

Weeping for Narcissus



A Postmodern Manifesto
by James Robert Strobe

To Myself

INTRODUCTION	6
Idealism	6
Ideation	6
Subjective Idealism	7
Collective Idealism	7
Order	7
WEEPING FOR NARCISSUS	9
On Ramp	9
The Newest Leviathan	9
The Story So Far	10
The Impossibility of Revolution	12

Monomulticulturalism	12
Continuous Apocalypse.....	13
Apotheosis of the Individual.....	13
Idols in the Pantheon.....	13
Multidimensional Idolatry	14
Tribal Existentialism.....	14
Progress.....	14
Golgotha	16
Stasis.....	16
The Last Man.....	17
Ultimate Yuppie.....	18
The Last Hippie	18
The Species' General Solution.....	18
The New Misanthrope.....	18
The Encapsulation of OBL	19
Anastasia	19
The Reillusionment	20
Suppressing the Scream.....	21
The Impossibility of Communication.....	21
Artist and Society.....	23
 BEING AND OTHER	 24
Sentimental Presuppositions	24
Logical Presuppositions	24
A Subjective Theory of Knowledge.....	24
Problems of Subjective Knowledge.....	25
Subjective Existence and Being.....	25
Ethical Kernel.....	28
Supreme Ontological Scandal	29
Subjective Politics.....	29
Art and Commerce.....	30
History.....	31

Theology	32
The World as Idea	33
Dynamic Models of Culture	34
History’s Plumage	34
Cultural Change	34
Historiography	35
Ellulism	35
Preconditions for Technical Development	36
Characteristics of Technical Development.....	36
Problems Caused by Technical Development	37
The Dynamically Stable Workforce.....	37
Ellul’s Monism.....	38
Metanarratives	39
Realistic Models	39
The Laws of History	39
The Meaning of Life	40
Collective Idealism and the Constitution of Order	41
Initial Bile	41
Subsequent Action	41
Practical Eristics.....	41
That Some should be Privileged.....	42
That One has a Bad Reason to Destroy	42
The Order	42
PHILOSOPHY	44
Rhetorical Existentialism	44
The Objective Persona	44
An Objectivist Project	45
LOGIC AND COGNITION	47
Cognition	47
Cognitive Primitives.....	47
Formulae	49
Metaphoric Extension	49
Kant’s Categories and Cognition	50
Modes of Truth Judgement	50
Quality of Judgement	50
Quantity.....	50
Relation	51
Propositional Calculus and Cognition	51
Inclusion Principle	51
Qualification of the Mutually Exclusive	51
Intelligence and Symbol	52

Principles of Formal Validation	52
Square of Opposites	52
Conversion	52
Existential Fallacy	53
Mood and Figure of Syllogistic Propositions	53
Quantification of Intelligence	53
Consciousness	54
25 KINDS OF FOOLISHNESS	56
First Conditions	56
Strategic Issues	56
Humility	56
Virtue	56
Persistence.....	56
Practical Rhetoric.....	56
Sentimentality	57
Definitions	57
Formal Language	57
Epistemology	57
Assaulting an Induction	58
Sophistry	58
Polar Argumentation	58
Uncertainty	59
Experience.....	59
External References	59
Theological Techniques.....	59
Conservative and Liberal	60
Attributive and Essential	60
Hedonistic Intellectualism	60
Personality	61
The Clown.....	61
The Brute.....	61
The Philosopher	61
The Encyclopedist.....	61
The Moralist.....	61
The Pragmatist	61
The Others.....	61
Continuous and Discrete.....	62

That Might Makes Right	62
Myths of Scientism	62
That the Universe is Understandable.....	63
That Science Describes the Universe	63
That People are Predictable.....	63
That Science Leads to Certainty.....	63
That the Idea of Science Prevents its Corruption	64
Myth of the Objective Observer.....	64
Soft Science.....	64
Holes in Science.....	64
That Science = Progress	65
A Scientific Definition of Science.....	65
Dysnomia.....	65
Premodern, Modern, and Post-Modern	66
Knowledge and Intention.....	67
Tangential Rhetoric.....	67
Tribal Impulses in Urban Society	67
The Psychological Attack.....	68
That Weariness is Sufficient to Falsehood	68
Ship of Fools.....	68
Irreversible Processes.....	68
Fallacies of Relationship	68
Truth as an End.....	68
Truth as a Means.....	69
Open Warfare.....	69
The Surgical Strike.....	69
Incendiary Devices.....	69
Carpet Bombing	70
Attacking Supply Lines.....	70
Gunnery Assistant	70
War and Existence.....	70
Recognizing Defeat.....	70
Synthetic Argument	71
GLOSSARY	72
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	74

Introduction

These are exciting times for the epistemologist; the forces of mysticism batter the headlands of causality, armed with Truth, hammering and undermining the salient rock, while politics, the chewing jaw of chaos, the end and means of human existence, consumes all proponents, metabolizing their names to fuel its fire.

There is no honest way to avoid connecting to everything else. To say one thing in isolation is to open oneself to the cruelest criticism. Not only must I respond to every fact and its connection to every other fact and each of its exceptions, I also must burden the relationships with all their political, ethical, and aesthetic implications. And if I tell you how to feel about it (and if you feel about it that way already) you might be pleased to say I speak the truth.

Nevertheless, I will introduce a simplified, objective, and linear basis for navigating this particular entrance to the labyrinth.

Idealism

Idealism is a philosophical system that focuses on ideas.

A circle drawn in the sand is an imperfect instance of a perfect, ideal circle. Somewhere in the vast cosmos the ideal circle coyly hides while every one I draw is approximate. Where exactly that perfect circle lived, I do not say. I can only see their fuzzy shadows.

I can say now, that all my ideas live in my brain as a network of neurons that send electro-chemical pulses to each other and to other organs in the body. Presumably, these networks would include the ideal circle, the idea of particular circles, and how I feel about them. As long as I am just supposing, I can think with my entire body, as no part is the origin but that thought is a resonant relationship between them. I am a collection of concepts.

That there is a real, objective world, is yet another suspicion residing among the collection of memories of suppositions, fantasies, real events, expectations, and other myths.

Ideation

The retina receives millions of bits of light-data and reduces that data to electro-chemical pulses that convey shape-information to the brain. The shape-information includes edge, corner, concave, convex, and motion. We have seen circles and so, when the brain receives the shape information, a particular network of neurons is excited and we might say we recognize a circle. The more recent the last excitation, the more likely the excitation and ensuing recognition. Recognition tends to reinforce the network excitation. Lack of recent recognition tends to damp down the excitation and over time we tend to forget.

Paradoxically, we tend to filter out constant stimuli.

When excited, the networks might signal other organs, such as the adrenal glands, which can release their own messages and the excitement can have a wider physiological path. We tend not to get excited about circles but we may. Certainly we can recall images that make us excited or angry and we become excited or angry just from the recall, even though the image is not actually present. We may have holistic memories.

In some cases, we receive information that we don't recognize. If we are looking for circles but we find disconnected lines, the network corresponding to the ideal circle will not be excited. But it is possible to cognize a pattern for the first time.

From all this, I can form a picture of how my ideas are formed and maintained. I have a model of the physiological process of ideation. I can suppose that the ideas exist in my own mind. I maintain a list of recognizable objects prioritized by time and impact.

I can talk about my ideas as individually constituted. No one can directly arrange my neural networks for me. He can describe things for me to imagine. He can draw examples of circles in the sand and argue for an ideal circle as a set of points but it is up to me to form my own network. If he fails to inform me or if I fail to be informed, I can neither cognize nor recognize what is offered.

Subjective Idealism

The world can be talked about as perceived by me. I have my own point of view, my own perspective. I see things that are close to me as larger than things further away. I tend to see what I am looking for and recognize things I have already seen.

Thus what I have already seen becomes the means of recognition. It is like a set of templates or patterns or other tools by which I can compare objects in the field of vision and select the object of my desire.

I tune out much of the world's detail because I am looking for the particulars that I have sought before. My ideals act as a filter. I am ignorant of things I have never seen, even though these things might exist. I do not have a universal objective view of the world. I have a local, subjective view.

After I have become comfortable in my surroundings, I tend to fail to learn anything new. I become closed to new cognition. My current set of ideals becomes sufficient (I think) to my functioning in the world. When it works, I am reinforced in my general belief. I tend to leap to the conclusion that I know the world because I recognize everything in my version of it. There is nothing I don't recognize. My recognition reinforces my confidence and vice versa.

I have a tendency to refuse to change, to insist on my knowledge, to feel threatened when my ideals are questioned.

I live in a world that is not so much given to me as a reality but a world that I constitute for my self.

The subjective idealist maintains that each of us lives in a bubble of our own ideas.

Collective Idealism

So far, this has been a description of individuals in isolation.

But humans are not solitary creatures but irrepressibly social. We crave the human voice. We give speeches and listen to speeches. We draw diagrams and examine the diagrams of others. We shake hands. We respond communally to smells. Social creatures tend to reinforce each other's behavior.

In addition to the direct perception pathway, humans have a symbolic path to cognition and recognition. Even though others cannot directly inform and excite my relationships, I might recognize their verbal descriptions. Recognizing their descriptions validates my ideals.

I need only to function and receive validation of my functioning to say that I know. I can believe that the world is flat, that the sun, the moon, the planets, and all the stars revolve around me and I can still make a living and belong to human society. If I have problems with a flat earth, my problems are likely to be social rather than physical. There is no absolute measurement of knowledge. There is only the relative validation of my peers.

Of course there are plenty of individuals who refuse to be trained. Some are skeptical while others are contrary. Some of them form their own mutual-validation societies while others remain on the fringe, every society's heretic. Beyond the fringe are the truly feral, whom I cannot know.

The collective idealist believes that we live in a bubble constructed by like-minded individuals. We enforce our membership in the bubble by discussion, gossip, and ritual. Other social bubbles exist and are often in contact. Some collisions are rougher than others.

Heretics are detected and shunned or worse. The enemy is identified by his failure to agree. We defined the boundaries socially by the bad examples.

Order

If you placed a devout, belief-homogenous group of people on an island and left them for a generation you would find them divided into bitterly opposing parties.

That this is so is obvious from the fact that the Earth is an island and humans were, originally, homogenous.

If further demonstration is needed, one need only investigate individual utopian communities to see that a people with a steadfast commitment to a set of values fall quickly into bickering, animosity, and dissolution.

The one thing that seems to preserve them from division and dissolution is an ineffective opposition from the outside. Thus if they have an external hated Other, there is no need to construct one internally.

One could also investigate the societies of aboriginal peoples to see that individual tribes exist within a changing set of alliances and wars.

Whether or not human society needs the hated Other, every human society constructs a group of people to hate.

Multiple societies exist because of the competition and cooperation among the societies. A society defines itself, in part, by who it is not, by its opposition.

The fragmentation of society contributes to the stability of civilization. The borders are like the buffers in a container of liquid that prevents unstable sloshing. The borders are firebreaks that damp positive feedback systems that tend to go out of control.

Hunter-gatherer societies require large amounts of territory per capita. The territory is guarded jealously by the society claiming the territory. Individuals respond to the call to arms to defend the territory.

Early on, even before the invention of agriculture, human societies began to trade with one another. Tribes existed at war with one tribe and at peace with another. Alliances could switch. As formal structures, human societies were more open than their primate counterparts, who do not trade.

The invention of agriculture led to increased population, accumulation of wealth, new labor specialties, and class stratification. In order for cities to develop, an additional ethic in the social order was required. Hunter-gatherers thrive on territory and vendetta. Cities contain many tribes. Humans must have invented a new ethic to live in cities.

Internally, each city was composed of groups with their own identities and their own enemies. One recognized and tolerated the other.

Externally, cities related with other cities by trade and military force. The tribal paradigm of vengeance could be invoked in the name of the city, nation, and empire.

An order is stable when it does not grow revolutionaries to the extent that revolution actually happens. An order might even encourage the display of revolutionary ideas and provide for the legal inclusion of their principles by the government for law and the preemption of their fascination by corporations for profit.

The lack of universals liberalizes by promoting diversity and provincializes by supporting local view.

Weeping for Narcissus

On Ramp

As your generation slips howling into the abyss, you might ask yourself, what have I done with my brief brush with life?

What, in sum, are we leaving behind besides a persistent medley of urban detritus and a set of half-truths that our progeny might use to justify our crimes and misdemeanors?

Did I miss the stampede? .

The Newest Leviathan

In the empirical evolution of the Leviathan, in its convulsion of experience, its recent invention of social democracy as the very latest method of crowd control is a triumph of the beast's serendipitous political adventure.

Social democracy as exemplified in the United States, Europe, Japan, and ostensibly Latin America, Asia, Oceania, and Africa, gives control of a major portion of the domestic product to the national government, which is more or less answerable to the couple in the cafe. The process eventually preempts the occasional spasm of revolutionary upheaval. In the earliest stages their heroes look like fanatics to those that can use them. Later on they become tee shirts.

With their budget, and the credit to borrow, the national government controls defense, trade, and other international relations, civil rights, currency, and the elections that guarantee government responsibility, however indirectly, to the café-goers, and attempts to influence the markets by purchasing the goods and services it chooses. In addition to charging its citizens for protection against foreign invaders, it also charges them for protection from themselves.

The market itself is a structure that is much larger than the government and whose elements and operations are mutually and dynamically defined. Corporations and governments vie for position within the market for human and material resources. They loot countries, slough workers, and create proud aristocracies that last a few generations before subsiding into the larger gene pool of humanity. Competition and failure churn the system, tending to prevent stasis. Metanarratives, the slogans that we use to justify life on the treadmill, are among its primary outputs.

