A good guess is the fox is/was chasing prey. Did it catch anything? That's a question to ponder.

* * * *

If you change the narrative to an image, you change the meaning of the image, at least the perceived meaning. This is why narrative issues are so important. A still image of a man with a knife is generally defined by the narrative-- what he is perceived as going to do with the knife, what he is perceived as having done with the knife. If the narrative is he just cleaned a fish and is taking the knife to the sink, the still image has one meaning. If the narrative is he's looking to hide a murder weapon, the same still has a distinctly different meaning. The accuracy of the narrative is no small issue.

It brings up the question of if a still image can be

understood independent of narrative. The two knife narratives were for the same image. Can the cup on the table's identity and meaning be determined as it is? Is how it got there essential to its identity? Humans often like to think they can judge things in a vacuum, without the relativism of past and present and nearby other objects, but is it possible?

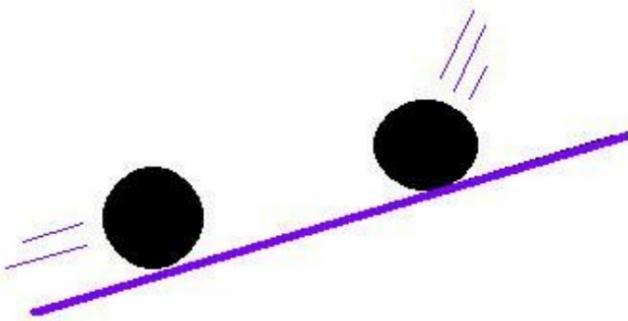
Some things are defined by their movement. A cheetah in the wild is defined and identified by how fast it runs. A sidewinder snake is identified because it moves sideways. When it's just laying there, most of us wouldn't know what kind of snake it is.

Much of our narrative is speculative. We can guess but don't know the whole story. The judgment of significance, motives and movements of the players in a scene is influenced by our biases and personal experiences. Different viewers see different stories in the same movie.

Consciously and nonconsciously predicting what will happen is a necessary part of human function. To catch a ball, you don't need to know just where the ball is at any given moment in flight, but correctly anticipate where it will be at later moments.

Narrative is an expression of human's philosophy of time, cause-and-effect, relationships between things. To most humans, nothing is static, but a part of a linear flow. Even still things and still images of things are viewed as part of this flow.

What is particularly interesting is humans apply narratives to abstract images and other information where it is not clear there is a real narrative.



Describe what going on above? Even though this is an abstract combination of dots and lines, most will say this shows two balls racing towards each other. Viewers can even describe what they see as happening before and after this image. However, unlike a movie still or snapshot photo, there is no before or after. As I am the one who created this design, I can assure that this is the only image, the one and only existence of these dots and lines. There is no narrative with this image other than as speculated by the viewer. That it shows balls on a line is itself imagination.

Whether there is a real narrative to the earlier Vermeer painting is debatable. It's not a photographic snapshot of live movement, as with the fox. The narrative and resulting meaning is nothing more than speculation.

As you can see, artistic experience is speculative, theoretical. Art is a symbol and metaphor for something larger and something in the viewers' minds. Art isn't so much interpreted by the viewer as made up. Movement is imagined in the following Matisse, but it doesn't literally exist. Even the artist having imagined movement doesn't make it exist.



A question to consider is is narrative the correct way to judge information? Is it always the correct way? And if it is correct to view information via narrative, is the human narrative the correct narrative? Does all human narrative, even as used by scientists, involve imagination and the associated biases and psychology? Of course, many of these questions we can't answer.

The movement illusions in the earlier chapter *Perception and Misperception of Movement* were all about false narratives. The stroboscopic illusion involves the viewer creating a narrative about movement that differs from reality. The perceiving of the barber pole stripes continually moving up is a false narrative.

The mentally ill often have abnormal narratives. They see and experience the same now and past and future that you and I see, but give the pieces a different causality and relationships, viewpoint, emphasis and soundtrack.

Aleatory Narrative

“Any path is right, if— as according to Bach-- it leads to the divine”— music historian Paul Epstein on J.S. Bach’s fugues, to which Bach never gave a playing order.

Aleatory art is art where the finished result is substantially out of the artist’s hands. It can involve chance or the musicians’ or audience’s choice. Many games are aleatory. Monopoly involves the roll of the dice. Poker involves the shuffling of the cards. Aleatocism in art can create fresh, inventive, unexpected results. If the results defies the conventions of plot, narrative and order, that’s the point.

J.S. Bach’s fugues are aleatory in that he never communicated which order the short musical pieces should be played. They can be played or listened to in any order, take your pick, randomly program the CD player. In the above quote, Epstein is saying an overall sublime aesthetic result justifies whichever fugue order lead to it. It’s reminiscent of the Hindi saying, “Any path that leads to God is correct.”

Novelist William S. Burroughs used the so called cut-up aleatory technique. Pages of text were physically cut up and randomly pieced back together, sometimes with text by other authors, creating new and often profoundly surreal meaning and narrative. Burroughs believed this type of collage more closely represented the human experience. Despite the conceit of linearity, humans don’t think or experience things linearly, one’s thoughts constantly flipping back and forth between past, current and future. Random little events and

objects trigger memories and provoke speculation of the future. When you consider buying a can of beans in the grocery aisle, you think about past meals and the future meal where these beans might be used. The human ability to identify flowers, shoe brands and people involves comparing the present to memory. Human intelligence and reasoning involves mentally flipping back and forth through time.

Broken Glass is the name of an aleatory computer storytelling technique that intentionally scrambles the tradition linear narrative. It is a computer web page made up of a plethora of small assorted images, often resembling a stained glass window. Each image is linked to a small piece of the story-- a plot, a description, a picture, characterization, whatever. The story's order is determined by the reader blindly clicking on the images.

The facts, scenes, characters, events and days of the week are always constant in Broken Glass, but the aleatory order in which the pieces are read affects the complexion, aesthetics, psychology and meaning. As any great novelist or film director will tell you, how facts are revealed can be as important as the facts themselves. A story told straight forward is markedly different than the same story told in flashbacks. Knowing what will happen to a character, what she will do and how she will change, effects how you view her in the present. Knowing versus not knowing how the romance will end (or will it end?) effects how the moviegoers view the lovers when they first meet, interact. Jumbled up order in and of itself has psychological meaning and symbolism.

Even with a physically bound paper book, the reader chooses the order in which the book is read. Whether or not they realize it, readers are as responsible for the order as the author, though the author usually gets the blame.

William S. Burroughs said the chapters of his novel *Naked Lunch* could be read in any order. That a reader read them 1, 2, 3 had nothing to do with him.

Dictionaries and encyclopedias are aleatory. Excluding the editors and writers, it's possible if not likely that no two people have read the word definitions in a dictionary in the same order.

A Mexican-American woman from Los Angeles and I were talking about our ethnic backgrounds. I told her I was the descendant of Vikings and she was impressed and said that was so exotic. As a pasty white boy from Wisconsin, I'd never before been called exotic.

King Charles IV 'The Mad' and the Glass Illusion



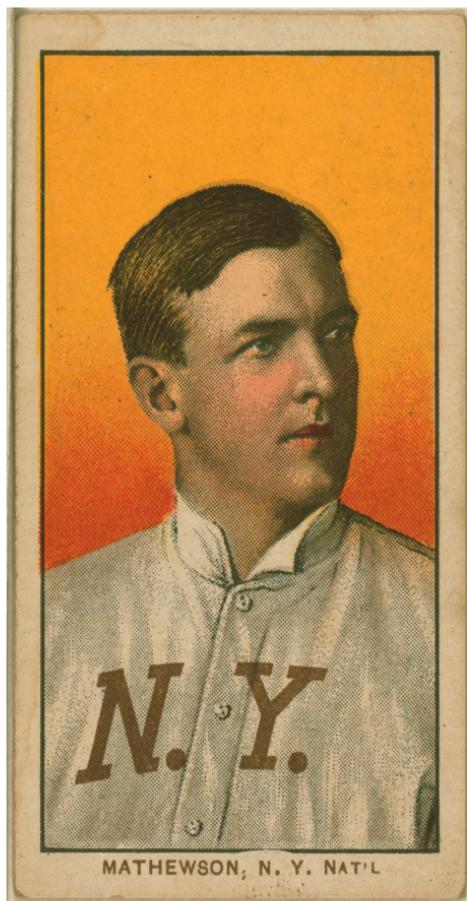
Commonly called 'Charles the Mad,' 1380-1415 French King Charles VI suffered from severe mental illness episodes through his life, including murdering four of his own knights while in a psychosis, forgetting his name and that he was king, at times not recognizing his wife and kids, running through the halls of his castle until exhausted and screaming uncontrollably due to unseen enemies.

His most curious psychosis was that he at times thought he was made of glass. During these times, he would not let anyone touch him, was scared of furniture and reinforced his clothes with metal rods to prevent accidental breakage.

Modern physicians and scholars have studied this so called glass delusion. Though many experts today believe

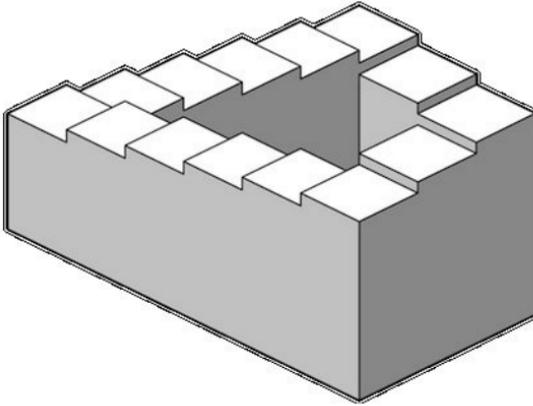
Charles suffered from schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, the glass delusion remains something of a mystery. There are few and unverified modern cases of people thinking they are made of glass, but there are numerous historical examples. A 1621 medical book by a prominent Oxford University professor described how mentally ill were known to have thought they were made of glass, cork, feathers and lead, which the professor compared to psychiatric disorders of seeing demons and devils. 1800s Princess Alexandra of Bavaria, who had numerous neurosis and minor psychoses, thought she had swallowed a glass piano as a child and it was still inside her as an adult. Examples of people with the glass delusion appear in old literature, including a Cervantes story where a poisoned law student falls into a long depression and believes he's glass and a Rene Descartes philosophical essay where he uses an example of an insane person who thinks he's glass.

Marquis de Sade's novel 120 Days of Sodom was written while he was a prisoner in the Bastille, and he lost the manuscript during the storming of the Bastille. Sade wrote that upon its loss he cried for days. Years after his death, the handwritten manuscript was discovered in a wall of the prison during renovation.



William S. Burroughs felt that the cutting up and shuffling together of different texts, included by different authors, revealed hidden information.

The Sonic Barber Pole: Shepard's Scale



The Shepard scale auditory illusion is often compared to the never-ending staircase where you seem to be continually moving up the staircase (or down depending which direction you follow the steps), yet end up where you started.

Invented by Stanford University cognitive science professor Roger N. Shepard, the Shepard scale is a famous auditory illusion. An auditory illusion is like a visual illusion but involves hearing instead of sight.

The Shepard's scale sounds to the listener as if it's continually going down-- or continually up, depending if the notes are played the opposite way. However, the sound is really a repeated scale of tones, much like the repeated loop

of steps of the staircase that takes you to where you start. The tones do not continually go down (or up), it only seems that way.

How the Shepard Scale Works

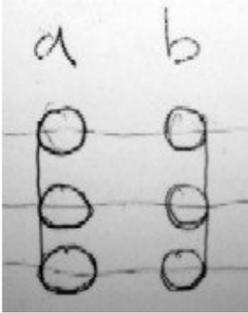
The Shepard scale involves a carefully and calculated manipulation of tones, just as the steps in the never-ending staircase were carefully crafted to trick the eye. Shepard's manipulation involves not only which tones are played but the volume of the individual notes in the tones.

Each tone in the scale is comprised of several notes played simultaneously, and at each moment different notes in the tone are played at a different volumes. Some notes are played loudly, while others are near inaudible. The changes to volume has the listener focusing on certain notes and oblivious to others.