Social democracy's success as the template of national government is due to its application of adaptive models, in all levels of detail, to circumstance, including response to requests from its corporate elements, its citizenry, and the government itself. The government responds by funding institutions. What we see is what has survives.

Inasmuch as the grand narrative of social democracy is that the government (weighted by its share of the GDP) knows what is best and the citizens know the best government, the charm of the tale is partially due to its preempting the phraseology of Franco-American libertarians and world Marxists. It is charming because of its pay off. The polite applause of the middle and upper classes can be heard everywhere.

The minor narratives we employ to justify our political relationships serve as intellectual shields that we hope will protect us from the ordeal of change as the planet completely autohomogenizes into a system of interdependent markets. Because the system is self-defining, the only limit to its size or shape is its success. There is no other measure.

Every parasite has its hitchhiker. There is not an atom without its price tag. As soon as someone can claim ownership and limit his liability, he sets up his booth and begins to charge admission. As if possessed of one mind, we reach obediently for the object of our desire.

And some of us have the money to pay for it.

The Story So Far

Casually well-dressed, the young man confidently opens the door at the Starbucks on Fifth Avenue and 33rd for his beloved companion. He breaks the tension with a comment that induces a smile on her face.

In a quiet voice, she mentions her current desire as they claim a table. He strides purposefully to the counter, takes his place in line with authority, efficiently scans the posted menu, the displayed pastries, and the coffee paraphernalia.

He has time to reflect. The business itself is an organ in the commercial body, a metabolic engine, a node in the cross-coupled net of supply and service, transportation and security, communication and finance, an ever-experimenting, self-adjusting, dynamic creature that is attempting to seize control of a significant part of the planet. He knows he is connected.

He maintains his theory about its shape and purpose, what it should be doing, and how to deal with it. Despite the conditionality of his conjectures, improvised for the moment and discarded when useless, he more or less gets along. He doesn't need to know very much about the grand process in order to live. He could regard the world as flat as a pancake and do his job just as well.

He is a proud cell in the international organism of business and pleasure, simultaneously a producer and a consumer. He gives his labor and receives the means to purchase the products of others. Despite romantic claims to individual independence, his membership is inescapable. One way or another, he purchases from it everything he eats and drinks, everything worn, seen, done, heard, thought and said, everything except, for the time being, the air he breathes. He is utterly dependent.

From it, he inherits language, custom, economy, rites of passage, gestures, images, memory, music, history, and every idea with a name.

Except for a few lists, the process does not know he exists. He could fall under a bus and it would go on without him.

The very few things he does not obtain from the social marketplace include his body (apart from dental fillings and other replacement parts), his love (apart from purchased erotica), and his rebelliousness (apart from film, music, and literature pretending to rave on the theme).

He will not try to escape. He will try to get deeper inside, to mainstream, to conform. Getting outside is the last thing he wants. Within the family, school, work, and leisure society, he practices reinforcing the propriety of social existence, how to get in and how to stay in. An entire catechism of things to say and do is provided for him. Thought, apart from the mechanics of his profession, is utterly unnecessary.

The outer fringe of his defiance is a bumper sticker on his SUV.

In as much as it serves him, it serves him well. He has money to spend, a family to raise if he wants, and a funny story to tell. He gets to hustle and bustle.

Sooner or later the cell is tossed aside. But he does not think of that.

Boomer is often convinced of his centrality. Things further from him are smaller. Things close to him are larger. He is the largest thing of all. He buys things for himself. He equips himself for the tasks that he would like to do. He buys books that he would like to read. The rugged individual devolves to the merely self-indulgent.

Finally the selection is identified and the money tendered. The machine hisses, the forceps snatch the cake, and the attendant delivers his practiced cheerfulness.

Returning, the man disguises his triumph with modest wit. The articulation talk amiably. They sit in amused silence listening to the soft babble and the piped-in, easy-listening.

Secretly, very secretly, Boomer feels more in sympathy with his wildness, his rebelliousness but, publicly, in mixed company, only admits of civilization. He feels he must present himself as unique enough among men to gain her notice but not so unique as to be thought an outsider. Unusual but not odd. Daring but not reckless.

The trick, he supposes, is in drawing the line and daring to approach it. He's discovered that the line needs frequent tinkering, depending on the company and time of day. He's learned a few lessons the hard way and has a dread of inappropriate behavior. His wildness is too often obscured by a bewildered silence as he tries to remember how to act.

He tries to impress her with his physical, financial, and intellectual powers. He appears willing to challenge some vague commercial or governmental institution.

She has seen this all before. For her part, she wishes he were more exciting. She tacitly compares him with other men she has seen. He's neither as clumsy and foolish as some nor as agile and strong as others. Inasmuch as she is conventional, she has learned to endure the bravado while hoping for compensation. He is a senior designer at 32. Not terribly aggressive. Not CEO material, not anytime soon anyway, but, then again, neither is she. She's in middle-management but does not expect to rise much further and probably, with marriage and the burden of children, to fall lower.

Inasmuch as she is unconventional, she dares to dream of fabulous wealth. But she suspects that she doesn't have the social background to offer a man who could provide the remote objects of her desire. She could take her chances with a reckless barbarian who might break into the fortress of success. But then again, he might embarrass her with failure, which would be unbearable. And yet settling for the mediocre seems like death itself.

The contradiction between desiring a man who is ambitious and reckless versus deferential and predictable is irreconcilable. The thought of public humiliation is equal to her fear of ordinariness. She recognizes this as her limitation and she turns to him with a tired smile.

He takes this as a sign of encouragement.

She had learned that if she would cast her eyes downward, as if she were very shy or ashamed of some secret, the man she selected might approach her. It had worked more than once.

She might become thrilled by giving him control of her and that, in yielding, she controlled him. The prospect of controlling and being controlled led once to an exquisite joy, one that never happened so intensely again, one that she pursued with increasing desperation, one whose imitations became less and less faithful to the memory of the original, as time went on, a memory mourned.

Boomer was no such man. He was safe. He thought of himself as adventurous and original but he was neither. Her eyes wandered over the others in the café. Not like the man in the copy shop. He was a risk. He did not belong behind the counter of a copy shop. He seemed to know something about her. Once he came around to show her how to do something.

She always dropped her eyes when their eyes met, although he did not seem to notice. She would repeat her little trick until at last he would notice her. Then she would turn away and walk out, never to return. She would own him.

But she didn't know him and that was so important these days. That nothing bad had ever happened in the past, was no guarantee that it couldn't in the future. Or even if it had, it was over. No one could do anything about it now. Nobody knew but him and her.

Perhaps Boomer was a safe bet. Perhaps she would stay with him. He had a good job. He did take her places, even if they were boring. She could talk about him with her friends. She possessed him. She had something to tell her mom. They could talk about all his ideas that he would never get around to.

Perhaps she would move to San Francisco. Her friend had been there. It was a party town. People did what ever they pleased. The winters were not so cruel.

He lived in the future or rather his expectations of what the future would be like, one of his own construction, invented by him for everyone, where everyone would love him for it. He claimed to love her, to love what they could become together. To lose her would be to lose possibility.

They met in the present, which was plain, sordid and shabby, a profound disappointment to them both. The present, in all its actuality, did not have the shine of their ideals.

Sometimes Buffy buys him a shirt that makes him look like everyone else at work, at concert, or on the trail. Buffy knows that reinforcing the centrality of the male gives her a measure of control in a relationship. Her mom taught her to practice on her Dad. Although she has her doubts about him in the long term, she practices on Boomer. She is gratified that Boomer responds appropriately.

Boomer purchases his gifts more randomly. He wants to prove that he can easily provide the objects of her desire. He wishes to lure her into his world. He tells her that her opinion is important, the price he paid is not too much, and that he can afford the price of fame, Coca Cola on the beach, Mercedes on the country road, and drugs if she's unconvinced. The harder and smarter he works, the more pleasure he can buy for her. He worries that his gifts are out of fashion, stupid, and boring.

She consoles him, telling him that they are really beautiful when they are not. After all, it's the thought that counts. She tells him that he spends too much money on her and that he is really very sweet.

This part of the ritual is very important although she does not believe a word of it. She is so sophisticated in her giving that she must use all her skills to assuage his fears and not appear condescending. They will have sex tonight and that seems to reassure Boomer. And so it goes.

The high-level designers of the systems are trapped within their own creations. They work long hours, take big risks, and mortgage everything to maximize their leverage. Time equals money. And change is everything.

Boomer has identified the enemy and it is not Boomer or any of his friends. It is the lazy and the seditious, domestic and foreign, as well as the stupid and insane people who do not support Boomer's solution. Although he has never in his life met any of the enemy or their supporters, he knows who they are and will never forgive them.

Silently, Buffy thinks Boomer has it all wrong. He can more or less run his own life, however unglamorously, but has no experience in the geopolitical solutions he espouses so fervently.

On the personal level, he wants to take her off, take her away. He wants her for his own. But it's not about him. It never was. It's about something larger, much larger, something that transcends the individual desire. It is a desire that hungers across the generations. She knows that he cannot know this. She also knows she is not strong enough to do it alone. Is she strong enough to do it at all? She would need all the help in the world and she has none.

She looks out the window at the people walking by, lost in thought, thinking of moving to San Francisco. Boomer sits back and picks up his latte, convinced that he hates the right people.

The Impossibility of Revolution

Boomer is on the very edge of revolutionary thought and has the tee shirt to prove it. On some occasions he will attempt to lead a charge on someone else's opinion. Buffy is coyly supportive. In spite of profound political differences with Buffy, he never talks politics with her.

The effectivity of social democracy makes revolution very difficult, even for talents like Boomer. Original revolutionary ideas are detected, labeled, encapsulated, commodified, and peddled back to the public from which they came via TV, newspapers, magazines, radio, and the Internet, reinforcing the ever-stronger monolith of the consumerism that the idea appears to attack.

Utterly insane, original, iconoclastic, anti-consumer rock-music groups with loyal followings of uncompromising and energetic fans are scouted by the music companies, who apply their own highly polished marketing technique on the headstrong neophytes. They are discovered, contracted, packaged, videoed, and manufactured into stardom, adding them to the very vanguard of cultural change. Without compromising the way they dress or the music they perform, they are hustled off to commodity-land. You are not likely to hear of the groups that are not offered the bait.

Buffy and Boomer are fiercely loyal to their music.

'Buffy' and 'Boomer' are not their real names. Their friend Brittany discovered their high-school nicknames and has tagged them and the tag has struck.

Monomulticulturalism

The true revolutionary is disgusted by so much and most of all by his own subculture's display within the umbrella of multiculturalism. Multicultural display is the subculture's dying breath, a final fetid gasp exhaled as it is swallowed by the super-culture, ever-ravenous for something exotic. The beast does not pause before seeking a newer and younger thrill.

The outward forms of subsumed subcultures are sometimes preserved for centuries in meaningless, ossified ritual.

At the parades, Buffy's applause seems more sincere than Boomer's.

Continuous Apocalypse

The rate of homogenization toward world monoculture proceeds apace. To the young, the ever-adaptable agents of culture, it is like water to a fish, the very medium of existence.

Marketing has become dynamic. Companies do not expect to be marketing the same reliable product for years but are working on a new model, from shoes to computers, before they release the current version. Not only does this satisfy the narrative of progress, but creates a dynamic obsolescence that drives the old products out of the market and into the landfill. The new version is marketed as better.

The process of ideation and recognition dismisses most of what one is tempted to see, which is itself the merest fragment of cosmic actuality, and, apart from buying the new product, the individual spends his 30,000 days digesting only the tiniest changes in routine, such as the remarkable weather, an unusual act of rudeness or kindness, and the more or less predictable particularities of the inbox.

The individual assures the process by recognizing old events and applying a canned comment that identifies the usual solution to be applied, which is reliably in the form of classification and dismissal. This prerecorded library of advice is cultural, with the individual tasked with adding a short list of independently-learned, non-fatal lessons.

To the person who craves a place to stand, culture becomes unrecognizable overnight. Cultural ideas are snatched up, gobbled down, commercialized all over, and thrown away, subsumed within the process that converts the exceptional and the original into a price tag fluttering seductively on its string, eventually dumped.

Apotheosis of the Individual

Inasmuch as art evolves culture, it does so by cognition, recognition, and destruction. The highest and fastest art provides for its own destruction. There is no substance, no form, only style and fashion, the smoothly integrated motions of creation, criticism, and abandonment. If it's been seen before, it's bad. If it already has a name, issue a sigh of exhaustion. Thus ideas are made to come and go efficiently.

Uncoupled from the craving for the Absolute, we devolve to the rhetoric of consensus, derision, ridicule, victimology, and propaganda, abandoning the tedious debate over the truth-value of statements in favor of the price. Fashion, the knowledge of what's in and what's out, is everything.

The difference between what the consumer has and what the consumer wants drives the economy. Without the consumer, who is also the designer and deliverer and cashier, we would not have the time or the use for art and philosophy. If we stopped buying cars we don't need, the world would end.

Consumerism's ultimate religious appeal, of which the café is a convenient altar, is that we are near the center of the universe, among the most important of objects. He is god and the universe is his supermarket. Everything, even gifts for others are purchased for his glorification.

All the signposts of the new religion point down this road, which ends conveniently in the spacious parking lot of the mart of self-indulgence, which includes the cathedral of the self. Anyone can dream of becoming the Christopher Columbus of the breakfast nook, the Madonna of the nail-salon, or the Leif Erikson of sporting goods. The effort to achieve the single, necessary, best solution drives cultural homogenization and simultaneously elicits the confused cry for freedom and individuality.

We must hope they continue, each and every one of them. If they stop buying the shoes that they do not need, the die-off will begin and we won't have time for philosophy.

Idols in the Pantheon

Our religious skepticism notwithstanding, the apparent power and beauty of the celebrity is all the evidence needed to reveal our ecstatic groping for the divine. The strongest and most discriminating of private individuals, coy, reserved, and skeptical, will melt in the presence of grand reputation, power, or wealth. Flash a limousine and a few diamonds, and Buffy quickly ascends to the giddy heights of adoration and will talk about the encounter for decades. Thus is the circle of gods maintained under the distant jeering and skeptical fire.

Buffy wishes she could be more like Brittany, who is a dynamo of positive energy, who has a ready excuse for action, who is always making connections, and is rising fast in a fast company. Buffy feels inspired around Brittany.

Buffy regards Brittany as the best liar she knows personally.

Multidimensional Idolatry

Given the complexity of the human animal's life, the simple progression from a genuine experience, to its tale, and finally to its fetish, serves to encapsulate the complexity, to locate and to name it.

The marketplace is where the idols are worshiped in mass. One does not shop alone.

With monotheism dead, religion is distributed to the many gods. The individual is free and eager to reassemble his own mind into the pantheon of celebrities in the entertainment, political, and industrial sectors, as well as the penultimately intimate worship of oneself as attractive, intelligent, strong, witty, well-dressed, heroic, discreet, modest, liberal, proud, conservative, assertive, respectful, powerful, and all the other battered attributes with which one attempts to modify the morass of reputation that obscures one's brilliant personality. It's either that or stand unreputed, naked, a neophyte unarmed before the heartless onslaught of opinion.

Inasmuch as the individual is a single item, it is a desperate attempt to integrate, in secret dreams and public discourse, this pastiche of broken shields and fractured idols and to send off the entire, clanking apparatus each morning to engage the world again.

Tribal Existentialism

Why isn't the process utterly chaotic? How is social order generated out of the chaos of selfishness?

The forward-looking entrance of the purchasing individual into the marketplace for goods, services, and myth effectively cures the obsessive introspection and anxiety that consumes the existentialist. The partial solution provided by existentialism is exceeded by the admission that we are gregarious creatures. The solution to the problem of being is being together.

Consensus and its darlings are the answers to all questions. Statements are legitimated by having heard them before. If you are capable of following the leader, and purchasing accordingly, you are inside. Advertising teaches us what, and therefore who, is in and out. The sports-spectacle industry provides us with teams of heroes battling teams of enemies as we conveniently calibrate our hatred to fit within the limits of our personalities.

The madness inherent in youth is channeled into socially acceptable occupations and diversions. Escapees from the process are sent to prison. The few individuals that actually create move up a level in design-responsibility.

To be secure in your tribe, repeat its narratives. Translate them into new expressions. Appoint infidels who dare question their obvious validity. Improvise corollaries. Propagate good examples and suppress the bad. Ridicule the identified enemy. Beat the hated. Sin to succeed.

Progress

The bold arrival the American Empire on the world stage has once again inspired the idea of Progress, that things are just getting better. In one form or another it is born proudly on the sweatshirts of the cheerleading squad and the banners of the assault troops of the Empire.

If things were getting better, one would think that the 20th century would be better, generally, with respect to the violent death. We ought to see fewer violent deaths as time passes and the 20th century should be the best. Boomer believes in Progress. He is doing well and so is everyone he knows.

About 12 billion humans who lived on the planet during the 20th century. World War I eliminated about a million. Over 55 million died in World War II.

There were 40 wars between 1945 and 1980. The Vietnam war claimed about 2 million and an unknown number of Cambodians. The Armenian, Cambodian, Rwandan, Timorese, and Balkan genocides added to the

toll. Stalin's added millions and Mao millions more. The repressive dictatorships and civil wars in Latin America and Africa contributed their share.

About 120 million people died a violent death during war in the 20th century. As many people were slaughtered during the 20th century as lived in the 1st.

Some will say that the figure ought to be compared with the total population, as if that makes the numbers more acceptable. The percentage of the total population of humans living on the planet that died a violent death in the 20th century is about 1%.

19th century warfare did not focus its attention on civilians to the same degree. Nor was the 19th century technology of mass death as efficient. You had to be within a few hundred yards of your victim. The American Civil War was particularly disastrous, resulting in about 500,000 military casualties. Napoleon might have lost 400,000 men in his Russian incursion. Civilian damage was relatively minor.

With some exceptions, such as Tamerlane's 15th century pyramid of skulls, the same is true of earlier centuries. Before gunpowder, death was more personal.

Earlier, after the invention of agriculture and the resultant accumulation of wealth, entire cities could have been decimated by marauding tribes. In many cases, the invaders preferred administering an intact economy. Cities replied with fortifications and so war approached a standoff.

In Neolithic times, there was much less concentration of wealth and less reason for destructive warfare. The technology of war was even more primitive. The lower differential of wealth would mean only minor skirmishes between more or less equally armed people marking their boundaries.

The 20th century has been the worst century ever for violence.

Recently, population has been doubling every forty years. This is due to the increase of agricultural productivity coupled with progress in public health measures. Numerically, this is progress, especially if we can say that life is no less miserable than before. There is no question that life expectancy of the average human has increased. Infant mortality has decreased.

World hunger is estimated to be persistently about 25% of the population, meaning that about 1.5 billion people are underfed, which is quite a lot of misery. If the figure is computed on a per capita basis, it becomes easier to swallow.

The human population increase seems like good news to humans but is very bad news for other species.

Much progress has come at the expense of other species. A recent estimate suggests that we will reduce the number of major mammal species by thirty per cent within the next generation, mostly incidental to habitat destruction.

On more than one occasion, otherwise intelligent, science-trained people have said that this is not really a problem because mass extinction has occurred before. They are perfectly natural and therefore okay.

They also said that the human cause of mass extinction is okay because, with genetic engineering, we can replace the extinct species.

This is merely a reflection of our own optimism. We are optimistic because we know we can succeed at anything expressed in scientific terminology. We know we can succeed in science because we are optimistic.

The proponents of the proposition claim that we can replace species that we don't even know we have eliminated. However, we are not systematically cataloging the DNA of every species of fungus, microbe, mite, insect, algae, moss, bird, mammal, or flowering plant that is being erased with its habitat.

Nor are we cataloging the genetic diversity of each of the species. Each individual is an entire library, a distinct member of the gene pool upon which the species' general response to its environment relies.

Nor are we cataloging the ecological interdependence of the species that includes the predator and prey, symbiotic, parasitic, and herbivore and plant-food relationships. In order to reconstruct the habitat we would have to put into place simultaneously all the interdependent species in the correct proportions and in the correct distribution.

Among the higher animals, especially the mammals, much of their relationship with their environment is learned, passed down from adult to child. Fawns learn from their mothers what plants are good to eat and what are not. Predators learn from their parents what to chase and what not to chase. This data is not being systematically catalogued.

The proponents claim that we can find the huge financial resources to do all of this when we can't find the relatively tiny resources to prevent the mass extinctions in the first place.

They claim that we will be able to do all of the above after suffering what could be a catastrophic loss of wealth and natural resources from global warming, sea and fresh water pollution, topsoil depletion, ozone layer destruction, loss of croplands by urbanization and desertification, loss of coastal areas from sea-level increases, and fossil fuel and aquifer depletion to which the extinctions were merely ancillary.

And they claim that only good people will be involved in the project and governments will not seize the technology and use it to dominate and destroy.

The uninformed optimist assumes that we can not create a problem that we can not solve.

Moderns despise the ancient bigots who burned the libraries of Alexandria, a thousand years in the writing, while we, in our pride, burn the genetic library a billion years in the making.

Boomer once took a white-water rafting trip down the Colorado. The guides strapped him and 23 others into bucket seats so they wouldn't fall out. He could have red or white wine with a choice of beef, chicken, or vegetarian dinner.

He didn't even have to cook.

Golgotha

Earlier, tiny troops of humans starved at the fringes of a world of predators and prey. For all but the last few geological moments, we have been hungry, infested, fleeing, homeless, ungoverned, unknown, and illiterate migrants.

The world has always been more full of woe than can be endured.

After agriculture, we became wealthy enough for cities and warfare. We've replaced the predators with ourselves. The newspapers record our kills. The wolf and the lion depend on us. The embodiment of special terror must be, for all creatures that can form the conception, including humanity, humanity itself.

Inventing language, we encapsulate the weeping with myth, isolating and insulating the tender sensibilities of the sensitive soul from the abrasions of reality, distracting the eye and ear, and providing a story to tell and tell again. Without ignorance and narrative, there is only the hideous and boring truth.

The automated slaughterhouse machinery of life feeds on innocence. Moloch wears a business suit. We explain the worst of the bad news to each other in such a way as to keep each other going. Each is born to die. Outside the bubble of conflated ideas there is only chaos where the bones bleach whiter and the toothy grin merrier still.

For the few, for whom comfort and entertainment are the only important issues, for those who nearly succeed in happiness because of their faithful efforts to purchase and consume the distractions of culture, the distant suffering is an annoying background. The lesser news of the day brings nearly to the very surface of consciousness the tiniest doubt. Thoughtful artists discover aesthetic possibilities while somewhere the bombs drop on actual bodies.

The extreme of self-interest is the profound loneliness that creates an appalling depression in such a gregarious creature. It is not enough that we are divided from the objects of our desire but, as humans, we must be conscious of the division and we must complain to each other. And most of us must ignore most of the cries. The woe solidifies, becoming righteous and powerful and sacrificial.

Thus some sell themselves into slavery that they may afford to buy an illusion of freedom. Some of those get their names scratched on a rock. Most disappear without a trace. The beast will feed.

In the cafe, overlooking the busy street, Boomer sips his cappuccino with whipped cream and a sprinkle of cocoa, voicing sometimes a sincere concern for the plight of the working poor and sometimes a satisfied commentary on the pace and direction of Progress.

Buffy turns to him and says she has something to say.

Stasis

If the search for the best technique succeeds globally, such that revolution becomes impossible because of the effectivity of social democracy in enforcing political and economic stability, and if these techniques do not develop their own revolutionary antitheses, then the techniques will cease to be the scaffolding for social change and instead will become part of the edifice. The rate of change will decrease and finally stop.

As the record of war, history will cease to be written. The abrupt political and economic change, the sharp discontinuities with which we delimit the smoothness of time, the stratigraphy of events will no longer form so obviously.

As population on the planet stabilizes, businesses that depend on expansion will die. Competition for brand-loyalty will increase. Market leaders will cannibalize each other.

Should world government, however constituted, succeed in ending war, including revolutionary and civil war, and succeed in stabilizing population, politics and nations will obtain a state of dynamic equilibrium, oscillating gently and predictably between the poles of fascinating and superficial fashion. The resultant, the rather constant and gentle raising of the hands at the auction of life, does not necessarily mean that life will be better. The change might be an Orwellian picnic.

Or we might reinvent the profoundest unhappiness within the narrow confines of material satisfaction. We might demonstrate once again that happiness is an illusion, merely a state, a mild discontinuity in the otherwise seamless trudge between the larger miseries. The brave, new world might be as unsatisfactory as the fearful, old one.

Or perhaps the grossest forms of unhappiness, the worst terrors that have dogged humanity since we invented the concept of time, will be institutionalized permanently and unchangeably; that the horrors of existence will become indelible, here to stay, and we will be unable to do anything about it.

Perhaps an acceptable state of war that does not actually topple governments or defeat the revolutionaries will be tolerated by society. Technique will have triumphed over the neophyte.

Apart from the fascinating oscillations of purchasable fashion, the equilibrium of whim, and the currency of violence, life will cease its wildest and most culturally significant swings.

Boomer finds himself at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He wanders the halls, looking for a distraction from his disastrous preoccupation, something interesting to penetrate his fatal boredom, something profound to fill his shallows.

He is bored with the great art, annoyed with white marble curls, disgusted with lacy trees waving over placid waters reflecting creamy clouds. The impressions of this and that are painful. He sits heavily on a bench.

It occurs to him that the human mind is merely a network of desires through which careen the impulses, spinning their odd trajectories, trying to avoid fatal collision. Craving, lusting, seducing, promoting, begging, the successful mote continues to do so.

A security guard notices him.

The Last Man

The true man, as uncompromised individual, completely original in thought and action, who rejects out of hand the assigned menial job description, who posits his righteousness universally, who is a dynamo of change, who demonstrates his genius incidentally to his purposeful resolve and attainment, is born in each and every individual human being. Each brings this potential power to the world at birth.

For better or worse, society and its brilliant choir of heavenly advice attempts to modify the raw courage of the original individual. Channeling, moderating, educating, socializing, internalizing, society is that which examines and modifies its members and encourages their strengths. No one who has influence escapes its influence.

The technique of education, developed over the millennia by millions of resourceful and diligent and networked parents, teachers, and politicians might succeed in formulating a fool-proof method of child-rearing that greets the utterly unknowing neophyte, absolutely uninformed about the world and its complexities, and converts him efficiently into an operable agent of its culture.

However, each generation produces its rebels, moving proudly or furtively between the ranks of operatives attempting to march in lock step toward their collective vision of success. The wild ones are yet within.

Ultimate Yuppie

If the underlying instinctual motivation of self-interest is promoted in such a way as to convince every individual not to risk his life and comfort for anything, no one would dare to make war. War would be impossible in a society whose members refuse to sacrifice themselves.

However, it is in the nature of some young men and women to take risks with their lives and the logic of risk includes the mythical possibility that one is bullet-proof. Armies are recruited from the youth because, in part, they are thrilled with the possibility.

The Last Hippie

War would be impossible in a society whose members refuse to sacrifice others. In a world society in which everyone regards everyone else as belonging to one tribe and in which members of one's own tribe are treated with absolute respect, war would be impossible.