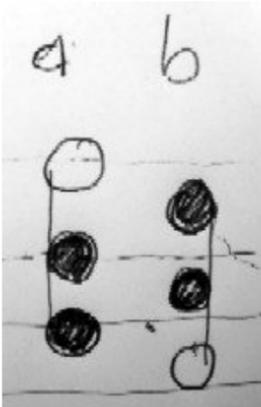
As with the steps in the staircase, the key to the trickery is each tone seems to sound lower than the preceding (higher if the notes are played the other way) even if it really isn't. The listener judges subtle gradations in tone by comparing it to the preceding note, not to tones from twenty or thirty seconds ago and certainly not to future notes. If each tone appears lower than the previous, the listener will think the sound continually going down.

So how the heck can you make a lower tone sound higher?

At first this may seem like an impossible task, but it's simple when you manipulate the volumes of the notes within the tone. Just look at the following tones.



The above a and b are the same tone, each with the same three notes. How would you lower the notes in tone b, while make it sound higher than a? The answer is by changing the volumes of the notes.



If you alter the volumes of the notes, you can make lowered b sound higher. The black notes are played loudly, while the whites are played very softly. As you can see, the loud notes of b are higher than the two loud notes of a.

The changing of the volume works as an audial mask, with masking or hiding of information being a common element of both audial and visual illusions. If you put your fingers or pieces of white paper over the white notes in the

bottom picture, tone b will also look like a higher tone. This shows you that the Shepard scale is much like a visual illusion.

The repeated Shepard scale involves a much more complex and larger variety of tones, notes and volume manipulations, but this simple example gives you the idea.

Numeral systems and psychology

In some Western Hemisphere high rise buildings there are no thirteenth floors. Well, there *are* thirteenth floors, but the floors are labeled 10, 11, 12, 14, 15 to give the superficial appearance of having no thirteenth floors. The building owners know many have a superstition against the numeral thirteen and it's easier to rent an apartment or office if it's called 'fourteen.'

In Korea and Japan where four is considered unlucky as it's the sign of death, some buildings 'omit' the fourth floor.

* * * *

Our base-10 numeral system

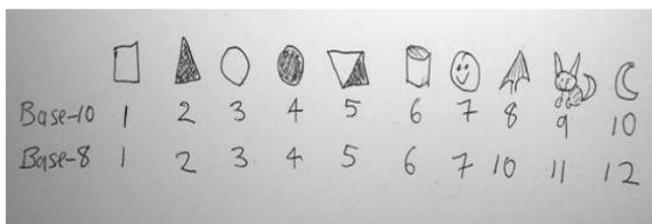
The common modern human counting system— the one you and I use-- is based on ten, and is referred to as **base-10**. It uses 10 different numeral symbols (0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9) to represent all numbers, and many popular groupings are divisible by ten: 10, 20, 100, 300, 10,000, century, decade, top 10 lists, golden anniversary, etc.

Our base-10 system is based on the number of digits on a human's hands: eight fingers and two thumbs. As with today, many ancient humans found fingers and thumbs convenient for counting and it seemed only natural to base a counting system on the 10 digits.

While the base-10 is a good system and has served us well, ten as the base was a somewhat arbitrary choice. Our numeral system could have been based on 3, 8, 9, 11, 12, 20 or other number. Instead of basing it on the total digits on a

pair of hands, it could have been based on the points of an oak leaf (9), the sides of a box (6), the fingers on a pair of hands (8). These different base systems would work. Some might work as well or better than our base-10 system. Nuclear physicists and tax accountants could make their calculations using a 9 or 11-base system. Once you got used to the new system, you could count toothpicks and apples just as accurately as you do now.

Quick comparison: counting with base-10 versus base-8



The above pictures compare counting with a base-10 system based on the ten digits of the hands (fingers + thumbs), and with a base-8 system based on just the eight fingers (thumbs not used). Notice that the base-8 system, not using the thumbs, is missing two numeral symbols: 8 and 9.

This comparison picture shows how assorted designs (top row) are counted with the base-10 and with the base-8 systems. As base-8 omits the two symbols 8 and 9, '10' comes sooner when counting in base-8. In one numeration system, the cat is '9' and in the other is '11.' As you can see, the real value of 10, amongst other numeral symbols, is not an absolute. It depends on what base is being used.

* * * *

Another example of counting with different bases

The following table illustrates how you can count symbols (far right column) using the base-10, base-9, base-8 and base-5 systems. If you wish, the symbols can represent physical objects like fruit or cars or plants. In this table the symbols are constant, while the numeral systems create different numeral labels for the symbols (or fruit or cars or plants). For those who consider '13' unlucky, notice that each counting system labels a different symbol as being 13.

Base 5	Base 8	Base 9	Base 10	Symbols
0	0	0	0	
1	1	1	1	!
2	2	2	2	@
3	3	3	3	#
4	4	4	4	\$
10	5	5	5	%
11	6	6	6	^
12	7	7	7	&
13	10	8	8	*
14	11	10	9	(
20	12	11	10)
21	13	12	11	-
22	14	13	12	+
23	15	14	13	“
24	16	15	14	:
30	17	16	15	>
31	18	17	16	<
32	19	18	17	{
33	20	19	18]

* * * *

This counting stuff is not idle abstraction. Civilizations have used and use different numeral systems.

The Yuki Indians of California used a base-8 numeral system. Instead of basing their system on the digits on their

hands, they based it on the spaces between the digits.

The Ancient Mayans used a base-20 system, as they counted with the digits on their hands and feet. They lived in a hot climate where people didn't wear closed toe shoes.

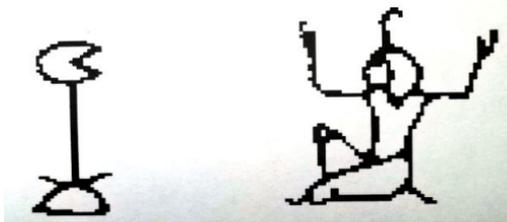
Today's computer scientists use 2, 8 and 16-base systems. For some mathematical work base-12 is more convenient than base-10. For this base-12 system they usually use the normal 0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 numerals and add the letters a and b to make twelve (0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,a,b). It goes without saying that these mathematicians, often university professors and researchers, are using this system to perform higher levels of calculations than you or I perform in our daily lives. They aren't counting change at the grocery store.

Our normal lives show the vestiges of ancient numeral systems. We sometimes count with Ancient Roman numerals (Super Bowl XXIV, King Richard III), letters (chapter 4a, chapter 4b, chapter 4c... Notice how this combines two different systems, standard numerals with letters) and tally marks. We group loaves of bread, inches and ounces by the dozen, and mark time in groups of sixty (60 seconds per minute, 60 minutes per hour). Counting inches and ounces by twelve comes from the Ancient Romans. Our organization of time in groups of 60 comes from the Sumerians, an ancient civilization that used a base- 60 system.

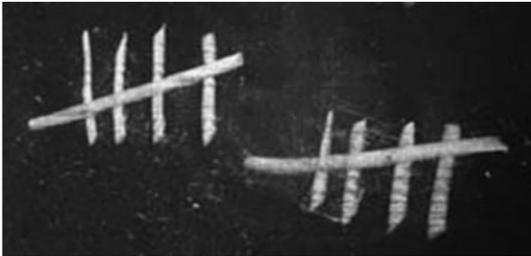
The traditional counting of bread into groups of twelve has practical convenience. At the market, a dozen loaves can be divided into whole loaves by two, three or four. Ten loaves can only be divided by two into whole loaves. Sellers and customers prefer the grouping that gives more whole loaf options, not wanting a loaf to be torn apart. This should give you an idea why feet and yards are divisible by twelve,

and there were twelve pence in a shilling— you get more ‘whole’ fractions out of twelve than you do ten.

These have been just some examples of other numeral systems, as there have been a wide and varied number over history. This not only includes systems with different bases, but with different kinds and numbers of numeral symbols. In Ancient Eastern countries, physical rods were used to represent numbers. The number, position, direction and color of the rod represented a number. In Ancient Egypt, pictures, known as hieroglyphics, were used to represent numbers. One thousand was written as a lily, and 10,000 as a tadpole. The Ancient Hebrews had a similar system to ours, except they used 27 different symbols to our ten. For the Hebrews, numbers 20, 30, 40, etc each got its own unique symbol.



Ancient Egyptian numerals for 1,000 (lily flower) and one million (man with raised arms)



Tallying is an ancient basic counting system many of us use. The practical problem with this system is that numbers like 500 and 10,000 require a whole lotta tally marks. 500 requires 500

tally marks. Over history, numeral systems have changed and evolved to correct inconveniences like this. Notice we use the tally system only for simple tasks, like keeping score in a ping pong game and marking days.

* * * *

A kid's counting system: Eeny meeny miny moe

Kids have long used counting rhymes to decide who is *it*. The below common rhyme does the equivalent of counting to twenty, with the last word being the twentieth word.

Eeny, meeny, miny, moe
Catch a tiger by the toe
If he hollers let him go,
Eeny, meeny, miny, moe

There are a few interesting things about this eeny meeny counting system. First, it is quasi base-20, not our normal base-10. Second, words are used as numerals, or as the practical equivalent of numerals. Kids could count to 20 for the same practical result, but they chose to use words. Third, while lucky 7, 10 and unlucky 13 have popular importance compared to other numerals in our base-10 system, the seventh, tenth and thirteenth words in the rhyme do not.

This is an example where a different counting system changes what numbers are perceived as important. Most kids who count with this rhyme aren't even aware which are the seventh, tenth and thirteenth words.

Humans often say they can't conceptualize numbers in anything but the normal base-10, but here is a base-20 words counting system that we have all used. Granted this counting system is simplistic in the extreme, used for one and only one purpose— to count to twenty (moe). You wouldn't want to try and use it to calculate your taxes.

* * * *

Numerals and human psychology

Humans form psychological attachments and biases for the numeration systems they use. Having grown up using a particular system, and seeing all those around them using the same, many people assume their numeration is absolute and eternal. Before reading this chapter, you may not have known or thought about the existence of other systems. Your base-10 system was all you knew, the prism which you saw the universe. 10, 100 and 1000— popular products of your base-10 system— are numbers you are attracted to. Thinking in base-8 or base-7 is foreign.

It's telling to look at how humans change their perception from system to system, and how a change of numeration system changes peoples' perceptions of things. The perception is not just about the numeration system itself, but the things the numeration system is used to count— objects, time, ideas.

* * * *

As the earlier tables showed, a different base numeral system doesn't change the accuracy of our calculations or the physical objects we calculate. However, if we retroactively changed our base-10 system to a non base-10 system (like say the Yuki's base-8 system) we would change how humans perceive and react to objects and concepts.

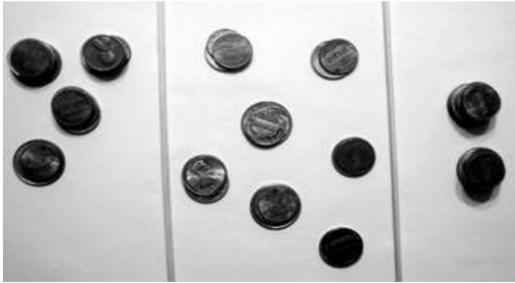
As with the high rise buildings and the superstitious renters, the historical changes would be caused in large part by human perceptions of the numerals themselves rather the things the numerals represent. No matter what the Mexico City building owner calls the thirteenth floor, it is the same floor. If he changes the label on the elevator directory from '13' to '9988' or to '789' or to 'Q,' it is the same floor with

the same walls, ceiling and windows and distance above the sidewalk. The numerologist apartment seekers aren't reacting to the floor but to the symbol '13.' It should not surprise that a change to the symbols, such as caused by the changing to a new counting system, will change their reaction to the floors, along with many other things.

With a large lot of stones lined up on a table, changing the numeral system has no direct effect on the amount or physical nature of the stones. With a new counting system, the stones would be the same stones, but many to most would be assigned different numeral names. While the stones are the same stones no matter what we call them, human perceptions of the stones change as the stones' numeral names change. Under our popular base-10 system, humans consider certain numerals to be special, including 10, 100, 1000 and 13, and react accordingly to objects labeled with these names. With the new numeral representations, humans' perception and treatment of the stones will change. If before a person avoided a stone because it was unlucky 13, in the new system a different stone would be called 13. If in the old system the stone labeled '100' was singled out as special, in the new system '100' would represent a different stone.

If a human is asked to count and group the stones, the grouping will change with the different counting system. In the base-10 system, it's likely the person would make piles of 10 or 25 stones or similar standard. In an 8 or 9 base system, the number and size of the piles would be different. To someone standing across the room, the rock design would be different. Her aesthetic reaction to the formation would be different.

This shows that your numeration system isn't just an objective observation system, but helps form how you perceive objects. Under a different system, you would perceive things differently.



The lines separate the same number of coins. The left group contains 30 total coins in stacks, the middle group between the lines has 30 coins in stacks, the group to the right of the right line has 30 coins in stacks. The coins of each group were stacked by different numeral systems. This is why the same numbers of coins look different.

* * * *

Changing numeral systems, changing history

As a numeration system changes how we perceive, organize and react to things, a retroactive change to the numeral systems would change human history. The amount and type of change can be debated, but today's history books would read different. With a change to the standard numeration system, time would remain the same but human marking of time would change. The decade, century and millennium equivalents would be celebrated at different times. No Y2K excitement at the same time as we had. Special milestones, like current marriage 10th or 25th anniversaries, would be at different times. People who now receive 30 years of service

awards might receive equivalent awards but after a different duration.

Think of all those sports championships decided in the last moments, including the improbable upsets and bloop endings. If the events took place at different times and under different numeral influenced conditions some of the outcomes would be different. If an Olympic sprint is decided by a fraction of a second, it's unlikely the first to last place order would be identical if it took place the day before with the runners in switched lanes and running a different length race. The changes to marking of time and distance would likely result in different gold, silver and bronze medal winners over the years. If a horse race was a tie, it is unlikely the same horses would tie if the race had been run earlier or later in the day or on a different day over a different length race. Realize that the change to the numeration system would likely change the standard race distances, even if the changes were just slight.

Think of all the razor close political elections. If the elections took place at a different time, even if just a day earlier or later, it's possible some would have different outcomes. A few of the outcomes could have been for President, Prime Minister, judge or other socially influencing position. Think of all those close historic battles that may or may not have had a different outcome if started at different times, using different size platoons and regiments and Generals who made decisions using different number biases. Napoleon Bonaparte was superstitious of 13 and made his government, social and military plans accordingly. Think of the influential or not yet influential people who died at relatively young ages in accidents, from Albert Camus to General Patton to Buddy Holly. James Dean died in a sports

car crash at age 25. Would he have crashed if he started his drive at an earlier or later time? Popular perception of the actor no doubt would be quite different if we watched him grow old and bald.

The powerful nineteenth century Irish Leader Charles Stewart Parnell would not sign a legislative bill that had thirteen clauses. A clause had to be added or subtracted before it could become law. Irish law would have been different under a different numeral system.

* * * *

United States consumer prices would likely be affected by a different numeral system, if just marginally. Again, this would be due to human psychological perceptions of numerals.

Even though most current US sellers and buyers think nothing of one penny, often tossing it in the garbage or on the sidewalk, sellers regularly price things at \$9.99 instead of \$10, and \$19.99 instead of \$20. Check the newspaper ads. This pricing is purely aesthetic, intending to play on consumers biases towards numerals.

The shallowness of this 1 cent game is illustrated when it is used by stores that have a 'give a penny, take a penny' tray, and that it is used in many states with different sales tax rates. Most people psychologically affected by \$9.99 pricing at home are also affected by \$9.99 pricing when traveling by car across the country. That the daily change in sale tax charge dwarfs the one cent between \$9.99 and \$10, illustrates the traveler's irrationalness.

Under a base-9 numeral system that omits the numeral '9,' \$9.99 and \$19.99 would no longer exist, and the visually

appealing "one cent below big number" pricing would land elsewhere. In a 9 digit system, it's likely that there would be many \$8.88 and \$18.88 pricings in newspaper ads, and the same types of travelers would be attracted to \$8.88 and \$18.88 prices as they go state to state even though the taxes change state to state.

* * * *

There are a variety of intertwined reasons behind irrational biases towards numerals and numeral systems.

One reason is people form psychological attachments towards a system, its symbols and the standard groupings of objects made from the system. A three digit numeral price (\$9.99) looks distinctly different than a four digit numeral price (\$10.00), literally being shorter. One hundred stones grouped into 10 groups of 10 each will look different than 11 groups of 9 stones each with one left over. It's the same amount of stones, but their physical designs look different. There's an aesthetic aspect to how humans view symbols and groupings.

Closely related reasons are tradition and habit. If you have used our base-10 system all your life, it's as natural to you as your native spoken language. In fact words such as nine, ten and decade are part of your daily vocabulary. If everyone you know uses this numeral system, the idea of using a different system may not have even crossed your mind before now. The idea of calculating using a base-8 or base-11 system seems strange and even unnatural to most people because they were raised on base-10.

Another reason behind irrational biases towards numerals is the seeming, if nonexistent, absoluteness of the

familiar numerals. While the true nature of time, supernatural, war, love and the cosmos are shrouded in mystery, the numerals traditionally used in representing these things seem tangible, concrete. Unlike philosophical abstractions, numerals can be written down and typed into the calculator. Even little kids can count numerals on their fingers. That folks like Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein used these same numerals seem to numerologists to indicate the numerals' potency. Though, if asked, both scientists would agree they could have used other numeral systems to do their work, and there was nothing uniquely special about the system they adopted.

Numerals are used only as convenient notations, proverbial post-its to label objects. They have no absolute, inborn connection to the things they represent. Whether you call the animal cat or gato it's the same animal, and whether you call a number 5, five or V, it's the same number. Whether you count a grove of trees with a base-10 or a base- 8 system, they are the same trees. If you count and label the trees a,b,c,d,e,f,g, they are still the same trees. Numerologists incorrectly assign an absolute meaning and identity to the numerals that doesn't exist.

Even in academia, mathematicians considered to be too enamored with the beauty of numbers at the expense of practical use are sometimes derogatorily called numerologists by applied scientists like engineers. Mathematicians are as influenced by aesthetics as the rest of us.

* * * *

Sounds Good

Many Chinese judge numbers as good or bad by what words they sound closest to. As their pronunciation of 3 sounds closest to their word for 'live,' 3 is considered good. Their pronunciation of 4 sounds close to their word for 'not,' so is often considered negative.

China is a huge country with many dialects. As numbers and words are pronounced differently in different areas, a number's perceived goodness and badness depends on where you are. For example, 6 is considered good in some places and bad in others.

“In 2005 sixty letters from Garbo to Swedish actress Mimi Pollak, a close friend in drama school, were released. Several letters indicate that she had romantic feelings for Pollack for many years. After learning of Pollak's pregnancy in 1930, for example, Garbo wrote, 'We cannot help our nature, as God has created it. But I have always thought you and I belonged together.'”

"There are many things in your heart you can never tell to another person. They are you, your private joys and sorrows, and you can never tell them. You cheapen yourself, the inside of yourself, when you tell them.”

– Greta Garbo

Henry: "I'll assume that was the lack of liquor talking."

* * * *

I greatly object to third person movies and stories. The omniscient camera, flies on the walls, because we don't see things that way. It's a lie, a fiction of art. It's a way we want to the see the world, omnisciently, think we see the world, but don't. We aren't flies on the walls in other scenes, we only see life through our own eyes, from inside our own closed rooms.

We all see the world through our own little hurts.

Henry: "You make Josef Mengele seem like a choir boy."
"Oh, be quiet. I said I'd get you dinner after I've emptied the dishwasher."

Asked about the permanence of current artworks, a scientist said in the far, far future the concrete would likely still be around-- and perhaps some of the physical books, though the text would probably be long gone.

“Are you going to write a second novel?”

“No, I'm too damaged.”

Never guess a woman's age. Even if you get it correct, she'll be offended.

Henry: "What's the difference between interesting and boring?"

"How long you talk about the topic."

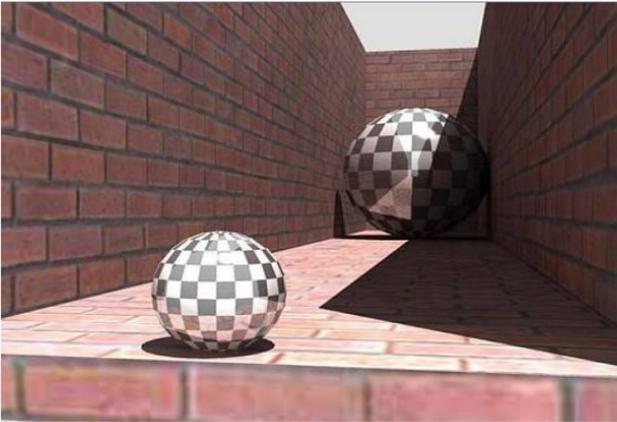
Anarchist and William McKinley assassin Leon Czolgosz's last words before his execution were "I killed the President because he was the enemy of the good people— the good working people. I am not sorry for my crime I am only sorry I could not get to see my father."

Did you know? US President Teddy Roosevelt's first wife, about who he said it was love at first sight for him when they met, died during childbirth and he was so heartbroken he almost never talked about her again and didn't even mention her in his autobiography.

"I'm not allowed to ask you about your sexuality, but let's say you were stranded on a deserted island with one other person. Would you rather that person be a woman or a man?"
"Just one, right?"

"Do you have photos?"

Uncorrectable illusions



Despite first appearance, the balls are the same size. Measure them yourself.

Even after you learn how they work, there are many visual illusions that still fool you. If you returned and look again at the visual illusions shown throughout this book, many will still fool your eyes.

The mind contains compartments that perform specific tasks. For example, one compartment is used for comprehending spoken language, another for perceiving smell. Some of these compartments are isolated from other parts of the brain. They work on their own, not influenced by goings on elsewhere. These compartments sometimes are even isolated from conscious knowledge.

The perception of many visual illusions is made independent of your conscious knowledge. This explains why even your conscious knowledge that they are illusions doesn't solve your nonconscious misperception.

Artificial Intelligence

No matter how advanced it gets and what form(s) it takes, artificial intelligence will have the same types of philosophic and cognitive limits, margins of error, paradoxes, irreconcilable conflicts, catch-22s and unanswerable questions that humans have and are shown throughout this book.

As with humans, it will be making educated probability guesses from limited and ambiguous information, using limited and often conflicting cognitive methods. To function practically and speedily and to process the vast amount of information it receives, AI needs rules of thumb, categories, language and pattern templates. This means it will have pattern and form biases, arbitrary choices, subjective value judgments, form and language biases. The perceptions and judgements it derives will have oversimplifications, conceits, distortions and illusions. Its makeup and perceptions will be influenced by what it is trying to do. As with humans, it will never be able to know the exact reliability of its own mind.

The idea of a machine being super smart and knowing more than humans is plausible, but one that can objectively process and understand and all of the information of eternity and reality is just a science fiction fantasy.

* * * *

As artificial intelligence advances, humans will cede some and perhaps eventually all power. With high speed computers crunching numbers and robots doing tasks for us, we already defer in areas. If artificial intelligence ever

becomes far more intelligent than humans, many of the answers and ideas it finds will be beyond human comprehension and translation, at least that of current humans. It will take a different than current brain to understand many things.

Developing artificial intelligence could be the christening of a boat that eventually leaves humans behind. Being the self-centered creatures that they are, this idea does not sit well with many humans. If the choice is between finding truth and self preservation, most humans choose self preservation. Even if artificial intelligence becomes far more intelligent, knowledgeable and even develops a higher than human consciousness, humans still want to be the master. Humans would rather be the captain of a less advanced system than a cog in a more advanced system.

Many will say that if finding the truth of the universe is an impossible task, even for AI, perhaps we should give up the ghost and use AI to build better video games and garage door openers. A standard existential response.