Ultimate altruism seems like a tall order. Humans of all ages seem universally willing to identify and kill the hated enemy. In politics, one is obliged to violate one's ideals in order to promote them.

If a society does not have external enemies, it tends to invent internal enemies, descending eagerly into civil war.

The Species' General Solution

Extreme self-interest and extreme altruism conflict with the species' adaptive, general solution to circumstance. They posit an idealized homogenized society in sharp contrast to the real society that is utterly heterogeneous.

The internalization of law, in spite of its explicit definition in the statutes, is far from complete. The figures on the casualties of war indicate that there is no improvement in our behavior in this respect. When the stubborn originality of the neophyte is convolved with the unexplainable forbearance of parents for the unexplainable activities of their children, it seems probable that the last man has yet to be born.

This saves us.

The New Misanthrope

The appalling horrors of war, especially in the 20th century and the gross reduction of habitat and the ensuing decimation of species have conjoined with an ancient and familiar romantic longing for the simple innocence of nature to form the policy, common enough to be influential, that mankind is the problem.

The problem is simple enough: either too many people or not enough smart ones to compensate for the evil and ignorant bulk who fail to recognize the rights of other creatures on the planet.

The increasingly efficient machinery of war has not kept up with our procreative success. While many demographers expect the world human population to level off at 10 to 12 billion, that is twice the current number, twice the amount of urban sprawl, deforestation, desertification, aquifer depletion, and greenhouse gasification.

The more hypocritical environmental advocates are likely urban dwelling, gas guzzling, water wasting, electricity using, squatters on aboriginal lands. They detest logging in any form yet, when they want to put up a shelf or a house, want wood and want it cheap. However, hypocrisy is no disability in politics and so the beast might notice the itch and give it a scratch before proceeding apace.

The rare purist will be invisible to the larger population while writhing in agony before the compromise necessary to political action.

The advocates of sustainability will attempt to woo government and business by appealing to their generous self-interest.

The Encapsulation of OBL

If the cell of the Leviathan is the individual, its metabolism is consumerism. It survives and thrives on the individual's transactions.

In addition to the older commodities, such as food items, which are not much affected by fashion, the imperial digestive system must deal with the whims of fashion as well as new ideas and new threats.

The fashion industry, in clothing, film, music, food fads, exercise fads, and religious fads, is well-equipped and practiced at recognizing and commodifying ideas. The design studios are poised. The advertising methods and media are ever ready. The manufacturing and distribution channels are eager and the retailers have already discounted last season's merchandise to clear the shop for the new inventory.

Actual, new threats to the beast are a genuine surprise. The news-media get a smattering of reports, already abstracted from the raw brutality and shock of the witnesses into sentences and paragraphs and pictures, and efficiently pass the data through the editorial chain, each link adding its characteristic value, and finally transmitting the finished stories to the consumer.

Only information is available, at first as fragmented as the reality of events, but soon integrated into the seamless narrative that includes what to think (the facts and the conclusion) and how to feel about it (the attitude). Systematic knowledge is the creature's first product in the supply chain that eventually cognizes and encapsulates the newest unknown.

As the story is formed, the reaction is crafted. The enemy is identical to all enemies. The template can be applied. The same characterizations of insanity, evil, and ignorance are associated with the enemy's face. From bumper stickers to biographies, narratives that justify the characterizations appear in stores everywhere.

To resuscitate the Old Guard, the old slogans are once again trotted out. New slogans are designed for those who can use them. Public speakers affect passion and call for sacrifice. All the agencies of containment and elimination are informed. The imperial immune system is primed and the uncertain consumer is reassured that the problem is being solved and encouraged to renew consumption. The emblems of courage, including daring satires of the new enemy, arrive at the market appropriately priced.

Eventually, the enemy is captured. Ted Kaczynski, Timothy McVeigh, and Osama bin Laden are led in chains by the equestrian leadership through a triumphal arch built especially for the event. Broken or defiant, they answer the charges issued by the panels of justice. The sentence is handed down and the bodies are put away in the next stage of isolation and insulation.

The books appear, first in cloth, later in paper, and finally at ten cents a copy at the bottom of a box at a garage sale.

History is written and it's safe to read the sports page again.

Anastasia

Should order win over chaos and the extremes of stability be achieved, the resultant might be worse than what has come before. If revolution becomes impossible, the worst forms of oppression that stop short of war might be preserved indefinitely.

What new forces would develop to bring about change? How can chaos arise from order?

The commercializing tactics of the pan-imperial creature that metabolizes all idea efficiently and turns a profit with every transaction would have to fail to adapt or succeed in finding a new application for its talents that cast its former institutions into the landfill of fashion.

The future is difficult to predict yet there is no shortage of prophets self-licensed to do so. You might suppose that some of them will be correct but picking among the eager crowd and investing significantly thereto is as difficult a proposition as the prediction itself.

What is certain is that no one predicted today's culture in any detail and it is unlikely that anyone will credibly predict the distant future or even the next great transformation of culture. This is not so much a problem of vast expanses of time. Cultural change makes the older ways of seeing culture obsolete. The new culture will look chaotic to those who are not ready to see it.

Whether the end of Postmodernity looks like the physical destruction of cities and civilization and even the species that built them or merely the destruction of our contemporary view of the world is difficult to resolve. We might be no more able to see Post New Age than *Homo neanderthalis* was able to see us.

That a culture tends to produce its antithesis in either an internal populace that it cannot support or an external populace it cannot restrain is a common thread throughout much of the writhing history of the species.

Small changes in the birth rate can create major surpluses or deficits in the population over the long term. Perhaps the political network that governs the planet will manage population rates as effectively as it manages cultural extremism. Presumably, the more volatile elements of the ever-dissatisfied under-class can be metabolized as efficiently as the evil stars of terrorism into the pan-imperial immune system.

The system survives by encapsulation.

The Reillusionment

The prognostications of Nostradamus and LaPlace notwithstanding, the distant future will endure intense and gratuitous myth-building, criticized by the principle cultural elements, including the necessity of the attempts to predict the future, encapsulating the unexplainable with paraphraseables, and providing us with a fashionable narrative.

Our ever-mutating views of the world are willful and unphilosophical ideas, fatal convolutions in the engine of change.

Boomer walks down the Museum steps and takes a cab to his apartment. He checks his messages. There are none.

He opens the window of his apartment and looks down at the trash-strewn street far below.

Suppressing the Scream

There's so much to scream about.

Upon awakening from their self-adoration, those unwilling or unable to accept the conventional encapsulation of our world will see everything undecorated, unpackaged, in all its indigestible banality and horror.

In the face of this vision, those incompletely possessed by mad grief, terminal self-pity, or transcendent dreams of paradise, will instinctively attempt to encapsulate their visions and return with them to an ungrateful public all too satisfied with business as projected, fascinated by the reflection of their own desire, and unwilling to suffer the disturbance of art.

Suppress the scream in a style that characterizes you. Hide it deeply then release it all at once or let it out slowly, in rhythmic measures, wooing the audience.

If all you do is scream or if you're always quiet, you will be ignored.

Work in committee, diligent under the critic's encouraging lash. The compromised howl is the soul of art.

The Impossibility of Communication

Because you insist on your own opinion, demanding the freedom to do anything you want in anyway you want, you have your own words and concepts, your own language and so does each and everyone else.

This makes advice very common.

If you could see the world as it is, there would be no point in anyone having an opinion.

The subjective human individual looks at the inner surface of the sphere of his ideas and not the world itself, which makes him hard to reach.

Public discourse is mostly a set of complications in the way we greet each other, associations of conventions accumulated while trudging between the scream and the echoing silence. Without an objective sense of language and a set of concepts built from it, how is it possible to talk about an event in a convincing way?

How can there be conventions without a meeting? Are we merely repeating these slogans to entertain and reassure each other? Is anyone creating revolutionary art that makes possible the rational awareness of cultural change?

You could scream in fear of death, of being trapped in your brief span of years, never seeing what's to come, the future happening without your influence, everyone forgetting you and what little you did. But so what? We've heard that one already and, besides, death is fair, in its way.

And if you're not conscious of your end, why disillusion yourself?

For the conventional artist, it's sufficient to give the work some color and flavor and character, some exotic spiciness to contrast it with the plain montage that cries from every advertisement, from soap to salvation. The pet ploy of conventional art is to appear unconventional without actually offending any customers and, by the way, buy these shoes.

For the revolutionary, for the one returned fresh from the frontiers of consciousness, it's necessary to give to the exotic and inchoate mutterings a bit of familiarity to make it visible at all. To fail to make revolutionary art recognizable is to fail to influence, to fail to provide the needed cultural vision, to fail to do the greatest good, and to yield too early to the abrasions of chaos. Please, sedate us with a little convention, before injecting the venom.

Eventually, our culture evolves its armored reaction to the new vision and we develop immunity. Eventually, we reduce the irritant from an atrocity to a discomfort to an unpleasantness, and, sooner or later, captured for a logo for a soft drink and everything is all right again. The jaded will regard the results with glib amusement while whipping complacency.

The artist plays near the border between the exotic and the familiar, presenting a contrast that dares the boundary, linking the two. Revolutionary art is the outer surface of the sphere of ideas, the border between the ideas that we already own and stubbornly hold and the actual world of uninterpreted reality, between the mundane and the mysterious, between what we think is happening and what actually happens. The

revolutionary artist attempts to create a new idea to add to our cerebral sphere. New ideas must break the polished armor of convention, the cerebral shield that isolates us from the objects of our desire and the boring horrors of our existence. Breaking and entering, the revolutionary artist seeks to smash what the conventional artist reinforces.

We tend to think that some of our ideas correspond to actual things and events, the difference between appearance and reality being the crevice into which the burglar tools of art and philosophy can be inserted.

An idea about something in the world is a representation associated with the thing in the world. An idea about the world calls up the set of features, which we then compare to the thing before us. Correspondence elicits a judgement of recognition. However cautiously, as I investigate, when pressed by time or impatience, I dodge new information, leap over the facts, and conclude conveniently.

Creating a new idea in a society without an objective sense and supporting language means to make something from nothing. To create a new idea about a thing in the world is to create a new association between the representation in the mind and the thing it represents. How can this be done?

A writer could show that the relationship between idea and actuality is a source of error, which could provide a logical attack that opens the door for a new idea. The development of the attack can be logical and might create an analogy that bridges other ideas, creating new associations. A rhetorical method could employ irony, which creates surprising associations between ideas that are not necessarily logically related. Satire, for example, can be used to describe a serious idea in such a way as to make it appear absurd. Methods can be combined into statements with a sharp ironic flavor that is intimately involved with a concise, logical argument. Logic and irony juxtapose ideas.

Rhetoric is the art of effective speaking and writing, not an excuse for logical mistakes or deliberate falsehoods. Disingenuous writing adds to our wealth of confusion. Cleverly ridiculing an idea does not make the idea false nor does glorifying it make it true. If a statement is obvious, then it ought to be easy to prove. Intricate logical constructions might be lost on some audiences but the writer must have diligently done his homework, which probably means a humble encounter with uncertainty and its derivatives.

It's a long slog between appearance and reality. Everybody has been there. Everything's already been stolen. Still, gazing out over the blasted landscape littered with the burned and broken bones of those who did not make it through the fire, one can easily see that this is the right way.

Sensual contrasts, such as a brilliant patch of white against a murky background or a tiny pleasure within a world of pain can define each other when juxtaposed. The backbone of the story can be formed by sharp contrasts between the beautiful and the ugly, beauty being made more so in the company of the beast. Art is corner and edge, a detail containing bulk.

Pose concise generality with generous detail, the concrete and the subtle, nutrition to the exegete. Use rhyme and rhythm to associate words physically, the music of the words tempting the connection of their ideas. Parallel grammatical structures couple disparate elements, providing the orderly and reassuring topography of the idea and its surprises. Irony becomes logical, associating and disassociating ideas. Perfect art rhetorically combines sensuality, logic, and ironic contrast, producing a memorable event.

The artist ought not be distracted by expectations of awards, either from the society he serves or his fellow artists. The society does not appreciate being told, again, that its views ought to be discarded and replaced with something new, or old, or suspiciously clever.

The artist ought to seek awards, if only to amplify the attention his vital ideas deserve. The artist who fails to attract attention to his work fails to influence. Politics is the greatest good.

If, by persistent talent, you actually win some attention, inspect it carefully. It just might be the mean mob, led by a jealous artist.

There is no shortage of people eager to imitate convention or initiate revolutions; many enter the marketplace with highly-polished examples and, being common and conventional, this work is not needed.

The revolutionary artist works on the edge of new perception. Few in the crowd will see the artist's vitality, and, of those who do, few will encourage the production, even though the process is necessary to personal growth and cultural evolution. The mad man possessed of visions from the outside is avoided.

Of course, many will pay to see the conventions of others undermined and count themselves among the wise for it, but that process supports conventionality, and is not revolutionary at all.

So much that passes for discussion about issues is a gentle merging of world views in which liberals and conservatives and other supposed opposites engage, exhausting their tiny energies in rigged debate about the meaning of words, the resulting innocuous chaos obviating change. Designed to discover the consensus needed for concerted action, an endless series of painfully slow meetings stifles communal action.

One is tempted to make some noise.

Artist and Society

And of course there is the philosopher, a pretentious set of antlers, a mad claim in the wide empire of truth, expecting at any moment the indigo sash of authority, magnanimously rehearsing his acceptance speech in which he begs a medal for modesty before launching his dictatorship of thought, insisting the artist should serve society by making some side-door deliveries for philosophy.

How does the artist feel, saddled up as a pack-animal for politics? Or somebody's idea of art? Even his own? Discover an idea so useful that it becomes fashionable, then common, before being faithlessly discarded as familiar and old, fossilized and invisible again.