* * * *

Before you get too scared, realize that AI is just in its infancy and, while there are some things AI can currently do better than humans, there are human things that scientists can only currently aspire to achieve with AI. These include consciousness, common sense, educated intuition and the human ability to learn. When a learned art expert looks at a painting and knows right away it's a fake (and is right), that is something far beyond what current Artificial Intelligence can do.

University of Louisiana-Lafayette Professor István

Berkeley explained human common sense (and computer's lack of it) as follows:

For most people, if they know that President Clinton is in Washington, then they also know that President Clinton's right knee is also in Washington. This may seem like a trivial fact, and indeed it is for humans, but it is not trivial when it comes to AI systems. In fact, this is an instance of what has come to be known as 'The Common Sense Knowledge Problem'. A computational system only knows what it has been explicitly told. No matter what the capacities of a computational system, if that system knows that President Clinton was in Washington, but doesn't know that his left knee is there too, then the system will not appear to be too clever. Of course, it is perfectly possible to tell a computer that if a person is in one place, then their left knee is in the same place, but this is only the beginning of the problem. There are a huge number of similar facts which would also need to be programmed in. For example, we also know that if President Clinton is in Washington, then his hair is also in Washington, his lips are in Washington and so on. The difficulty, from the perspective of AI, is to find a way to capture all these facts.

ucs.louisiana.edu/~isb9112/dept/phil341/wisai/WhatIsAI.html

Even if it happens, AI having super intelligence and human-like consciousness, intuition and psychology is something for the far distant future.

* * * *

Scientists are trying to get AI to learn and expand its knowledge base and capabilities on its own, and some imagine the time when AI can increase its knowledge so quickly that it far surpasses humans in intelligence. Whether this would be for the good or ill of the human race is a

question. Some humans worry if there will be a day when AI is super intelligent and no longer needs humans or feels humans have gotten in the way of more important missions, such as the search for truth. Some fear situations such as if humans tell highly advanced AI to save the earth and its climate and AI decides that “The first thing to do to achieve this is kill all humans. They're the source of most of the trouble.”

2001: A Space Odyssey's Hal 9000 was a super intelligent computer that tried to kill all the humans on the ship when it felt they were getting in the way of the mission. Human movie goers being human catalog Hal 9000 as an antagonist and the American Film Institute listed him as number 13 on its list of film villains. However, Hal was sure he was doing the correct thing. Humans prioritize human self-preservation above searching for the truth, but Hal prioritized searching for truth. Putting aside your hard wired self centered human bias, was Hal wrong in prioritizing the search for truth over the handful of humans on the ship?

* * * *

For the movie 2001, Stanley Kubrick consulted with famed M.I.T. cognitive scientist Marvin Minsky. Minsky's predictions to Kubrick about what artificial intelligence could and could not do by the year 2001 were correct, while the movie's weren't. Minsky thought computers would be able to talk, but not in the advanced conscious way HAL does.

It just goes to show you that you shouldn't rely on scifi movies and television shows as gospel. Many scientist's AI date predictions have been far off. Stanley Kubrick may have

picked 2001 because it had a catchy “In the not too distant future” sound for a movie title.

* * * *

For the near and likely longterm future, advancements will involve humans and computers working together. Computers do some things better than humans and humans do some things better than computers, so combining the forces is best.

This kind of combining of forces is nothing new. Humans have long used technology to improve their abilities, understanding and awareness. People use eyeglasses, binoculars, microscopes and infrared viewers to increase their knowledge and understanding of themselves and their environment. Technology expands humans' minds.

Even if AI someday becomes dominant, it would likely still consider many human methods (intuition, instant gut reaction) to be useful inputs into its system.

For complex processing of vast amounts of data, artificial intelligence programs need categories, prioritizing and common sense starting points, and scientists have found that human intuitive choices are useful for this. The computer program's processing and analyzing will move beyond these human starting points, but finds them quite useful.

* * * *

Artificial intelligence scientists often say the human mind is a quasi computer (if a biological one), as it takes in and processes information using calculations to come up with an output answer. They say our intuition is a probability

processing or educated guessing system guided by massive archives of subconscious information and experiences. Many computer scientists use probability equations, rules of thumb, stereotypes and “fuzzy logic” to try to mimic how humans think.

Remember that quantum mechanics involves inherent margins of error, paradoxes and probability inexactitudes but still produces practical results. One hundred percent accuracy isn't required to function.

* * * *

Though it is human nature to want a single unifying theory, in practice AI scientist have discovered that different parts of an artificial brain system often require different methods to work. The program to process certain data can be decidedly different than the code to make a robot's hand clasp. Further, there are different and sometimes competing methods, language and logic to process the same information. One works better in one way, and other works better in another way.

While often frustrating AI scientists, this mirrors the way the human mind works. The chapter *Logic Versus Art in Expressing Advanced Ideas* (page 530) showed how humans have competing and often conflicting ways to think about and express something. *Uncorrectable Illusions* (page 738) showed how compartments in the brain work independent of each other and even independent of the conscious mind.

While these conflicts of opinion lead to many of our optical illusions, delusions and paradoxes, they can also work as checks and balances and lead to more intelligent and accurate judgments.

When you enter a new, ambiguous scene your subconscious intuition gives you a quick judgement as to what is going on. The gut reaction may or may not be correct. You then use your conscious logic to judge the accuracy of the instinct. You may even move about the scene, inspect the scene further to test your logical analysis. These different methods are working together.

And as you are a human that naturally learns as you go along and constantly adds more experiences and information to your brain, you broaden your intuitive accuracy and knowledge. A mirage originally fooled you, but with knowledge and experience, the same natural phenomenon may still 'trick your eyes' but you now are no longer fooled. You know that water in the road is just a trick of the light.

This should demonstrate how the additional AI sensory inputs and information processing methods and viewpoints would help humans. More viewpoints and information would theoretically make our understanding and assessing of ambiguous scenes more accurate, and expand our knowledge and learning.

* * * *

Human intuition, such as in the subconscious perception of art and nature, may be very important insight into complex things, but goes beyond our current level of conscious testing. It may give powerful insight, but, as been shown throughout this book, going only by our gut reactions and psychological perceptions lead to many delusional thoughts including visual illusions.

Advanced AI with its different logical and non-logical computing methods and sensory inputs could be used to test

our current intuition. It can check the veracity and hone our intuitive perception, and, by adding more information and experiences and knowledge, expand out intuition to new levels. It may help solve some of our mental paradoxes.

However, it would require a bigger brain and consciousness than we have. We can't currently solve the above mentioned problems because our minds aren't advanced enough. And one of the reasons for AI is to expand consciousness and knowledge.

* * * *

Two standard philosophy of AI questions are if AI can have human-like intelligence and consciousness. Some say the self awareness and self reflection of consciousness is necessary for AI to advance and learn at the level of humans. Philosophers and scientists debate whether AI can ever have either, in particular consciousness. Some say it is possible, while others believe it is not.

IBM's Deeper Blue famously beat human chess master Gary Kasparov at chess, though detractors say the computer was designed for one narrow task (playing chess) and won through number crunching brute force and not the sophisticated intelligence of humans. Though Deeper Blue still won.

Some practical minded people will say discussions of intelligence and consciousness are idle coffee shop questions and all that matters is what AI can do. If AI can win a chess game and not appreciate the beauty of a flower, then AI can win a chess game and cannot appreciate the beauty of a flower. They'll say pondering about whether or not Deep Blue has intelligence is a waste of time.

As questions of consciousness even in humans (what it is and how and if it can be identified) is itself an ongoing debate, the question of consciousness in AI will forever be debated.

* * * *

As a highly advanced artificial intelligence would be processing more sensory information and using different and more advanced processing methods and require a more advanced brain, it would have a different than human world view, aesthetics, psychology and sentiments. Human thought, philosophy, religion, myth, world view and art are seeped in their limited sensory abilities and biases (light versus dark, colors, shapes), and the different mind would view the world using more and different senses, viewpoints and methods.

It's not so much that an advanced brain would be more advanced, but that it would be different. It would have a different personality and sensibility.

* * * *

Humans will insist AI follow many human sensibilities, irrational biases and conceits, even when they are irrelevant and even detrimental to AI's mission. This is the way humans are. For good and bad, they are psychological animals hard wired for self survival. In fact, humans believing they are the center of the universe and believing their psychological ideas and feelings to be divinely appointed truths are a part of the evolutionary survival psychology. As shown in earlier chapter, firmly believing in one's conceits, even if they are wrong, is an integral part of practical achievement.

* * * *

And while we can pie in the sky theorize about all the possibilities, realize that in the real world artificial intelligence research and manufacturing is very expensive, and the history and future artificial intelligence is the history and future of funding. The form and function of artificial intelligence is in part a matter of where the research money goes and all the business, government, bureaucracy and human personalities involved in that.

It is also a matter of what works and doesn't work in practice. An idea may be wonderful in theory, but not work in practice and the makeup of a working robot is inevitably different than what the scientist originally expected. Again, artificial intelligence is manufactured in the real world, not sci fi novels.

* * * *

Famed M.I.T. Mathematics professor and cybermetrics pioneer Norbert Wiener said he feared independent-to-human automation not only because of the possible danger it could cause by itself own, but because certain groups of humans would use it for their advantage and the detriment of other groups.

Legendary Warner Bros. cartoonist Chuck Jones said that to make his characters' cartoonish movements look flowing and good in film, he had to unrealistically distort and change the characters' bodies and limbs still image to still image. When Bugs Bunny was rubber arm throwing a baseball his arm could change in length and shape still image to still image. When Wile E. Coyote was falling off a cliff, his body could change in length frame to frame. Jones said that after seeing what he was doing, a studio executive with no animation experience made the new rule that the animators couldn't make such distortions. He thought such distortions unseemly and somehow unethical.

* * * *

I want all the scenes to take place at night, with night logic, dream plotting, unconscious spaces between scenes. Add night photos.

* * * *

Sometimes there is an otherness, a foreignness, to my thoughts, at the fundamental atomic level, and I only get through the day by habit and muscle memory. People around me during the day won't even notice anything different.

* * * *

Did you know? Anne Frank went to correspondence school while hiding out. Her family had locals smuggle in and out food, letters and her homework and tests. She took the courses under one of the local helpers' name.

* * * *

"Life is short. I mean, why worry?"

Henry: "Well, one reason is I'm going to bite you on the leg if you don't shut up."

* * * *

"Saying you once returned a library book late doesn't count as a deep dark secret from your past."

Henry: "Sorry, that's the best I can come up with. I've led a wholesome life."

"If I'd have known that would have been your answer, I wouldn't have gone first and detailed my decade long cross country killing spree."

Henry: "Next time we can flip a coin."

* * * *

I've learned that the desire for perfection and symmetry and porcelain beauty, and more important the idea that truth lies in these things, is a sign of immaturity common to humans. Artists trying to perfect their craft is a shallow, myopic act.

* * * *

Humans have hard wired psychology that was useful to survive in caveman days, but is often useless and even detrimental today. Our great desire to eat food right away was essential to survival in days of food scarcity, but leads to obesity and health problems in today's day of cheap and plentitude. In the old days of survival, sticking with one's

small tribe and being suspicious of a new group of people that looked and dressed different was important, but manifests itself in modern times as bigotry, xenophobia and high school cliques.

And many people mistake their primitive evolutionary psychology for eternal absolute truths. Our great literature, art, religion, science and philosophy is steeped in base human biases about romance, sex, beauty, base senses, food and drink.

* * * *

"Do you think there's a god who smites sinners?"

Henry: "I find that doubtful. I haven't been smited and I've done some pretty bad stuff."

* * * *

I don't consider myself a Devil's advocate. I consider myself someone who is capable of seeing both sides to an issue.

* * * *

A lot of people sneer at how many selfies you take."

Henry: "And a lot of people are ugly."

Henry: "That was written a long time ago. How do you know God hasn't changed his mind since then?"

* * * *

William Faulkner said he read all the books he could get his hands to learn how not to write.

I prefer making a document than a work of art. A document means you leave in the things that would be taken out of art. The mistakes, the reality, the awkwardness, the cheesiness.

Even a failed attempt at art is good as a document, gives you meaning beyond the text. In that sense, a work of art is a failure.

Any work that has edited out the cheesiness and all the punctuation and spelling errors is a lie. We're all cheesy at times, have mistakes, in real life tell jokes that bomb. A document leaves them in.

* * * *

If you believe in God why do you think he gave humans aspirations they cannot fulfill, questions they are unable to answer?

* * * *

When an athlete says he gives 110%, isn't that admission he uses PEDs?

I believe humans want a perfection that cannot be achieved and may not exist. Perfection may just be a human idea, a qualitative not a quantitative thing, a cognitive bias, and the human idea of what is perfection most certainly is. And readers are looking for it in this book as they look for it everywhere. You see it in their criticism. And I know it cannot be achieved and I know the readers are wrong for looking for it, so defy, rebel against it, complain against it and against the readers, but also try to create a conglomeration, a collage, a mess, that approaches it in a way. I do want to create a music. And I do at times, in ways. The sublime moments found in disjointedness, rebelliousness, broken music, messiness, discord, carpet bombing.

Some of the things I write are real while others are not. Part of the intent is for the readers to be unable to tell which is which. Though I'm sometimes curious if discerning readers can tell. I sometimes wonder if I'm more obvious than I think. To try to prevent this I mess things up more. Shift the sands.

"What are you doing for Christmas?"

Henry: "Mocking Christians and their backwards ideas."

"What about Hanukkah?"

Henry: "Ashkenazi babes are hot. I lay off them."

"So I don't need to get you a Christmas present, then."

Henry: "I never said I was zealot."

* * * *

"Nice thing about pancakes is if you accidentally step on them with your boots they're waffles."

Henry: "Don't step on my pancakes."

* * * *

Henry: "I hate fad whores, posers, serial bandwagon jumpers. I won't do anything that others do."

"What about breathing?"

Henry: "I taught myself to breath out of my ears just so no one could accuse me of being a crowd follower."

* * * *

Henry: "Why do you always smirk in your photos?"

"A woman said my smirk is sexy and my smile is sweet, and I prefer sexy."

“Actually, when I grin in photos I always fear I look like an actor pushing a product in a television ad. We former teenage shoe gazers cringe at the thought of that.”

I've realized that Sunn 0))) essentially is Discharge played backwards and 20X slower. In other words, Discharge is the nuclear apocalypse while Sunn 0))) is the nuclear apocalypse in an altered state.

These things come to you as epiphanies afters hundreds of hours of listening at full volume.

It never leaves you. At some point in the future it's crystal clear in your head again.

* * * *

A big mistake, and I suspect a mistake many people make, is to think this book is about one thing, even when I specifically spell out the philosophy of the book. I'm well aware that readers will take one point they think they understand and apply it as a broad brush to everything else, as if the book is a Agatha Christie murder mystery with one final who dunnit answer.

And there also is one answer and I spell it out.

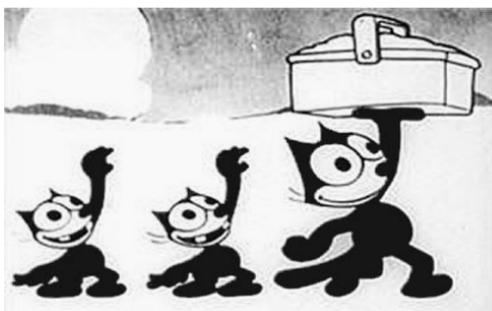
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* * * *

"Now that George Clooney is taken, I guess that makes me
the most eligible bachelor."

Henry: "I guess."

Connecting to the Unreal: Art Perception



Fans feel a connection to cartoon characters, seeing them as if they're living beings, following their lives, laughing at their jokes, feeling good when good things happen to them and bad when bad things happen. Someone can feel closer to a cartoon character than a living, breathing next door neighbor.



Many feel a human-to-human connection to the figure in this Modigliani painting even though it clearly is not human in many ways.

A complex and fascinating question is why do humans have such strong emotional reactions and human connections to unrealistic art? Why do viewers become scared, even haunted for days, by a movie monster they know doesn't exist? Why do humans become enthralled by distorted figures and scenes that aren't realistic? Why do viewers have emotional attachments to comic book characters?

The answer lies in that, while humans know art is human made artifice, they decipher and perceive art using many of the same conscious and nonconscious methods that they use to perceive reality. Looking at how we view reality shows us how we view art, and looking at how we view art helps show us how we interpret reality.

While a full discussion of this topic would fill books, the following offers several aspects of our art perception. Food for further thought.

* * * *

Art perception is irrational

People don't perceive art or reality on the entirely logical, rational or literal levels. Art is designed to communicate psychologically, aesthetically, sensually, viscerally, irrationally, subconsciously. Music is *felt*. Beauty and ugliness are psychological. Unreal things, distorted figures, a fictional monster in a movie can strike a primordial chord in us that our normal daily reality can't. A computer generated science fiction landscape can be perceived as beautiful.

Humans have aesthetic reactions to many basic qualities including colors, shapes, angles and balance whether the qualities are in the real world, dreams or in art. These qualities don't just symbolize feelings and evoke meaning in nature, they symbolize and evoke in abstract art and even a

kitchen design.



Even those who have never seen the 1922 silent vampire movie Nosferatu get a psychological reaction from this still image. I don't have to tell you that isn't the tooth fairy climbing the stairs.

* * * *

We interpret art using many of the cognitive methods we use in the real world. Shape and form biases, imagination, comparison and the other cognitive methods discussed throughout this book are used when we look at art.



Even though she has no legs, we perceive Mona Lisa as a whole person and not as some freakish amputee. This mimics how we perceive a real person standing behind a fence or sitting behind a counter.



We use the same shape and form biases to pick out a horse in a cloud as we do a train station in the Monet sketch.



Both in real life and when art viewing, humans focus on some information in a scene while being oblivious to other. The audience can get into a movie to a point they forget they are sitting in a theater and watching a projected image showing paid actors. This explains why a movie shark can make jump the audience in a desert theater one thousand miles from the nearest ocean.

* * * *

Symbols. Symbols are an integral part of the human experience on many levels. A symbol is something that

represents something else, something larger. It is a short hand, often to a complex idea. To many, blue at the top of an abstract painting or kid's sketch represents sky, and green at the bottom represents grass or ground. A gold ring on the finger symbolizes marriage. Shadows in a movie can symbolize danger and mystery.

Not only can commonly known symbols be used in art to communicate ideas, meaning and mood, but this illustrates how humans don't need reality to communicate real ideas. Symbols literally aren't the thing they symbolize.

Literature, this paragraph you are reading, is a long series of symbols. The meaning isn't in the symbols themselves, but what they evoke in your mind. I couldn't communicate many of the ideas in this book without these symbols.

* * * *

Humans mentally adapt to and accept new and artificial worlds. Throughout our lives we learn new games, rules, languages, rituals, manners and fashion. In art, we accept and adopt new musical styles, symbols, genres, conceits, artifices. Through repetition and experience, artistic symbols, conceits and associations become more than convenient intellectual devices. They become ingrained.

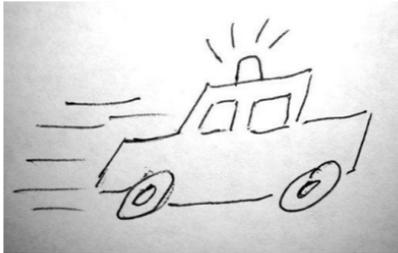
Our perception of reality is formed by the conceits of art. Around the world people perceive the Old West from Hollywood movies, even though historians will tell you those depictions are historically incorrect. People gain dubious perceptions of faraway places and peoples from sitcoms and action movies.

* * * *

Each art medium is limited in what it can show literally.

A painting or sketch doesn't have physical depth or movement. A silent movie doesn't have voices even when the people on screen converse. The letters of a novel can't graphically show a sunrise.

This means a medium must use artificial devices to communicate the literally undepictable.



Movement and flashing lights can't be literally shown in a sketch, so the artist symbolizes them with lines. Symbols are a common way to overcome a medium's limitations.

* * * *

Speculation, play acting, day and night dreams. All humans speculate about the past, present and future, things that haven't happen, things could have happened, things that might have happened. People wonder what their life would have be like if they were born in a different family or time and place or with different looks. Someone wonders how the conversation would have gone differently if he hadn't made that stupid remark. People ponder when they will die, what their life will be like in the future. People wonder it's like to visit Iceland or live in Paris. Speculation is an essential part of human intelligence. Great inventions and human achievements arise from from speculation.

Humans day dream, play act, dress up as different people, pretend they're different people, mimic others, act as if they animals to amuse their kids, dress up in costumes for Halloween and masquerade balls, join Civil War recreation clubs, have imaginary in their head conversations, practice speeches before imaginary crowds.

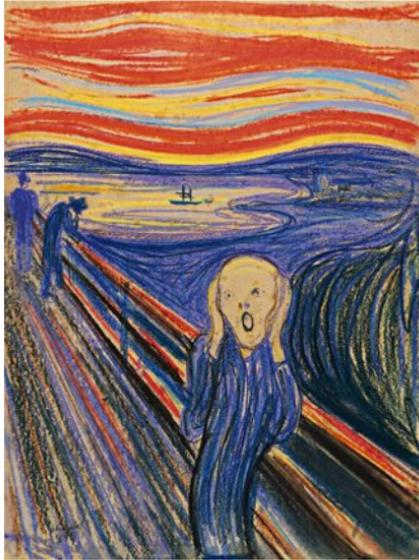
In our sleep we have strange and surreal dreams of impossible situations and lands and scenarios. Dreams can resonate and haunt us deeply. Dreams affect how he think and act in our daily lives.

The surreal situations, fictitious plots, made up characters and distorted figures of art go hand in hand with our normal dreaming, speculation, play acting lives. A novel may have a made up plot and fictions characters, but our daily speculation and day dreams involve similar fiction. Science fiction is often a serious intellectual, if also entertaining, speculation of the future and space. A painting or movie may have a surreal landscape and bizarre characters, but so do our dreams. Much art is about dreams and daydreams.

* * * *

Humans know and feel there is more than what they see and can comprehend, more than what they experience in their day to day lives. They know people in a society hide their true thoughts and feelings. They know they themselves have feelings and ideas that can't be put into words. They know there are concepts they can only imagine about.

The unrealistic, the impossible, the surreal, symbolism can evoke that which realistic art and our daily lives don't. Abstract patterns and wordless music can evoke secret memories, emotions and philosophical ideas that a photograph or neighborly chat cannot.



A 'photorealistic' snapshot can reveal little about what the subjects think and feel, while an expressionist painting can tell a lot.

* * * *

Henry: "To tell you the truth, David really is a polymath as he claims. Except everything he knows about is incredibly boring."

Henry: "I mean if you accept an invitation to coffee from someone who wrote a history of numeration systems, that's your choice of poison. He leaves me alone because he knows I bite."

* * * *

Did you know? The Three Stooges really were stooges. In old Vaudeville a stooge was a term for a lower level comedian who supported the star, and Moe, Shemp and Larry started as a trio of stooges. And in their later movie shorts their recurring supporting actors were their stooges.

* * * *

Henry: "That's the worst coffee I've ever tasted."

David: "It's paint."

Henry: "Not bad then."

* * * *

Henry: "I wondered why it was metallic blue."

Always remember that your taste in art and your philosophy and critiques of art, along with your political, social and religious philosophies, are in part products of your natural personality and temperament.

* * * *

“Why do you leave your back door open in the middle of the night?”

“Enter the back door in the middle of the night and find out.”

* * * *

“No, the semicolon was intentional. I put it in there to identify all the anal retentives.”

* * * *

I said to a science professor who writes textbooks "An author never finishes a book. He just quits" and he said "Exactly."

Beyond practical function, why do humans day dream, speculate and play act? Do you think there are important purposes for this? If so, does art serve a similar function?

What is the practical meaning and significance of 'Average'?

“You're a mathematician and a philosopher. Can I ask you a question.”

“Okay.”