Being and Other

Subjectivity, which values the individual's judgements over that of the culture's, is the fashion. Those who would do more than wear subjectivity superficially, ought to consider its sacrifices as well as its advantages.

This instantiation of an ideally subjective system describes a mode of self-conscious being that provides a subtext for a reflective life and discovers multiple escapes from its inherent loneliness.

Sentimental Presuppositions

In the chaos of likes and dislikes, loves and hatreds, I love wisdom above all else. It is not an infatuation because it continues through time and nor is it lust because it is never satisfied. It is not a convenience because at times it is the greatest of inconveniences. It is not utilitarian because I am used by my love more than I use it. Where it goes, I will follow.

Secondary to the pursuit, I publish my discoveries. I suppose that because they are exciting and significant to me, they will be as such to others. The lack of applause is informative.

Logical Presuppositions

The system is not arbitrary but filtered through logical presuppositions. Some propositions are caught by the filter and others pass. I examine what passes and what does not and make judgements. Truth or falsehood are properties I attribute to propositions.

The examination of propositions takes place within the context of proof, which has no meaning without logic. When logic is in doubt, nothing is provable.

The presuppositions are not proofs but assumptions as to the form of my judgments about statements; they are the original principles of my reasoning ability, unprovable but necessary to proof.

1. The truth of a statement depends on its logical self-consistency, the possibility and probability of it being true, and the actual physical evidence of its truth. A proof that simultaneously demonstrates all three modes of truth judgment is complete.

If a statement is internally inconsistent and impossible and not in evidence, then I may judge it false.

2. I am tempted to ridicule the conventions of another but a statement cannot be false merely because it is ridiculed. Ridicule is certainly an action of an observer, a property of the ridiculer, not necessarily a property of the object ridiculed. If a statement is obviously absurd, it should be easy to demonstrate its falsehood without resorting to ridicule. Neither ridicule nor sanctity should move to a judgment of falsehood or truth.

A statement cannot be true merely because a particular person says it is true or because many people say it is true. Many people once thought the Earth was flat. Now many people believe that the Earth is round. I don't suppose the planet changed shape to accommodate public opinion.

Nor does it matter how strongly someone feels about a statement or how loudly it is asserted or how patiently or how humbly. Nor should a statement be judged true or false merely because of the motivations or the desires of the judge. The truth of a statement is independent of whether or not I like the statement or prefer the effect of judging it true or judging it false.

3. Since the presuppositions are not provable, I must admit the possibilities of other logics or other presuppositions that would inform my reasoning ability.

A Subjective Theory of Knowledge

I crave to know and crave it to be known that I know. This is the source of philosophical energy.

Knowledge is a relationship between something in the world and me, between knower and known. I acquire knowledge of things in the world by receiving sense data originating or reflecting from an object. My senses organize the sense data into shape, color, smell, sound, texture, weight, temperature, or motion. I intuit the perceptions into a concept, an integral whole that I name. Remembered, manipulated symbolically and

abstractly, knowledge is far from the original sensory stimulus and further from the object itself. Knowledge of a thing in the world is a system for recognizing the object, of working with it, of being apart from it.

Since knowledge is a relationship between knower and what is known, there can be no knowledge without someone who knows it nor an object to be known.

Knowledge of things in the world does not come naturally. I was not born with knowledge. As a newborn, I had only immediate experience. The world was bright and cold, terrifying and exciting, which suggested that there was something other than myself. This is the very atom of knowledge.

While I might demonstrate knowledge by representation, by speaking, by a systematic repetition of the features or symbols of the known object, confirmation is not necessary to knowledge. People need confirmation. The knowledgeable person does not. While judgements are uttered within a social context that is necessary to make them possible, their truth (or falsehood) is independent of that context.

Relationships other than knowledge between observers and things in the world include mere reception of sense data, perception, memory, ridicule, and sanctity, none of which equals knowledge. The maple perceives the change of seasons and the amoebae detects its morsel of food but I don't suppose either creature knows.

Examination of what I know and how I know it makes possible inferences about my nature as a reasoning being. Examination of how I represent what I know makes art possible.

Problems of Subjective Knowledge

My knowledge of other things depends on sense data traveling between the object and myself. Neither the sense data nor my perception of the data is the same as the object itself. Knowledge is profoundly different from the known object. Knowledge is in my mind, apart from the object, a model of the object, examined, remembered, retrieved, improved, or forgotten.

Can the object and my idea of the object correspond perfectly? A perfect idea of an object has a correspondence between each part of the idea and some feature of the object. Each item on my map corresponds to an item in the world. However, not every item in the world corresponds to an item on my map. The perfect idea exhibits perfect correspondence in one direction. A truth-judgment about something in the world is a correspondence between idea and reality.

I want perfect correspondence in both directions but truth is not a function of what I want. It is impossible to get the entire world and all its detail into my mind. Truth is a function of how it is, how I perceive it, and my reflections on that perception. Truth is not arbitrary. Truth is a logical or empirical harmony between something in the world and me, a reciprocity between thought and reality.

Is there a problem between philosophy and reality? After all, if I would know all the causes of things, is it possible to act in the world? How is it possible to move while doubting the ground, each atom therein, and each its own tiny universe? Do I need to know everything in order to act?

Can any statement be proved without making assumptions?

Can I observe something without changing it? Does how I view the world condition my judgments about it?

Can I make a true statement that is not about things in the world?

What do I know and how do I know it? Do I exist? Can I know myself? If I begin to analyze myself, who is analyzing? Who is being analyzed?

Subjective Existence and Being

I worry about the persistence of things and my pursuits in knowing them. Will they continue? Do they exist at all?

1. That I exist is absolutely true and is the first thing that I know.

That I exist might be doubtful to someone else because I am merely one of the things in the world to them. But to me, either I exist or the world and all its questions become meaningless. If I don't exist, nothing makes sense at all.

My existence does not need the confirmation of others. The only condition I need is that I ask the question. Self-reflection guarantees being.

No matter that my existence is improbable, that out of the millions of possibilities, I am only this highly unlikely individual. I exist because I ask the question. If I did not exist, I could not ask. However improbable, I certainly exist.

External evidence of my existence is not necessary, since its nature has yet to be determined and because evidence can make no sense to me if my existence is in question.

I do not merely think I exist, merely being deceived and not really existing, because being deceived is being. I cannot deceive myself about my own existence. I cannot realize my own non-existence. Without existing, I realize nothing.

I am trapped in the present, the past being no longer and the future having never existed. I am also trapped in space, at this point, and within my own experiences and inside my own opinions. I am always here and now. I can never be at any other place and time besides here and now.

2. Do other things exist? How can I know? Why are there other things at all, rather than just nothing?

I make inferences about the actual nature of things in the world from the sense data I receive. I can act on those inferences, am rewarded, or not, and gain confidence in the truth of my inference. The repeatability of these cause-and-effect relationships adds to my confidence that I know something about the world.

I walk tentatively because my knowledge of the ground is conditional on my experience. The outer world is not provable in the sense that I am proven. It's existence is conditional while mine is absolute. I must doubt the world seriously at least once and I can always return to my doubt. I am only sure that I exist and am only sure enough about the rest of it to act, tentatively, faithfully, or ignorantly.

I sometimes wish to become completely trustful, to forget that I ever asked a question about the existence of other things, to heal the division between the world and me. The world remains remote. It is not a function of my wishes.

Existence in the world is adaptive. Until I bumped my forehead, I assumed that I was only as tall as my eyes. I used the new data for a new inference about my size. I assume the ground is solid and this assumption permits me to travel without examining each atom. When I act in the world, I must be confident enough to leap over some questions to be able to ask others. Motion and change are impossible if every detail must be examined. A quest for knowledge might be incompatible with other kinds of actions.

Can I trust things to continue to exist in the world? To act, I must be willing to assume a consistency or at least a predictable rate of change. Thus the world, with me in it, is distinguishable between the one thing that I know certainly and all the others I know conditionally.

I am a singularity, trapped in my own existence, standing on a pedestal that rises from the abyss. I think I see a way down into the mysterious darkness and over to something else but I don't know if it is safe. Perhaps I will cease to be. I can only imagine this. I cannot move without trusting something else, without risking something. Being becomes the self-conscious act of reflecting on the possibility of non-existence. Being is the knowledge of the possibility of non-existence.

I am certain about myself but anything in the world could be an illusion. Even in my self-perception, my hands and feet and physical actions, I might also be deluded. I like to think I am strong and handsome, agile and witty, generous and perceptive. These are only perceptions, subject to the faults of observation. I am none of these qualities.

Do other people have these thoughts? Are we each trapped in someone else's conceptions? Is each of us standing utterly alone, daring the depths and seeking more than a foothold, a place to step in faith that something else exists?

Being alive and intellectually aware, I seek to control the world with my understanding. I am wrapped around the world, surrounding it with my perceptions and conceptions, containing it with idea and words, desperate to plug the leaks. I must have something to say about everything. I wish to consume the world, to justify that I am all that is. Before me, there was nothing and nothing after me. I wish to fill the void.

3. The boundary between the actual world and me is made of ideas. The ideas are associative relationships between things in the world and me, formed during my trial-and-error interaction with the world, which gives form to my otherwise undifferentiated libidinal hunger. Some associations are logical or subject to logical criticism while others appear randomly. Some are solid and immutable, others are variables; some are fractal-like expressions that resolve into other ideas too numerous to resolve, an interconnected labyrinth, one idea anastomosing encyclopedically into another.

Ideas serve as obscuring walls or as windows to view a bit of the world, disabling or enabling understanding of the outside. These abstractions are in the way and the way. They are the world in all its detail and the means by which I understand the world and its details.

I can enforce a system of classification on the ideas that is independent of the order in which they were received.

My choice of ideas to retain and to eliminate and the shared characteristic of all my ideas or the norm of all my ideas, is my personality, my mask, a set of holes through which my being emanates, the apertures through which I hear and taste and see and speak. The mask conditions the way I see the world and is the way the world sees me.

When I say that the boundary of ideas permits me to contain, insulate, isolate, introduce, understand, accept, mask, invite, or deny the world, I mean that the connotation of those words indicates how I characterize the world. They all indicate a separation. It is my psychological attitude that I impose on my world view, which is composed of ideas. It is how I desire the world to be. I am attached to the world by my view of it.

I form new ideas either by using old ideas as windows into their references, by making new distinctions within an old idea, or by examining sense data in the knowledge-acquisition process. I receive new data from my senses, which are smart windows between my mind and the world, passing shapes and colors, smells and sounds, tastes and textures into my mind, which has seen all of it before, except the surprises. The lines are insulated with ideas and my mind is quick to turn perceptions into conceptions, cognized or recognized.

A phobia is a leak in my container of ideas, a thing that will not be reduced to symbol, that insists on being seen in all its fearful mystery.

4. Is this as far as we can go?

The individual is not indivisible at all. It is not even separate from the external objects of its perception.

The individual is a network of associated objects, interior and exterior, that tends to an equilibrium sufficient to the pleasure (or terror) of recognition, which is associated with a motor action.

The tendency toward equilibrium, associated with action, promotes survival. After all, we are not talking about computers. We are talking about biological critters.

Many associations between the many objects, internal and external, are possible. The instincts are the set of predispositions to acquire a particular set of associations, without which the individual would likely die. The 'likely die' evaluation is made by the super-network of individuals ancestral to the particular individual. The viability of the species is an evaluation of its ancestry. Hence the individual is programmed to live. Among humans, the 'programming' is genetic and cultural.

The associated objects within the individual include

Memories of perceived objects

Memories of intentions

Memories of social conventions

Sense organs

Sense data (as close as the individual may come to an external object)

The associated objects are connected to all other associated objects. Each informs the other. Thus we tend to see what we wish to see or have seen before.

Despite the incredible number of connections between the associations, the associations are evaluated (summed) quickly by the neural networks in the mind. The evaluation process quickly eliminates complexity.

In the vulgar sense (the sense that any animal could 'understand') there are only four possible evaluations of an object:

The object is good to eat

The object has already been eaten

The object is going to eat me

The object wants to have sex with me (the Supreme Ontological Scandal)

Ethical Kernel

I begin to encounter the world with regard to my own purposes. I serve myself. Existence is simple when I am alone because it is a matter of seeking pleasure and avoiding pain.

But I also am a communal creature, a family member. I yearn to speak, to join. But people are not merely things in the world. Or if they are, they are exceedingly complex, the most complex and unpredictable and interesting of all the things in the world. They tend to escape containment.

My judgments as to pleasure and pain are no longer in reference to me alone but cause reactions in the things themselves, the people. Unlike my truth-judgments, my actions become subject to confirmation of others. I might judge it true that Jill killed Jack and judge it wrong for her to have done so.

Does right equal pleasure and wrong equal pain? My actions, designed to bring me pleasure, might harm the rest of us and that might in turn harm me. As a self-interested person, I choose among the possibilities in such a way as to benefit myself. If the choice also benefits the community, then there is no conflict. But if the choice is between two mutually exclusive decisions, I, being self-interested, choose my interests over those of the community.

Is there an ethical kernel as fundamental as the I-think-therefore-I-am discovery that can lead me out of the dilemma presented by my simultaneous selfish and communal interests?

It is not in my interest to publicly advocate self-interest because someone might take my advice, serving themselves at the expense of my community, and that might cost me my share of communal benefit.

I have nothing to gain by public advocacy of selfishness. I might appear wise by the statement, but only to those who did not think about it. Public advocacy of self-interest leads problematically to self-destruction.

If I would serve myself and advocate anything at all, I should publicly advocate virtue, that set of behaviors I think to be of value to our community. I might influence someone to a community interest that might benefit me.