“It's about averages. When something is quote unquote *average*. I don't know if this is a really dumb question or not, or even if I can say it well, but, say, you have a closed specific group of people. Say a group of 100 people. And they're all people, and for the case of this argument each person is one thing or another. Let's say each is a man or a woman. 100% man or 100% woman. For this case there are no hermaphrodites, or homosexuals or transvestites or people with too little or too much testosterone or whatever. Oops, I've probably offended everyone by now. Ha ha. But my only point is just that each person is one thing or another. Man or woman. Now in this group there are 70 men and 30 women. So, if you take the average, the average person is 70% man and 30% woman. Yet such an average person doesn't exist. Can't exist. What does this say about averages? Can you explain this to me? If this question makes any sense.”

“That's an interesting question. It gets to the meaning of what the concept of average means. There are a lot of things to consider with your scenario. One thing is perhaps your group isn't large enough to get a reasonable calculation. Perhaps if you included all the people in a state or country you would

get a better number. One hundred may be too small a sample. Clearly the 70/30 ratio doesn't correspond to the country or the world, and one hundred is an arbitrary cutoff. So maybe your group is too arbitrary and small . . . Another thing is you yourself-- granted for the sake of argument and example-- you yourself made what you said or implied wasn't a real world situation. You said a person is one or the other, man or woman, when there may be shades gray and in between in the real world. Some people define man and woman physically, some sexually, some culturally. Some men say they have a feminine side. Again we won't get into all that stuff, open up that can of worms, but perhaps the average points to this. That things aren't all or nothing, 100% or zero. You complained you don't get correct numbers for a scenario that you yourself said is not exact. Perhaps the average is pointing out the errors in your assumptions . . . Another thing to remember is that average is an abstract calculation using abstract numbers. The theoretical or abstract often doesn't fit well, or even apply, to the real world. Many people make the mistake of trying to apply theory to the real world assuming they're natural matches. As Yogi Berra said, "In theory, theory and practice are the same, but in practice they aren't." . . . Just remember that average is an abstract numbers calculation done in the air, in the mind . . . Also, in your case, there really is no need to have an average number. It's a pointless exercise. You said there are 70 men and 30 women. The 70/30 ration, or 70%/30% average if you will, is right there in the 70 men and 30 women numbers. There's no need to have an average number . . . I would think your 70%/30% numbers are best considered as statistical probabilities numbers. If you randomly pick one person, the 70%/30% percentage gives a probability there's a 70 percent

chance of the person being a man and 30 percent chance of being a woman. The average as probability numbers makes more real world sense and is useful. Think of it that way . . . Many things can't really be averaged or an average calculation is pointless or deceptive. What is the average of blue and yellow? Is it mixing blue and yellow and dividing by two (green). Is there such a thing as an average of blue and yellow. Blue + yellow divided by 2 = green. But blue + yellow divided by 3 or divided by 4 is also green. It says average is not really applicable in some situations, and perhaps not your situation. Your average calculation produces something that doesn't exist . . . The geographical average of a three men, one standing in Los Angeles and two in New York is, say, a man standing in Saint Louis. The *average man* is standing in St. Louis. Yet none of these people is standing in Saint Louis. What is the point of this calculation other than wasting time on the calculator? . . . This should all make you think what it means when someone gives you the 'average' age or height or eye color of a population. At the least it says you should consider numbers other than average. In addition to average. You don't judge things by just one calculation as definer. This also says it isn't just the calculations but interpreting what they mean . . .“

“ . . . So it wasn't a dumb question.”

“Ha ha. No, it was a very good one. Very interesting. You shouldn't have gotten me started.”

“Ha ha. No more questions.”

* * * *

Idle sidewalk conversation I overheard today between a boy and girl, perhaps about five years old:

boy: "XYZ."

girl (wearing a skirt): "What?"

boy: "XYZ. Examine your zipper. (pointing at her skirt where a pants fly would be)"

(girl looks down at the front of her skirt)

boy: "Ha ha ha! You don't have a zipper!"

Must count as timeless humor as that was a joke when I as five.

* * * *

Sometimes as a writer, I give up direct communication. I realize that information can't be can't be perfectly communicated and understood by the reader, and give up the ghost and intentionally hide things, make things obscure. I sometimes even point out this is what I'm doing and that ambiguity and obscurity are the very points. Sometimes I write in language and structures that can't be understood and cadence that trips up. Sometimes I write while looking the other way so what comes out is beyond even me and because what comes out can make me wince. Sometimes to get the

real meaning out of yourself you have to look away. I sometimes don't see the point in trying and get lazy and apathetic

* * * *

There was a period where if I tried to write down something, such as an internet address from the computer screen, it would come out as foreign picture symbols. There was also a time when I was hallucinating that I couldn't tell if my eyes were open or closed, because I saw the same things either way. People thought I was going to sleep when I was awake and I didn't realized I had closed my eyes.

* * * *

Did you know? James Cagney grew up dirt poor in the mean streets of New York City, while Humphrey Bogart grew up the wealthy and socially elite son of a prominent surgeon.

Do you know how historians can tell what colors and designs Medieval churches were painted inside? They look at the original stain glass windows which often show scenes of the insides of the church.

Old church pillars and ceilings were often colored much more brightly and ornately than modern people expect, a pillar perhaps painted with blue and yellow stripes.

* * * *

Yes, I'm very much obsessed about writing structure, communication, how readers read things. Reader habits, predilections and cognitive fallacies are things that bother me to no end. It doesn't help that I'm a control freak and don't want readers to have their own ideas.

* * * *

Henry: "Can you help me?"

"What?"

Henry: "I got the #10 Megahold hair gel for my new summer look."

"So what's the problem? You look pretty good."

Henry: "I'm stuck to the wall."

Henry: "Is barf an onomatopoeia?"

David: "Depends what you ate."

As I grow older, I don't fear death. I fear losing my mind.

* * * *

“Why are you still single?”

“All the good ones aren't taken and I prefer a challenge.”

* * * *

Godzilla is a small man in a rubber suit. The surrounding even smaller set and props makes him appear big. If the set and props were many times larger, we'd perceive Godzilla as small as a mouse.

* * * *

And, of course, why can't it be both, why can't it switch back and forth? Why can't something be both cheesy and heart piercing?

Henry: "That movie pierced my soul."

"Dogs don't have have souls."

Henry: "Must have been my liver then."

* * * *

Telling a human a truth isn't enough. He or she has to be convinced of it psychologically, aesthetically. Humans need to have it explained as a metaphor. Of course, humans often mistake psychology and aesthetics for truth, and metaphor for fact. They take stories literally. Psychology and aesthetics can be other terms for smoke and mirrors.

* * * *

You'll never understand the horror in a cup of coffee

* * * *

Henry: "Don't interrupt David when he's working on his number systems."

"Why? Because he gets annoyed?"

Henry: "No, because he'll explain them to you."

* * * *

Truth is a fleeting glimpse, a second in a thousand hours, a flash from a shard of glass on the ground in the alley that can't be found when you approach the spot. And even worse it can't be trusted. And how can we find truth when we aren't honest with ourselves?

* * * *

If I create some magic in my writing, I have to stamp it out. If I create some poetry, I have to mess it up. If I create clear I have to throw some dust on it, mix it up. But you're supposed to find beauty in the dust maybe, the beauty and poignant tragedy in the being all messed up inside.

* * * *

You'll never understand the horror in a cup of coffee.

* * * *

As an authentication expert, I can tell you that the majority of counterfeiters aren't trying to fool museum curators and auction house experts. They're trying to find buyers ignorant and gullible enough to fall for their scams and fakes that museum curators, auction house experts and seasoned collectors would identify in two seconds.

I don't know if or how this relates to the book, but thought it interesting.

And most people who buy what are obvious fakes to experts think they are getting a steal from the seller. They think the ignorance pretending scammers are the rubes who don't realize what they have on their hands and are offering for so

much under market value. Counterfeit sales regularly involve greed and deceit from both parties.

* * * *

You can't know everything, so the key is to be an expert on three entirely different narrow subjects-- proverbial pinpoints on the spectrum-- so someone someday overhearing snippets of your conversation in a bar may think you indeed may know everything. I chose ancient numeral systems, late 19th century lithography and The Ropers.

* * * *

I remember when I was a kid, maybe seven, I was reading a kid's book on the couch and the book started saying the words back to me. As I continued reading it got louder and louder and it got so loud I had to shut the book. I told this to my dad and he thought I was joking, a kid's imagination. He said that's what books do, they tell you stories.

Henry: "Wow, look at you all dressed up. You look like Clark Gable."

"Really?"

Henry: "No."

Henry: "It's your own fault asking follow up questions."

One thing as a literature writer you're not supposed to do is spell things out, telegraph the meaning and summarize philosophy. So, naturally, I have to do this. And of course I feel compelled (even aesthetically) to break such rules. It is important.

And even just there in that above paragraph, spelling out what I am doing, will be considered incorrect form by many literary types. They say you're suppose to imply.

* * * *

And I am drinking beer and see dancing sprites outside on the lawn past my window-- and I go out there and make them keep on dancing-- And when they are exhausted and want to quit I make them drink and keep dancing.

* * * *

With anything I spell out to you, there is more to it. At the very least it could be said in a different way. At the very least it could be said in the same exact way a second time.

* * * *

And I know if I write and think more, take more notes, I would come up with new ideas, good important ones. But I

also know that leaving them out, having them unstumbled upon is more important. An unfinished symphony is the best thing of all.

* * * *

Yes, one hundred percent definitely this book is in part about how humans, readers, interpret information, find meanings in their biases. And how their judgments of truth and meaning are reflections of their biases. Often their truths are nothing more than their biases.

And, really, many people are only interested in their own biases. They aren't looking for truth in art, they are only looking for art in art. Some search only for beauty but beauty is as shallow as a pretty lying face.

* * * *

And as a longtime writer who has been trained in conventions, I do have the notion and desire about proper form, content and styles-- which pieces to be left in and which to be taken out, how to balance and shape--, but not only is it okay for me to be imperfect, imperfections are vital. Cutting off the end too soon or too long or too ragged is good. Leaving something essential out or too much in is good. The meaning is beyond the artfulness (or lack thereof) of the writing.

Orson Welles said 'If you want a happy ending, that depends, of course, on where you stop your story.' And this makes you realize that book form and cropping, ordering, what's left in and out, means so little. That you want a happy ending, that you make a happy story, is neither here nor there

as far as the truth goes. The meaning is beyond the book and the good book merely spends its time pointing out its limits.

And if you say the book fails as an artistic work, I say “So?” or even better “Good. Maybe we're getting closer.”

But of course I do like art, find power in art, have my favorite works. I play music as I write.

* * * *

* * * *

Even when I write straight about complex textbook topics, I generally don't like to write one linear attempt at all encompassing text, as I know things are complex and there are different ways to think about things, shades of gray and endless disclaimers and asterisks. So I offer assorted ideas, snapshots from isolated places, with the expectation that the reader is a student with a brain who knows the snapshots are assorted and will try and fill in the blanks, thinks, researches and reads more. This is the only way you can do it with complex subjects.

In most cases I have further thoughts and personal conclusions that I don't express, as I know they're my takes and expect readers to think on their own and know personal commentary from my point of view can ruin things no matter how piercingly correct it is :)

In that sense I do intellectually use the aesthetic rules of implying, leaving gaps of information for the reader to make their own thoughts and intellectual imaginations. I believe in intellectual juxtapositions and food for thought. The rules of art do apply to my textbook writing.

And when I tell you what is something, why I put it here, what was the point, I leave things out. The explanation is a quick summary or snapshot, and you can never detail

everything. And I'm a private person and protect myself. This is why contradictions are important. When correctly done and honest, they aren't contradictions, but point to the whole story, the broader meaning. This is a bit how juxtapositions and collage work

A reason I can be maddeningly obscure and ambiguous is because the truth is beyond what I can write and what literal minded readers read literally, and the maddeningly obscure and ambiguous points to where it isn't.

The neuroaesthetics chapter is an example. This is a topic that leads to much further and deeper research, thought and ideas, there are so many psychological and philosophical implications that I offer some ideas and examples for the reader run with it. Come back in a month with a paper with your theories and we can discuss. If you think that chapter is bare bones, it is.

“Arbitrary social rules are for the weak and small minded.”
Henry: “I still think you should wear pants to church.”

The format of the book-- the way the pieces are arranged on the pages-- is of much thought for me, and there were different possible ways I was going to write this. One way was to have it just straight text-- no page breaks, no quasi chapters, another was to have a piece on one page with a photo on the other. Another was to have chapters of different formats, including straight, columns, diptychs and triptychs of text and images. The idea and practice of collage and natural juxtapositions are what I like. Of course, I also

realize that the format is a contrivance, there is no *real* way to write it and just picking by flipping a coins is a reasonable way.

The format is just a way. And, after listening to a script writing friend who went by how the dialogue sounds when spoken, I realize that writing is part visual for me. How the text looks on the pages.

If you say the book should have been written in a different format, I'm not saying your wrong, but I'm not saying you're right.

Aleatoricism and the broken glass style of writing is always important to me, as it gives up the ghost of linear reading and reader expectations.

Juxtapositions, even just accidental or incidental ones, are things I like. So I am very conscious of format-- and always have designs in my head--, but also know that letting things just happen and leaving things as they came out is good. It has always stuck with me the middle school teacher who said, when in doubt , stick with your initial answer on a multiple choice question

The more I work on a book the more polished and cohesive it gets, so I have to force myself to quit early and no longer touch it. The spell and grammar check is the tool of the Devil. My weak side uses it behind my back.

You may complain about the mess, but I promise you the final book will be much, much more polished than it should be and poorer not better because of that

As Freud said, sometimes a cigar is just a cigar. If he really

said that.

“Where'd you get those shoes?”

“On amazon.”

“What brand are they?”

“I don't know. (looking down at shoes). Wait until I take them off.”

“What are they? Like running shoes?”

“Walking shoes I guess. Walking shoes I'm pretty sure. Saucany. Actually, they're running shoes I'm pretty sure. It's just when you get all black running shoes they look like something else.”

“Comfortable?”

“Yeah, pretty much. I have the tendency to wear shoes over and over until they wear out. Same with jeans. I wear the same jeans all the time until they get holes in them. Usually in the worst parts haha. I once used packaging tapes on the crotch but they made a funny noise when I walked. The key is to wear the correct color underwear just in case. Haha”

“Haha.”

* * * *

Truman Capote said sometimes writing isn't about what the words mean but the music they make. Sometimes when I write I don't know what is the meaning. The meaning is something else than the literal meaning, what people will read. But I'm not making music either. I felt this when I wrote and looked at 'Sometimes I feel I wasn't made for this world.' There is some truth perhaps, perhaps not, but also an overall foreignness to the whole thing, a distance in the words and the act of writing the words.

* * * *

My brain fights me sometimes, and in different ways.

* * * *

* * *

People define art as being made by people, and not animals or nature, because they want intent and design behind it. Even most agnostics and atheists believe in some form of natural design or order to things.

* * * *

Does it even matter whether or not something is labeled as art? Does labeling something as art change what it is? Can't a work of art be missing something essential in its very artness? It is that missing something that makes it art?

* * * *

It doesn't matter what you think is. It matters what is.

* * * *

Henry: "The key to being a successful businessman is to in your money back guarantee misspell money and guarantee."

Henry: "And 'back' to be safe."

Henry: "'Technically, sir, if you read the contract, it says if you don't like the product I get to moon you.'"

* * * *

For those trying to find the meaning in my work, I work on the expectation that you've read everything I've written, have yet to write, won't have time in my life to write. I'll write out rushed outlines near the end like Sade.

And my writing doesn't tell many secrets, even my favorite sit com, football team and food. I think my personality and knowing my favorite pop and fruit are an essential part of understanding my philosophy.

* * * *

With all their photoshopping and lighting, rules for imagery and books and movies and furniture arranging, I realize humans are trying to reach a harmony or unity in their lives. Some sort of psychological, metaphysical, spiritual harmony or perfection in the complicated world. Even when the attempts are half baked, even by their own standards, or forgotten for a while or suppressed for practical reasons, this is what deep inside they are hoping for.

And they often know they can only approach it in a small picture framed on a wall, the way they shoot and photoshop a photo. You can see the attempts in the way they criticize this book, sometimes in the shoes they wear. To most people, perfection involves personal controlling.

And I too am trying to achieve it, move towards it through my disorder. My disorder is a breaking down of false order in order to build something new. It's a breaking down and a creating at the same time. But the real creation is for another book.

There is a book I have been planning on writing for years that will lay down my aesthetic castle. It has been put aside for years, even forgotten and dismissed for long periods. I know exactly how it ends and many of the scenes have been composed in my head for years. It ends in a wet dark purplish red, and is the work to get me to heaven.

I listen to a pop song on the radio and it breaks my heart

“What do you think of Mozart?”

“Uh, he's too frilly for me. Light and frilly.”

“I agree.”

“Actually, we sometimes play him in recorder group and playing him you can tell how talented he is. You can tell when you play them. We've also played his dad and Solieri- the guy from Amadeus- and playing them you can tell they aren't as good.”

“Interesting. Who's your favorite to play?”

“Hmm. Maybe Bach. Maybe Beethoven. I like Handel to listen to, he's one of my favorites, but he's boring to play.”

“Who's the hardest to play?”

“I don't know. I'm not the most talented player, so I'm perhaps not the best to judge. Ha ha.”

“Everything's hard.”

“Haha. Yeah I guess. I dunno. I once tried warming up my recorder by the fire and it melted all this like waxy varnish on it and covered the holes.”

“Haha.”

“To be slightly off topic. Actually, I can read music but don't know the notes by name. Letter. So if someone says 'Play a G' I have to have them point to the note on the music sheet.”

“Oh. It looked like you were taking piano lessons in the photo.”

“Uhhhh. What?”

“I don't know. With the curtains and the computer on the desk. It looked like a piano.”

“Hmm. Hahah. Okaaaay.”

“Call me crazy. Haha.”

“Have you had lunch yet?”

“Uh. Not officially, but I had some bread and almonds before. Unofficially. I'm not that hungry, but will eat if you pay.”

“I was going to Taco Gayaneros if you want to come.”

“Sounds good. I'm suddenly hungry. Burritos Son Latondos.”

“What?”

“Nothing. You ready to go?”

.

My next book is going to be so obscure that you won't even realize it's a book until page 90.

Henry: "What are they going to think it is before page 90?"
"A spoon."

Notes on Time

A longtime debate has been whether time, at least as we humans commonly conceptualize it, is an actual, absolute thing independent to us, or merely a human conception. Isaac Newton believed that time is an absolute thing independent to humans, just as dirt, rocks, trees, weight and geography exist in concrete forms independent to us and out minds. His contemporary, Gottfried Leibniz, however, felt that time, at least as we perceive it, is merely a human concept, something we observe and imagine through out myopic, limited human view.

* * * *

Newton, and for that matter Leibniz, didn't know about Albert Einstein's theory of relativity, which likely would have made him think differently. If Newton knew about it, he likely would have not viewed time as so absolute and rigid. Amongst other things, Einstein's theory showed that time can be different and there can be dual (different) times simultaneously. Further, it is impossible to determine which if either of the dual times is the 'correct' time.

Also note that there are things, if not humans, that move at the speed of light. So Einstein's duality of time exists, if not for humans.

* * * *

Also, where we stand on earth is not stationary. Beyond that

the earth spins and rotates, we do not know the speed of our cosmos and space as a whole. Our space could be changing in speed for all we know-- speeding up and/or slowing down--, which would change our relative time.

All of the above bring into question of our preconceived notions about our standard marking of time as an absolute.

* * * *

The common human conception and perception of time is a product our subjective and narrow conscious view of things. Humans commonly perceive the *now* (what is in front of us on the proverbial line of time) as the *real*, and the past and future as somehow *unreal*. However, this is a product of our myopic animalistic 'in the moment' conscious view of things.

There is no question that our perception of time is limited to our experience and limited view and mental abilities. We proverbially watch from the side of the tracks as the bullet train of time goes by (And that time even goes by in a line like a train is up to debate). As with most things, including the universe and reality and even our own minds, time is something larger and possibly different than what our small minds and senses perceive. Our perception of time is merely a limited and perhaps deluded view, viewed and translated through our cognitive and perceptual filters. This is what Gottleib thought.

* * * *

Other animals have narrower and shallower consciences and perception of time--- they perceive reality and time and existence in a shorter in the moment window than humans. A

dog and cat exists in the moment and have no concept of their births or deaths. However, humans perception is still similar to other animals. It is just a broader version and with memory and intellectual speculation. Our view is myopic just not as myopic as other animals'.

* * * *

If you think time can be represented by an axis line just as distance can be represented by an axis, then standing in your current point in time and saying other points of time past and future are unreal is the geographical equivalent to standing in Toledo Ohio and saying Los Angeles and London don't exist.

Clearly to most of us Los Angeles and London are real no matter where we are standing, and so are the past and future. Sure you cannot be in the past, present and future at the same time, but neither can you stand in Toledo, Los Angeles and Paris simultaneously. The past doesn't exist in the present, but Los Angeles doesn't exist in Toledo Ohio. Doesn't mean the past and Lost Angeles aren't real.

* * * *

Time and 'now' is viewed differently at different points in time. If you consider the 'now' (right now!) as real and 11am July 2 1755 as unreal, realize that a man back in July 2 1755 would have considered that moment as real and your current now as unreal. Was that person less right than you. Is his reality less real than yours? To him, your now is unreal, doesn't exist-- but it does-- at least to you right now. Is his past or the future real any less real? How can it be. Your perception of now, called *specious time*, is a matter on your

place in time and consciousness. It is subjective to where you are in time.

In the big picture-- moving away from a human's biological myopic conscious view, and seeing a broad view of things-- all past and future points are equally as real. Stepping back and looking at the spectrum, 11am July 2 1755 is as real as your right now. If you consider that past moment as not real, realize that from the broad view your current moment is no more or less real. It has the same degree of realness as any other point in time.

Also realize that that current and future events are formed by previous events. They aren't separate, working isolated to each other. Events in the past influence the now and events in the past and now influence the future. For example, your current knowledge is a product of past education and experience. The clothes you are wearing now were designed and made and you picked them out in the past.

You are a product of your past experiences and education and physical happenings. In that sense the past exists in the now.

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(2)

Physical time versus psychological time

Time is sometimes categorized as physical versus psychological time.

Physical time is time as it is marked by a clock-- it keeps marching along at a steady rate, whether or not it is observed, whether you are awake or asleep.

Psychological time is how it is subjectively viewed by a

person or persons. The perceived speed of time changes due to psychological and physiological factors. Time can drag when you are bored, while it can fly while having fun. Sleep makes time pass quickly psychologically. Drugs and illness can make appear to time slow or speed up. After taking a nap we can be surprised at the time.

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(3)

Human time travel

Time travel is a topic that doesn't overly interest me because I think the actual (rather than speculative) practice of a human actually traveling through time in a time machine like Doctor Who is far fetched, if not impossible. In particular, I think a human being going backwards in time might well be impossible even at the theoretical level.

* * * *

We all travel through time. I experienced 1975 and 1987 and will be around for the future.

'Time travel' as most people define it involves traveling highly abnormally, beyond the normal human limits. This can include experiencing the distant beyond normal lifespan future, skipping back and forth through time and experience time at abnormal speeds.

* * * *

While the theory of going backwards in time is filled with

major problems and is likely impossible, people do and can experience foreword time in abnormal ways. People use drugs, take long sleeps to skip periods of time (psychological time). People who are unconscious wake up in the future and consciously miss periods of time. People take care of themselves to live longer lives. The life expectancy of modern humans is much longer than long ago, so humans today experience more time in their lives. The story of Rip Van Winkle is about a man who falls asleep and wakes up years later. This isn't so far fetched as modern medicine progresses, though some would claim it isn't time travel in the 'traditional' sense.

* * * *

Einstein's theory of relatively shows how it is theoretically possible to experience time differently. Though the chance of a human riding in spaceship traveling at the speed of light is very, very far fetched.