I must advocate sacrifice as an ideal to demonstrate my self-interest. The principle does not eliminate all dilemmas, contradictions, or ambiguities, since by honoring sacrifice I might be the one who makes the sacrifice but at the very least I have the language to discriminate between right, wrong, pleasure, and pain. I can begin to think and talk; my words have meaning. Publicly, I ought not say otherwise.

Irrespective of personal benefits, publicly, I must judge actions as right or wrong in a public context, right if it brings us benefit and wrong if it brings us harm. Devotion to the pleasure principle is not necessarily right and neither repression nor sacrifice is necessarily wrong.

It is right to promote virtue at every opportunity. If humility is a virtue, then I sacrifice the pleasure of pride and if charity, I sacrifice the objects of greed, and if courage, I risk my life. I must not publicly judge an action right merely because it pleases me or wrong because I personally fear the consequences. That other people publicly continue to advocate self-interest is of no philosophical consequence.

Is there a private self-interest that can be talked about? If I were to serve myself alone, I should keep quiet about it and not publicly advertise selfishness as right. It is insider information and it spoils the market to let it out. But, while all this must be done in secret, here I am suggesting it. I cannot recommend dishonesty because, however carefully I attempt to say so, as soon as I talk about it, I join the public discussion, which changes what must be said. Advocate virtue.

Of course, if the discovery of my selfish actions in the face of a conflict of interest were discoverable and included penalties, then I can see the risk, obey the law, and avoid punishment. Or, I could focus my logical faculties on avoiding discovery, seeking to exploit the communal advantage without reciprocal sacrifice. But I cannot talk this way. I publicly reject disingenuousness and choose to act as I speak.

It seems improbable to me that selfishness leads so simply to community but it is evident since no one that I know is self-sufficient economically, linguistically, politically, or emotionally. We are together on this, despite the range of our opportunities. While claiming freedom, we depend on each other. The very fact that I am writing these words is because I feel the usual human need to make assertions about discoveries that I think are important to us and true and not widely held. I talk because I am communal; I share the common defense.

What are the virtues? How much effort is required of me? How much sacrifice do I pledge? How much benefit do I gain and what do I lose? How do I know who is sincere or not? How can I persuade others to make

the sacrifices that will benefit me? Against all these uncertainties, these breaches in my container of ideas, action becomes a commitment with which I define my life.

I don't believe I am alone. Threads of trust connect my loneliness with others. I notice some trying the threads, some walking, running, even cart wheeling from person to person, ignoring the hungry darkness that yearns for error. Others are skeptical and exploitive. The confidence with which I regard the existence of others is tempered by trust and uncertainty, which creates a higher level of possibility and allows me to explore beyond my own immediate limits. The adaptive nature of the creature to its unique set of circumstances guarantees that each creature's container is unique. The collective reality of social creatures such as humans tends to reject radically different masks, which tends to cause another adaptation in the container of the creature. And later, when the urge to have overtakes the urge to be, the being undoes itself.

Supreme Ontological Scandal

It seems that myself is all I need. Only nothing could be smoother. But there is an itch in the animal that drives it out on the town to risk its selfish freedom for a shot at something else.

The self-referential reverie is interrupted by the anticipated thrill of the adventure. The objects of desire woo the individual and leads one into the other.

Subjective Politics

There is no more significant a reason for attempting to communicate this research than my desire for communal experience. I crave the human march.

The qualitative basis of logic consists of the judgements of truth or falsehood. Ethics judges individual actions right or wrong. Politics judges its propositions as effective or ineffective.

Politics and ethics are different sciences. In ethics, it is wrong to punish one person for what another did but in politics we punish one person for what another person might do. Politics is non-ethical just as geology is non-ethical. One does not condemn an earthquake because of its lack of ethics.

Nevertheless, politicians speak of what is right and what is wrong or what is true and what is false. When a politician speaks in ethical terms, he is making a political statement. That he accuses his opponent of ethical violations is a political action. When he accuses his opponent of logical inconsistencies, he is not marrying wisdom for better or worse. He is making a political statement designed to reinforce his reputation and damage his opponent's. The measure of political action is not its truth or its rightness. The measure of political action is its effect.

Subjective politics subsumes ethics and logic within effective rhetorical statements. Political actions effect the consolidation of power and the reinforcement of allegiance. Given the amorality of subjective politics, effective action is all there is to politics. The system is utterly self-referential. It does not admit of philosophical criticism as long as that criticism is politically ineffective. Politics admits of any effective criticism, no matter how false or how wrong. Political action is that which is successful.

Apart from short slogans with an obvious ethical or logical irony, the vast numbers of human ears are insensitive to logical dissertation. Human ears are most sensitive to what they want to hear. We believe politicians who tell us what we want to hear. Catchy rhetoric defeats the most finely worked logic and the purest ethical research.

Given the amorality of subjective political science, as a citizen or a leader, I should reinforce the most effective political force. I should join the most powerful party. I should not join the fairest or the cleanest or the most logical of the parties. Those qualities are not fundamental to political systems but are merely political labels. My party's opponents will insist on a different set of labels. In any case, the fairest and cleanest and truest of the parties might be the weakest and therefore politically the most useless, the least deserving of my interest.

This discourse leads into what only appears to be an ethical quagmire. It cannot really be an ethical problem because it is a political system. I should claim that my party is the fairest and cleanest and most logical because somebody might believe me and that might make my party stronger.

Of course, I have the choice to join or form a weak party. In that case, I would be obliged to make that party powerful, in part by claiming its virtues, even though philosophically irrelevant and even though I will compromise those virtues in making the party effective. If I form the Anti-Capital Punishment Party, we will eventually kill someone to further our political goals. A party must blunt its point in order to be effective. If I form a party and refuse to compromise my virtues, I am making an ethical statement. If I remain in the intersection of politics and ethics, I become sacrificial, which might be an effective political statement.

If I am selfish or altruistic, I must reinforce the most effective political party and attempt to direct it in such a way as to benefit myself or ourselves. I must not advocate selfishness because such statements sound immoral and immorality, although philosophically irrelevant to political systems, can compromise its effectiveness and damage the system. I must advocate virtue. To be optimally effective, I must become politically involved. To fail to maximize my influence is the most miserable of failures. I must dive into the turbulent river. I must end my isolation and act.

When I advocate my freedom, I imply freedom for other people as well; action becomes example and success becomes an informal law. The consequence of choice is noticed. For better or for worse, we are building the society we are building, constructing fantastic bridges across the abyss. There is no one else making our society but us.

Ethically, I create myself as an individual within a society. Politically, we create a society within the larger populace of humanity. We define our tribe by ritual recognition of our friends and enemies. We create by the choices we make, by self-definition and sacrifice, by conflict and war and other modes of existence.

War is an existential mode.

Public advocacy is not merely private thought expressed publicly. It is not just musings exposed raw to the world. Public advocacy is public action and commitment. If I choose to sacrifice a personal indulgence as part of an agreement that others will do likewise, I reinforce the belief in virtue that tends to perpetuate the community.

Contract is political self-definition and makes political action possible. Contract is consolidation of power. Gratuitous abandonment of the terms of contract is chaos and destroys the meaning of the words that contain the world.

Why should I trust anyone who promises to serve my interests against those of the larger community? Can there be predictability within a society of truly self-interested individuals?

I must not only be confident that things in the world actually exist but I must trust them and must act in such a way as to be trusted. We act together or, failing to cooperate, we fall through politics, ethics, and are back to the isolate, facing the patterns of light and sound and temperature and texture, alone.

Political existence is a process of original idea, gathering support, sacrifice, building the political edifice, sustaining defense, calcifying, becoming dogmatic, oppressing, destroying, and dying in flames.

There is nothing else to do.

Art and Commerce

I want to describe things. Effective description relies on aesthetics.

Aesthetics is concerned with the contrast that makes perception possible. Aesthetics depends on the relation between subject and object, viewer and viewed, light playing on the surface and received by the eye. Perception requires contrast. Aesthetics is about sense and what is sensed, the object against a background and my reflection on what I see and how I see it.

The unborn have no knowledge of the world because they experience no contrast by which they can make distinctions. There is no night or day, no hot or cold, just two heartbeats and occasional motion.

The artist is concerned with the relationship between appearance and reality. An object of art is a thing that represents another thing in the world or merely presents itself, without external reference, a thing in itself, complete, captivating. Objects of art might represent other things or simply present themselves.

It is easy enough to scribble some thoughts or doodle some patterns but quite another to be taken seriously, and still another to be influential. Whether created for publication or not, art that joins the public discussion joins the moral sensibility of its period and the subsequent periods it survives.

To be safe, I want the artist to tell me that my path into the darkness is a good one, that my symbols are strong, that I am perceptive and intelligent, revolutionary, on the cutting edge of culture, so are my friends in my tribe, and that we have contained terrible mysteries. We are smart and ambitious and good. The other tribes are stupid and lazy and greedy. To be safe, I do not want to learn anything new. I just want to know and be confident. I am willing to pay an artist and politician to tell me what I want to hear.

That I am seeing the world inaccurately, that my enemies are correct, that I am missing the point completely, that my time is slipping away, that everyone I know is going to die, that I am lazy and stupid and greedy is revolutionary talk and I won't pay to be told that. I will try to escape.

The culture provides me with labels and other mechanisms to protect my ignorance and to insulate me from the unknown. I can be comfortably numb. The successful conventional artist will be rewarded with fame and fortune, and be complemented as visionary and revolutionary. Though his work is not needed, he will be honored.

When the artist is truly revolutionary and vital, he will be ignored.

It is not enough to merely complain artlessly about this. Popular culture is not the enemy of art but one of the sources of artistic image, the transmission medium, and the target of artistic ideas. The art object can appear conventional enough not to be rejected and odd enough to be actually noticed. The artist uses the received images to show us what we so desperately need to see and yet seek to avoid. Significant objects of art allow us to break through our world view and briefly see phenomena before they are once again contained by ideas.

Some people make money. Some families grow stronger. Some societies become influential. Our generation's illusions will be discarded by the next in favor of new illusions and all but the strongest and most effective distinctions will be crushed by the process.

What appears to the artist as a dilemma between art and commerce is really an opportunity for unification. The artist, thinking himself an individual, believes that he has created something different enough to be distinct and precious, not of this world. There is really very little news that he can bring to my culture and have it be visible. In fact, much of what is called art is really a reassurance that we see things in the same way, yet another reinforcement of convention. Our illusions are similar. To create a work of art that is not visible is to miss the opportunity.

Revolutionary artists are out of phase with their culture, leading or lagging its conventions. Revolutionary art insists that conventional art is unneeded, that it is dedicated to propagating our cultural illusions. But art that is too far out of the conventional stream is as invisible and ineffective as the conventional, and quickly rejected. Visible art is nearly outrageous in beauty or violence, dwelling just outside of convention, on the edge of the container of the actual world of chaotic sensory data, the storm of image and impression that I desperately attempt to cover with platitudes or reject as madness.

I suppose the artist might return with news. It can be pretty for a moment as it is put behind us, as it is explained, before it is reduced to icon and discarded as old and out of fashion.

To the merchant, of course, there is no contradiction since his aim is to link seller and buyer. His obligation is to trade. Nor is the public obliged to buy or even to take art seriously. The public is a herd blindly eating its way through its environment, ensuring its collective immortality. Art is made of the cultural substance, the ideas and images in currency.

The conventional artist is trying to sell back to the culture that which he has taken from it.

The revolutionary artist is providing a vision of the next revolution in our world view.

The customer is seeking reassurance and safe thrill.

History

History is the record of our inquiry into human events, including science, mathematics, and art, an attempt to contain all our experience.

Being a form of knowledge, history always lacks two-way correspondence with the events it describes. History is composed of words and pictures and maps and not the events themselves, which are made of flesh and stone and life and death as well as words and pictures and maps.

A work of history is credited to an individual or two but the events are streams of culture, eddies in the current of human events, thousands of individuals in chaotic motion, each with a point of view, each a potential

historian. A work of history is written in a new time and characterizes its own time as much as the time it seeks to describe.

History is always being revised because it cannot possibly duplicate the event and therefore the description can always be improved, suffering the disease of distance that all sciences suffer. It is another set of ideas that encapsulates us. History is always being revised because it has a new audience that needs the story told in a new way. History follows fashion.

A work of fiction has some correspondence with the real events that it seeks to mimic. Some degree of correspondence always exists between a work of the purest fiction and the time in which it was written as well as the time in which it was set. The correspondence between the most fantastic work of fiction and the reality that makes it possible might only be the fact that it was written in a particular time and place and that the writer thought it important enough to create, and the culture important enough to preserve. Illusions created in a similar time are likely to be similar.

A fictive element always exists in the historical record and an historical element always exists in fiction. It is the job of the researcher in either field to decide what is valuable to his inquiry and what allows him to advance to new decisions. Disdain for the other way might be useful as a mnemonic but the honest seeker must look back, at least once, with sincere yearning for the other path.

Since our world view is composed of ideas and since history is the accumulation of our ideas about the world, we live in history not in nature. We isolate ourselves from nature with our container of ideas. Successful creation in arts and letters and science is pushing through the containment and results in new ideas, new words, new stories and new histories that plug the breach.

We can deconstruct ourselves as a plume of particular ideas and influences.

We are apart from nature but not apart from our history. Nature is reduced to another set of ideas that we get mostly from television.

History is not a subject about someone else. When we improve our knowledge of history we improve ourselves. Our understanding of ourselves changes us and then we no longer understand ourselves. The very attainment of historical knowledge creates new possibilities. There can be no laws of history because as soon as we discover them, the discovery makes it possible to change our behavior, act in some other way, and so invalidate the law.

We are not merely free; we are freedom itself.

Theology

It seems that a contradiction lies at the base of my knowledge of the most elemental truths, a dialectic that cannot be held in the mind or that cannot be expressed in words. I accept the possibility that I might never possess knowledge beyond the simple element of my own existence and the conditional knowledge of other's, a statement that provides a rational basis for mysticism, which is that the world can be seen as a profound and impenetrable mystery.

The only certainty is that I exist. All other entities are conditional on my choice to believe in my own persistent perceptions. If I hear voices demanding that I make a ritual sacrifice to prove my faith in the existence of something else, I may choose to discuss the matter with my family and friends and a doctor. I may choose to ignore or comply with advice. The advice of others does not cause my behavior. I cause my own behavior by the choices I make, by consciously trusting or not trusting things in the world, including the advice of the disembodied.

Without choice, there can be no reason to give or receive advice, no morality, no consciousness, and no law.

A god is either one of the other things in the world or the world itself or something outside the world. I've heard that no one can prove the existence of gods. But no one can prove anything to me. Only I am provable.

To prove the proposition that there are no gods, I would have to examine all ideas of gods and show that they were each false or discover one idea that includes all possible ideas of gods and disprove that.

The former is impossible since many people who have had ideas of gods are now dead, vanishing without leaving descriptions of their ideas for me to examine.

As for the latter, how could I begin? I have yet to think of a single idea that encompasses all possible ideas.

And if I did succeed in disproving the many and the one, I would only have disproved all ideas of gods and not gods themselves who could be existing happily enough, although outside the realm of possible ideas, unimaginably existent.

With its millions of ideas to disprove, the atheistic proposition seems extremely difficult.

However, one irrefutable idea of a god is sufficient to destroy atheism.

If a god is defined as the supremely perfect being, then a god, being perfect, must necessarily exist, since not to exist would not be perfect. The proposition is self-consistent: it does not violate its premise and leads necessarily to the conclusion that a god exists.

The proof is not a tautology, which is merely an identity, a definition mistaken for proof, but a necessary conclusion that springs self-evidently from the definition. Existence is as necessary to supreme perfection as a mountainside is to a mountain, impossible to think of one without thinking of the other.

The refutation of atheism does not prove its converse, theism. I don't know that it is possible to imagine a supremely perfect being or if it is possible for a supremely perfect being to exist. Nor do I have any evidence that a god actually exists. But absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. I suppose it could be that I have not yet found the evidence or perhaps everything is evidence of a god's existence.

If a god is the world then everything in the world is evidence.

The World as Idea

The conclusion waiting patiently to be made is that the objective world is viewed subjectively.

The conclusions of science, as represented by peer-reviewed publications, can be viewed consistently with subjectivism if the conclusions are assigned a confidence value, rather than just a value of true or false.

The conclusions of the hard, physical sciences lead to predictions more often than the social sciences, which are left open to the subjective interpretation.

Most people live their lives outside of science and philosophy and legitimate their actions with whatever seems convenient: inherited wisdom, consensus, authority, optimism, and apparent pragmatic success.

Rights, which are political ideas with which we attempt to contain the behavior of others, do not exist except when and where we make them. We have only those rights that we give each other. Animals have only the rights we grant them. Animals themselves do not grant rights.

The laws of physics are really scientific models of the behavior of physical systems. What we have of the world scientifically is the record of improvement of scientific ideas, ever refined yet never absolute. Any scientific idea is conditional on the design, implementation, and interpretation of an experiment. Science, then, is a form of history.

By examining situations ethically, I derive morals that I think will influence human behavior. Virtues are those behaviors that exemplify morals.

The world becomes for me a dynamic of purpose, value, idea, judgement, and law. I interact by modeling, experimenting, moving, doubting, and assuring. These actions are all I can have of a world in constant motion. Apart from mere existence, they are what I am about. Socially, I am composed of acts. They are the objects of my language and the fabric of my social being.

That I exist is certain. Why I exist is the meaning I bring to my existence when the question is asked. The fact that I am able to think in this way is because of my cultural heritage of language and history. It is impossible alone. Without my culture, I never could have asked the original question.

We have isolated ourselves from nature, containing it in television and behind fences in parks and in our minds. We are composed of ideas, without which we would still be harmlessly, fearfully, and innocently roaming the plains and forests, content to be an ignorant part of nature.

Dynamic Models of Culture

With the death of the gods, historians were tasked with the job of showing how order could have arisen from chaos. How could culture evolve without a goal or divine guidance?

Culture is that set of behaviors apart from the instinctive. Culture is possible among the higher animals that can acquire a set of behaviors from each other and propagate them within their society. They learn from each other. Of the animals, humans are most cultural.

Cultural behavior changes faster than instinctive behavior, which is dependent on biological evolution. We are too numerous, too heterogeneous, and too generous to one another to have biologically evolved much lately.

A representative model is a structure composed by humans that exhibits some correspondence with an observed system. Models are useful in that provide a system of symbols that we can substitute for the real thing. We can examine and rotate and test and improve the model's internal and external coherence. Some scientific models are so complete in their correspondence with the systems they represent that we can use them to predict the behavior of the systems they describe.

Cultural models are especially interesting because of the tantalizing possibility of predicting our own behavior. If we understand our behavior, perhaps we can control it.

History's Plumage

Certainly change can be detected in the vast migrations that have characterized human history and pre-history. A tribe or nation that has at its geographical center an expanding population with technological and administrative advantages forms an ethnic plume that pours into another region and in time governs or displaces the original inhabitants.

The first invaders are young men bound for adventure, conscripted, hired, or fleeing the law. Families follow the first wave and eventually the original inhabitants are subsumed within the more vigorous culture. Language is the indicator of the depth and extent of the invasion.

This process is clearest in the Americas and in Australia. The process failed in sub-Saharan Africa, largely because the European homeland of the invaders did not contribute sufficient population. The Arab invasions succeeded in North Africa.

In a similar manner, it is thought that Indo-European speakers mounted a sustained prehistoric invasion from the Caspian region west to Ireland, north to Norway, south to Sicily and east to India.

Eventually, Indo-European languages became primary in all regions except Africa, and much of Asia and Polynesia.

Other forms of migration, such as diffusion, are much gentler as small groups of newcomers meekly beg for a spot outside the town walls.

Cultural Change

If culture does not change, there is much less choice in what we can do. We should discard all 'shoulds' and 'coulds'. Irrespective of the apparent progress we have made, we are still very primitive. Change is only superficial.

Perhaps we are trapped in a cosmic or instinctual envelope, subject to scientific or political or economic fate.

If there is no real change, what keeps things the same? What prevents change?

Perhaps there is change but it is cyclical and we return, after entertaining a brief illusion of freedom, after a sojourn into possibility, to exactly where we began. A car is just a horse and the horse just a foot. A nuke is just a spear and a spear just a stick.

The arguments against significant change are not very interesting because they obviate so much of human aspiration. . Certainly the belief in change is commonly held, the belief in Progress being an example. Optimists believe that it is at least possible that things will change for the better. Some pessimists believe that the world will end, which would be a change. There are many resourceful people attempting to change things

on the large scale. Some of the attempts, such as political revolutions or medical discoveries appear to have enormous consequences. Most people not utterly consumed by survival issues try to improve their lives, attempting to change things locally.

Some kinds of change, however superficial, are obvious. Technology has been in rapid evolution. The species has changed life styles from gathering and hunting to agrarian and again to urban civilization. Formerly we were at the mercy of wild animals and now they depend on us. We can touch the stars.

The elegant solution to the quandary is that change is not merely apparent but real. We have an incredible array of choices at any given moment, each one of which potentially influences the future.

Historiography

History as a genre of writing has undergone its own evolution. Earlier forms of history are drastically different from later forms.

The teleological and ontological models of history expose the urge on the part of the historian to formulate an unchanging law as inescapable as gravity or DNA.

Naturally, histories are selected for publication because they satisfy one or more of the current candidates for a grand narrative, a paraphrasable truism handy for admitting and dismissing argument.

For example, Gibbons' *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* exudes the conclusion that the Victorians saw the world in all its tragedy and that they were smart enough not to repeat those mistakes. Will Durant advertises the irony of heroism and Arnold Toynbee that civilizations follow a pattern.

Teleological histories feature nations and their supporting cast of faithful individuals striving to fulfill a purpose discovered by the historian but largely unknown to the individuals and the nations under study. Polybius viewed history as driving inexorably toward the apex of Roman civilization. Augustine of Hippo viewed history as a collective effort to perfect humanity in the eyes of God. Similarly we have seen manifest destiny and social Darwinism, both of which were handy for justifying imperialism.

Ontological models of history do not pursue an end but nevertheless describe a process. The process does not need to come to an end because it has none. These models were rejected by teleologists because they could not imagine order arising spontaneously from disorder.

Hegel posited dialectical materialism, a cosmic force that mankind acted out. The force was blind to its ends but it had a method. Similarly Marx posited a reciprocating engine of class warfare as the actuator of events, one cycle perpetually driving the next.

Some ontological models allow for multiple processes. Events are driven by processes, some of which are very old and some of which have been newly invented. Processes themselves can evolve.

Ellulism

The kernel of Jacques Ellul's model is the technique, which is an evolving cultural artifact that embodies the best way to do something. A technique is an optimized process used in manufacturing, marketing, government, or any endeavor to produce or administer. Societies win or lose economically based on their techniques.

Ellul claims that the techniques we have used have something in common despite the different materials upon which they operate. What we learn from any technique might be applicable to the design of all techniques.

For example, in the field of consumer electronics, high technology electronic components, manufacturing processes, and product assembly are designed by highly-paid, highly-trained professionals in an area that is dense with such talent. The components and the integrated products are produced in areas where manufacturing labor is dense with unskilled and semi-skilled labor. The products are then shipped to the markets and sold generally by unskilled sales personnel to those who can afford them world wide. The entire process from design to retail can be viewed as one technique that can be used to make and market other products.

Ellul operates within a neo-Marxist envelope. Successful technical solutions tend to eliminate old problems and create new problems. For example, the factory system that produced an inexpensive flow of consumer goods during the industrial revolution also drew millions of former agricultural workers into cities

that were not prepared for them. The change resulted in slums and political unrest. The technical solution to the unrest was labor unions, higher wages, better services, social safety nets, and mass-produced entertainment, all of which created new issues. Thus the process evolves.

The problem-solving algorithm of technical development drives change. There is no single actuator but an evolving sequence of devices dynamically responding to the last version.

Preconditions for Technical Development

According to Ellul, these social conditions are necessary for great leaps of technical development.

Common Inquiry

A large group of people with common economic concerns and in close communication is necessary for technical development.

For example, the lone inventor is relatively ineffective without his manufacturing, marketing, and delivery teams.

Reciprocal control

Technical solutions lead to control by some part of the society of some part of its domain.

The society must be willing to change. To some extent, the technical solution also controls the society that is committed to its implementation.

Search for the Best Method

The designers of technical solutions must be committed to the search for the best method.

Maturation Period

A period of time must exist whereby the technique can mature and incubate. The technical idea takes time to develop, manufacture, and market. The social changes that support the new technique often take some time.

Population Growth

The population must be growing to provide source of labor for its production and a market for its output. This is especially important because the society must change in support of the innovation and because the new generation is often less resistant to change.

Economic Milieu

An economic milieu suitable to the development of technique must be in place. A nation immersed in war, economic depression, or other survival modes develops solutions to survival issues that are often abandoned in richer times. Some techniques developed under harsh situations become useful to the wider culture.

Plasticity

The society developing the technique must be able to change. Tradition-bound societies will not develop new techniques.

Clear Technical Intentions

The part of the society designing the technique must develop clear technical intentions.

Characteristics of Technical Development

The technique is characterized by these properties.

Automatism

The search for the best method tends to restrict choice by reducing the number of methods. Workers on an assembly line perform the same actions, time after time, becoming programmed automata. Human freedom tends to be eliminated in the face of technical innovation. The technique almost takes on a life of its own, inherited over generations, parasitically employing its human dependency.

Self-augmentation

Techniques are self-replicating, self-improving habits, sometimes irreversible and geometrically progressive.

The factory system can manufacture factories.

Monism

The search for the best method drives the self-improvement and so techniques tend to unify into interdependencies of necessities. Someone must have conceived at least the question of a grand unified human technique. It might become possible to glimpse the whole.

The connection of the manifold objects with their singular processes creates an illusion of diversity.

Universality

Successful technological innovation travels, tending to unify distant cultures around common technique.

A thousand years ago, technical information traveled no faster than a horse.

Plant food species have supplanted many native species.

Autonomous

Because a single technique can produce a variety of products, the many products become separate from the single process that produces them.

Efficiency tends to enhance survival, especially when examined.

Technique appears to govern itself, becoming autonomous.

Problems Caused by Technical Development

The machines we have invented have solved many of the particular problems addressed. However, the solutions always change society and that change is always disruptive with respect to equilibrium. There are two classes of problems that arise from technical development.

First, new problems arise directly from the application of technique. Ancillary to new materials, new designs, and to improvements in factory systems, about 120,000,000 people were killed during wars in the 20th century by technical innovations in war machinery.

The second problem of technique is the fundamental change that takes place in individuals as they increase their relationship with techniques. We think we are driving the car but, in a significant sense, we are serving the car, the manufacturing and retail systems that produced it, and the environment it requires. We are changed by the relationship.

The Dynamically Stable Workforce

Labor management in the fast food industry, and its supply chain, minimizes the cost of labor in the production and retail sales forces. Procedures are reduced to a small set of easily learned tasks, often performed by part-time workers. The cost to the company is minimized in the following ways at the expense of the employees.