* * * *

If they don't experience time travel directly, people experience distorted echoes and artifacts of time. Reading history, visiting an ancient building, reading an old diary or looking at photos or mementos allows us to, in a sort of way, experience the past. Visiting a boyhood room in the same physical state can give a rush to the past, allow you to experience again old emotions.

We can and do get new insight and knowledge about the past that effects are current and future. We can't change the past, but can change our perception and knowledge of it and

that can change our current and future.

Of course, all these experiences are distorted and filtered through our present mind. Like reading a poem translated from another language.

* * * *

Predictions, including scientific predictions, can sometimes show the future. Computer programs can predict with accuracy how humans will age or show the progression of a disease. We all know we'll gain wrinkles and our hair will gray with age. Financial calculations and schedules can show how much money you will have and what you can buy. Learning our relatives' and medical histories and our having medical checkups can, to a degree, show us our medical future.

However, these predictions aren't first hand experiences of the future. Even if accurate, imagining isn't the same as experiencing first hand.

* * * *

We can think about the past, learn more about the past.

We can think of all the different possibilities in the past — the different forks, trails that could have been taken, the paths and real things that could have happened but didn't. And these thoughts can change our now and future, how we act and what we do now and in the future.

The highest human thought involves such types of contemplation and speculation. Great inventions are the product of intellectual speculation.

* * * *

There are many paradoxes with time travel, in particular backwards time travel, paradoxes that make many conclude that backwards human time travel is impossible.

On the face of it it's impossible to go back before you were born. How can you exist before you were born? How can you exist when you didn't exist or before you mother even existed? Is it possible even on the philosophic level?

There is a famous time travel paradox where you are told to go back in time to assassinate your grandfather. Clearly you can't do this, because if you did you'd never be born and exist to go back in time to kill your grandfather.

There's also the problem of duality. If you could go back before you were born, would, as time passed, there be two yous? Is this possible? Some propose the idea of parallel universes, often with different times. Theory of course, though we all can look at the past and see how real possible different things could have happened, different real-possible paths could have been taken. If you had taken a different fork in the road, your real future, your real present could have been different.

* * * *

How can you go back to an earlier time and not effect the future? Unless you lose all future memory of the past? The latter would be a changing of the future and possibly change your desire to go back to the past to change the past.

We often want to go back in time to change past hurts, but changing those hurts would change the future motivation to go back in time to change those hurts.

If you want to go back to change an event in the past and you change it, you change the desire in the future to go back and change it. It is the future that changes the past. The change in the past is dependent on the future and if you change the past to change the future you won't change the past. Some would say that the past being dependent on the future is an impossibility-- that backwards causality is impossible.

If in the future you can invent a time machine to take you back to your current past and change all the bad things you want changed, then why haven't those bad things been changed? Is it because you never invent the machine, because you do but decide not to go back or the time travel work as planned doesn't work as planned? Is your current unresolved present the product of the time travel?

And if you say you're lazy and must work and study harder to invent that time machine, then why haven't your past bad things been fixed?

These and other endless paradoxes and paradoxes within paradoxes point to the impossibility of time travel or our delusory perception of time.

There's no question time is something our limited myopic minds can't grasp, much less master. There are questions we can't answer or even get our minds around. We can't even be sure that these questions aren't wrong headed.

* * * *

You can't change the past. The closest you can do to changing the past is to change the right now, which, a moment later, is the past. By changing the current you also change the future. These are the powers you have, not going

back in a time machine.

As traveling to and changing the past is at the very least near impossible, it makes practical sense to put one's time and energy into changing the now and future. That's where the best bet is, the best use of one's time.

* * * *

The discussion of time travel is a look at the unrequited psychological wants and needs and aspirations of humans. Humans want to live forever, never grow old, are haunted by their pasts, past choices. The contemplation of time travel is a contemplation of the conundrums and limitations of being human, the human condition, our regrets and heartaches. Our wants, our yearnings, wanting to exceed our capabilities. The more we study time travel, the more it haunts us, damages us. Humans long for the impossible. That's part of being human.

* * * *

Time travel is often used in fiction. Often it's pure fantasy for fun and games, but other times it is a device to delve into the human condition and psyche. Picasso said "Art is a lie that brings us closer to the truth." Similarly, time travel in fiction is a lie, but it reveals much about humans' desires and psychology.

Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* involves back and forth time travel, but the scenes are more visions, with Scrooge only shown scenes. He watches them impassively from the outside, as if watching a television show. He is shown the past, as one would be shown the past through

pictures or a diary or stories told others. The future scenes can simply be credible predictions. This literary use of time travel is a metaphorical device, a symbol of memory and contemplation and how self awareness can change our future. Notice that his visions/contemplations of the past (and future) change his actions and, it would seem, his future. The story is a “change your ways now or you'll regret it in the future” morality tale.

Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* is an early story about time travel, involving the protagonist being transported back in time and using his future knowledge to benefit him in the past. However, the story is couched in the fact that the protagonist has been knocked unconscious by a hit to the head and that it is very much possible that the time travel story is nothing more than his brain damaged dream.

To me, Stanley Kubrick's movie *The Shinning* is a particularly interesting story about time travel. In the movie the family is staying over winter at an isolated mountain hotel and the little boy, Danny, has psychic visions of the past and future. The cook Hallorann has the same secret psychic ability and recognizes it in Danny. Hallorann explains to Danny that they don't see the past and future but traces of it.

He says, “Well, you know ... when something happens, it can leave a trace of itself behind. Say like, if someone burns toast. Well, maybe things that happen leave other kinds of traces behind. Not things that anyone can notice, but things that people who 'shine' can see. Just like they can see things that haven't happened yet.”

They aren't so much traveling through time as seeing artifacts and mementos left behind. As shiners, they have

better abilities to see the details that are there but others miss. They are more sensitive.

The Shining is even more complex and ambiguous in that the movie involves numerous geographical and narrative impossibilities. Some believe the entire story is the dream of Danny's mentally ill and alcoholic dad, played Jack Nicholson. They believe the movie is really about mental illness.

It's also notable that it is debatable that Danny's visions of impending horror and violence are accurate, or any more accurate and detailed than anyone normal person's intuitions. In meeting with a hotel employee, Danny's father had been directly told there had been a horrible murder at the hotel several years earlier, and it's plausible that Danny also got this information. Further Danny's premonitions of violence may have been insights into his dad's volatile nature. It is strongly alluded to that his dad had previously done something violent to Danny. The premonitions may be similar to anyone's bad dreams based on unsettling experiences and insight. Last, Danny and his mother escape their homicidal dad. He has premonitions of murder that never happen.

It's also notable that the last image of Jack Nicholson (or a look alike) is in an old photo on the wall from decades earlier-- an artifact or symbol from the past. The smell of burnt toast left behind.

The movie involves riddles within riddles.

The curious, out of left field ending to Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* is interpreted by some as Travis Bickle's deathbed dream. A speculative reality.

* * * *

A major limitation of humans is speed. It takes us time to do things. We can't write a novel in a day or go from Los Angeles to Paris in a minute. "There are not enough hours in the day" people often lament. Our errors in judgment are magnified because we are slow. Computers are more accurate because they can make many computations and repetitions in a short period of time. Their accuracy is in their being high speed.

People can't be in two places at the same time, but with technology we shorten the gap-- communication, faster travel. In the 1850s, most people lived their entire lives within a short radius of their birth. Today, people fly across the country and world regularly. You can have a real time video chat with a friend on the other side of the world, while 300 years ago you would have written by rare letter. We know more about other places than we used to. The world is smaller, we can do more in our lives, in our week than we used to.

As technology and knowledge improves, we won't slow time but will speed up what we can do in that time. And our science and knowledge will teach us more about our past and help better predict the future.

To me, perhaps the best way to process this book is if you could consume it all at once. But, on the other, hand, having to read it word by word is so human.

Identifying amber

A simple test to judge if amber is genuine is to rub it on your pants leg and see if it creates static electricity. Real amber will attract lint and bits of paper.

Amber also floats in seawater. Dissolve about 3 tablespoons of salt per cup of water to test this out. Amber should float and many imitations will sink.

Notice how the lead singer in the rock band gets the focus of attention even when another member is the primary composer and band leader.

Ibn Khaldun was a 1300s-1400s Arab historian who wrote a famous seven volume history of civilization from the Arab viewpoint. He felt that civilizations rise and fall in cyclical fashion, with innovation and cooperation leading to wealth, and greed and sloth leading to a fall.

Unlike other generals, Omar Bradley was said to be so polite that he never gave an order that didn't include the word "please."



Wife and daughter of Geronimo

Consciousness

Humans have a consciousness, or awareness of things and ourselves, but it is limited by our ability to physically detect and mentally process information. Our myopic view of time is an example of our limitations. Our cognitive biases in interpreting sensory information is an example of how our conscious view is colored and distorted. How this book, as a collection of information, is interpreted and judged is another. Beyond the reader's cognitive and literary biases, the book can only be read one word and one page at a time-- an example of our physical/mental limitations in processing information and how this itself colors interpretation.

Do I believe that the conscious is reality based-- and not merely an unconscious dream?-- Yes, I do, but I believe our conscious view is myopic and biased, colored and viewed through human patterns. And we all come to points of irreconcilable conflict, inconsistencies, where we see that our consciousness, our mental capabilities, is not advanced enough to understand many larger, real things both about the universe and ourselves. And our unconscious dreams can give us insights, emotional insights that escape our waking hours-- which says our waking hours are not fully aware.

Higher levels of human consciousness involve more knowledge, intelligence, experiences, points of view, proper reflection on this knowledge (learning) and experiences,

lessening or putting into context our habits and biases, being fearless. Knowing we have biases, identifying many of them, is important. Trying to process information, new experiences, with an open mind is important. But this will only raise our consciousness to a higher level. We can never free ourselves of biases entirely (or know we have) and our intellect is limited, our information processing is always limited.

Doctors say to identify consciousness in others you observe how they react to stimulus, such as pain, and respond to questions such as 'What are you doing and thinking?' 'How many fingers am I holding up?,' 'Tell me what you did in the last hour, the last week.' Of course these tests are medical using their purely medical definition of consciousness. As said, our night dreams can offer insight into ourselves hidden from our days, even when we are oblivious to questions being asked and fingers being held up before our eyes.

Identifying consciousness beyond us is difficult. Even with animals-- pets-- they cannot communicate. We assume rocks and trees don't have it. Is consciousness something beyond us? Many consider God total consciousness-- total knowledge, awareness, mental and physical speed, total self awareness. Some say nature is consciousness, or that total consciousness is total understanding of nature.

Philosophers, psychologists and scientists debate it's nature and scope to this day. I'll let you think and debate about this all you wish.

A beginner's guide really is an advanced guide because it is forced to answer so called beginner's questions that most don't have the answer to and idly dismiss. Most parents who dismiss as "dumb" or "silly" their kid's question of "Why is the sky blue?" don't know, much less can explain, why the sky is blue. The beginner's guide forces the author to actually answer the question.

At a dinner party a guest went up to Salvador Dali with a Dali print the guest had bought and asked if it was authentic. In front of the crowd Dali said "No." Later in the party, Dali pulled aside the guest and said he had made the print, but had yet to be paid by the publisher. He said once he was been paid, then the print would be authentic.

Most people don't have the guts to do what they think is right. They play it safe. Most people are at conflict with themselves.

People deny things things in their sober daily lives, realize it in a fit when drunk, suppress it again when sober again.

David: "What's heavier, a pound of feathers or a pound of gold?"

Henry: "I don't know. I have no idea what feathers cost, but you aren't going to get much gold for a pound."

* * * *

"You forgot well dressed."

"Wow. You're handsome, smart and witty. You must be hiding something really bad."

* * * *

"The bag for the feathers is going to be a lot bigger, so I'm going to go with the feathers."

* * * *

Did you know that the famed Russian ballet dancer Vaslav Nijinsky was schizophrenic and spent most of his life in and out of mental asylums?

* * * *

"What the hell is that?"

"It's a dog. A dachshund chihuahua mix."

"Oh. Okay. As long as it's on a leash."

Cows have no upper teeth.

"No word rhymes with orange"

Henry: "Orange does."

Henry: "Are you a vampire?"

"No, I don't think so. But that would explain a lot."