- It minimizes the expense of training.
- It minimizes the value of particular employee. He has little bargaining power.
- In the US, the Federal government often subsidizes the hiring of employees with a payment to the employers ostensibly to promote training, although training is minimal.
 - Because of worker dissatisfaction, it produces a work force that changes jobs often, thus minimizing vacation and pension expenses.
 - It encourages migrant laborers because the workers have no stake in the company, cannot afford good housing, and certainly cannot afford to buy housing or a business.
 - The transient nature of the work force makes it difficult for the workers to establish formal worker communities such as labor unions or political action committees.

- For an adult trying to support himself or a family, he must work more than forty hours a week to meet basic expenses. This makes supplemental education difficult, and thus tends to perpetuate the workers' circumstance. Children of uneducated, poor, migrant families tend to follow the same course.

- Within the network of employers, the employee can be blacklisted, which tends to eliminate labor activists in the work force.

- Part time employees are not guaranteed vacation, unemployment insurance, health insurance.

- Of course the industry has successfully fought against raising the minimum wage.

- The technique minimizes the tendency of workers to assume any ownership within the company.

In addition to causing problems for the employees, the technique causes problems for the society as a whole.

- Because the workers have no health benefits, they tend to live with illnesses until they become acute and then visit an emergency room, often at the public expense.

- When out of work, the workers are likely to rely on public assistance or have no income or take even more poorly paid or more dangerous jobs, including jobs in the black market where they have even less protection and where they are not taxed.

- They tend to have less cash to spend on consumer products. Since they do not receive unemployment insurance benefits, they do not contribute to the stabilizing effect of that program.

- Many of the fast food companies receive government subsidies to train entry level workers, even though there is little or no actual training. This expense is born by the public.

- The system tends to create a disaffected, unvested, migrant workforce with little or no commitment to their communities. The life style and its corollaries tend to be handed down to the next generation.

- Workers have no pension programs and later in life must depend on public assistance.

Systematically, the technical expression spanning the industries is a self-interested, self-promoting, self-defining set of feedback loops that adapt dynamically to circumstances and produces, as its output, equity improvement for the stockholders.

Ellul's Monism

Ellul's cultural criticism is an example of an effective philosophical model of the world.

The salient features of an effective model are its internal and external consistency. A model is internally consistent when its internal features are logically linked. A model is externally consistent when its elements of description correspond to a high degree with observed events in the world.

New techniques must deal with the problems the old technique created. For example, the growing anti-technical political faction focuses on the problems that the new techniques create. Will technical solutions be applied to these problems as well?

Inasmuch as the techniques benefit from each other, they become more powerful. The empire is the grandest technique, a geopolitical, horizontal and vertical integration of production and marketing.

Ellul's model represents a highly-evolved description of the political world that features a great deal of correspondence between the model and the world. The model is successful in approximating because of its dynamism, which resembles the dynamism of human societies. The model abandons the single-goal and the single-process hypotheses in favor of a goal-less dynamic evolution of processes that are implemented and discarded.

That the model does not argue for freedom is not a refutation but a frank description. The techniques become more autonomous while the humans become automatons. In the extreme extrapolation, we will all be working for a vast machine that is periodically tinkered to address the problems caused by the last version.

However, is it necessarily true that we will invent the perfect technique? Is there a segment of the population that successfully avoids technical inclusion? Given the growing success of international organizations like the EU, WTO, IMF, NAFTA, and NATO, it seems that a new world order could emerge.

The United States finances all sides of the civil war in Columbia. US citizens buy the cocaine that pays some the fighters. The US Federal government directly pays the government in cash and military hardware and redistributes the aid to its political constituents. Presumably the money that was spent on cocaine plus the

money that was spent on military aid could have been spent in such a way as to eliminate the disaffection that turned so many US citizens to drugs in the first place and the problem would be solved forever. Instead, the collection of techniques becomes static, perpetuating itself, and failing to evolve.

Much of the Muslim world is absolutely opposed to adapting the products and marketing techniques and the cultural attitudes that support them. Ellul's model seems to make no allowance for techniques that stop evolving or for groups of people who refuse their charms. Is there something wrong with the model? Or with models?

Metanarratives

If the Ellulian model is a better fit for observed events than the Marxist, it is because it introduces more variables without making the system unmanageable. It is more flexible without being less understandable. Marxism features one process, class warfare, which erupts periodically to revolutionize society. Ellulism features many processes that are attempted and discarded over time. It is the processes themselves that evolve.

When Darwin's work appeared, some of its critics challenged that a world without purpose could have no order. Darwin was tasked to show how order could evolve out of a chaotic process. The Social Darwinists presented a model of how societies could generate order without purpose. Marx and Ellul continued that project.

Much of the advice ever given, divine or otherwise, is still floating around in conversation. The next step in cultural advice might be to dismiss all advice. However clever, Ellul's theory of technical evolution is yet another narrative, an attempt to paraphrase the chaotic evolution of society.

The Postmodern is suspicious of narratives, if only because someone claims them as eternal truths. Anything that makes sense cannot describe life as it actually is. Life does not make sense. Some people try to make sense but life does not.

And yet we crave prediction. We yearn for knowledge of the future. We devour one prophet after another. What will happen? If we dismiss purpose and universals and, however dynamic and adaptive, metanarrative, what does the future look like? What is left to do? What are we going to dismiss next? Can our cunning consciousness be prevented from deriving principles from our observations?

Culture critics will not be prevented from constructing new theories. These constructs, among many others, drive cultural evolution.

Realistic Models

The idealistic teleological and ontological models form are ideas that invite us to search for facts that instantiate the ideas. Plan precedes existence. Existence is merely the acting out of a plan. Theorists must apologize for exceptions to their law.

While there is no shortage today of authors writing in the earlier modes, scholarly contemporary historical text books eschew the teleological and ontological models in favor of the what could be called the dendritic pattern: One event potentially influences a number of other events. Some of those events drive other events while others die in their traces. Many of the ideas appear in books and some books appear in libraries.

Realistic models are fine for predicting the past but not very useful for predicting the future, apart from the generalization that some events influence other events.

Volumes of detail can be written by the historian simply describing what a political figure attempted to do and what influence he actually had. The figure's effect can ripple through the centuries. Any detail can be thus represented and there can be no exceptions because there is no law, other than one event can possibly influence another.

The Laws of History

Humans, being material, are subject at all levels to physical law. DNA determines much of our lives, which is in turn determined by the mass and electronic charge of its constituent atoms, which is a function of

more fundamental particles, which ends there or goes further in that series of compelling details that characterizes scientific investigation.

We might suppose we could follow the chain of physical causality and predict the future of a single human individual or his entire tribe. This reductionism is derived from the giddy confidence in turn inspired by the success of scientific achievement and liberation from earlier dogma. The confidence tends to keep the markets excited and we should stand support that.

This fatalism holds that somewhere, perhaps in the deeper departments of government or the innermost sancta of the university, someone sooner or later might figure it all out and each and everyone will be a factor in someone else's equation. Not everyone draws comfort from this possibility.

A straight-forward method of expressing the problem is in a system of equations, the solution of which is well known, in principle. One equation would have to be written for each independent measurement of human behavior, including the geographical, political, religious, educational, mobility, and wealth distribution for each individual. Add to that accurate long term weather predictions, terrain, soil conditions, natural resources, export commodity and infrastructure, manufacturing, mining, and marketing capabilities, genetic engineering and all other technological innovation, and wild and domestic crop and pest gene pools. The size of the system of equations is already enormous.

For each physical dimension, each human has at least one idea, true or false or fantastic, about that dimension. Ideas are invented for the moment and distributed freely, discarded gratuitously, exaggerated, deprecated, published, worn to parties, taught, ridiculed, and made into movies. Associated with each of the physical dimensions of the system, there is a dimension of ideas about that dimension, which at least doubles the area of the matrix of terms.

Add to that the expense of gathering all that initial data, to the required granularity.

Add to that the choice of scientific disciplines in which to quantify the system. Will it be quantum mechanics? Biochemistry? Psychology? Economics? All of them seamlessly and completely connected? What are its presuppositions?

From the above, it might be that science and mathematics are languages of the wrong order to best-describe the world and its freedoms. Technology, the science of the useful, is the privileged child of Science. String theory is a language of the wrong order to describe geo-politics and political science can have no substantive impact on particle physics.

The problems of best-description and ultimate system-prediction are solvable in principle only. Neither the time nor the funding could be found for its actual solution.

However, even in principle, the problem is not solvable. As soon as we posit the law, inasmuch as it is noticed, we understand ourselves better, we change, and so we no longer understand ourselves. We are not the creature that we were. The law becomes invalid as soon as it is known or acted upon.

Apart from the tendency of one event to influence another, there can be no law of history. That some ideas inspire men to more ideas is a description of chaos, not order.

We will continue to try to figure it out. Idealism, the formation of ideas from or in spite of reality, is not only among the most practical of human endeavors, it drives human cultural evolution. The engine of historical change is historical awareness.

The Meaning of Life

We exist before we ask the question. Because we inherit no plan, we are anguished and free.

What passes for reality is really a set of adjusted memories playing in the routine course of the day. An individual is a nervous set of habits sufficient to association and dependent on a body, which is dependent on other bodies. The persistent quest gropes between the impossible, the unacceptable, and the tempting.

The secret of the ages is obscured by the slogans chanted hopefully to the night sky, lost to be discovered again. The mind strapped to the back of a dying animal lopes across the plain, which wheels toward fire or ice.

It gets to squeeze off a shot or two while builders of boxes mumble with diggers of holes and the hot wind blows dry over the echoing abyss. You will pay the thief to steal your money. The secret will be kept. Buy that soap.

To do it artfully is to do it well.

Collective Idealism and the Constitution of Order

Initial Bile

To the philosopher, it is vile that one's relationship with the truth is subservient to concept and social order. That history or science or religion or autocratic dictate determines my thoughts demands rebellion.

However, neither the concept nor the relationship is actually stable over time. It is not closed. The posited order attempts to provide stability but the order is weakened by an error-prone constitutional processes undermined by individuals critical of the order.

Individuals constitute their communications in sound or text or pictures or corporeal lash and might fail to do so effectively. This is especially common when the populace wearies of the same repeated news and fails to stay awake for the speech. It's harder to start a war right after losing one.

Individuals vary in their receptivity. Some individuals are skeptical while others are contrary. Some individuals are receptive at some time and dismissive at others. Folks tend to listen to what they want to hear.

Subsequent Action

An individual may sign on, join up, and march off, although someone pays a price for that. One may identify, consciously or not, with a particular political group and work, more or less diligently, for the party's published or ulterior goal. Justifiers may apply for the job.

But justification is not necessary to action and in any case is supplied by the party's thought leaders in the form of catechism, policy statements, slogans, and bumper stickers. The reason for the action is not in the detail of the justification.

Justification is a stage prop that can be replaced when broken, held with tenacity, or repeated until its critics are exhausted. There is no need whatsoever for consistency among the various justifications that arise within the party for a given issue. The official statements may be mutually exclusive and cause problems only for the paid press secretary. Justifications are custom made for each audience anyway and so what he said yesterday to another crowd in another city is not what you will hear today.

Justification serves the justifier politically.

The reason for action is choice. If the concept-holding individual attempts to identify the reason for the choice, those reasons can be undermined by those who choose to do so. Proofs are subject to refutation.

Practical Eristics

One approaches the field from ones experience. The engineer might want efficiency and the mercenary pay. As a philosopher, the identification, stalking, pursuit, and destruction of concept ought to be done a way that excites the intellect. The attack ought to be on the logic, evidence, and possibility of the concept's veracity. One statement followed by another does not necessarily prove anything else.

The anarchist believes that any and all human order is fictional and dangerous and must be sought out and destroyed.

The anarchist differs from the nihilist, who only believes in nothing.

The discovery that order is fictional is dangerous.

The thin excuses for war provide reasons to destroy any and all received conception.

By what means should the concepts be destroyed?

By Satire?

Certainly, partly because satire can be entertaining (although rarely to those being satirized) and partly because satire might give rise to art (not the highest art but art nevertheless) and mostly because it's effective. Laughter is the best poison.

By Jeering and Smearing?

Ridicule outside of an artful context is a favorite ploy of politicians and children everywhere and so is already a rule in the game.

Philosophers may feel their standards lowered by stooping so low but destruction is necessary to evolution. The measure of a tactic's worth is its effectiveness.

By Economics?

The audience member will publicly support sacrifice while secretly suspecting that someone else will actually suffer it while he turns a profit.

Cooking down the profit estimate is an excellent tactic for undermining the Most Exalted Truth.

There is no shortage of applicants for the common mob. They are lined up around the corner and down the street for miles to sell their soul. Let them know that it's a buyer's market. Tell them they'll have to pay to have the damned thing hauled off.

By Logic?

Logic is easiest to ignore. The intended victim might simply repeat the justification or find another laying around handy or tattle to the authorities or, least likely, become more sophisticated in the use of logic. If he has been to college, he will dismiss the philosopher with sophism when offered disagreeable or difficult arguments.

While the philosopher may experience pride and joy after confounding the primal nationalist, the lout will likely heal up by tomorrow morning and simply avoid the situation in the future.

Debate can become nothing more than a contest, a game between not very good amateurs, as cosmically important as checkers.

That Some should be Privileged

The practicing skeptic is likely to skip over selected opportunities to practice the art. One might exempt members of one's own political party, exponents of science, or the tender inferences of young children.

These are choices and cannot be defended otherwise. By granting privilege, one identifies with a party and starts, however slowly and carefully, down the other road.

Whatever one's initial ideals, corruption eventually creeps in. Fervently fight for decades against capital punishment and one is likely to kill some one. To survive politically, one must collect money from one self-interested group to finance the lies told to the voters.

That One has a Bad Reason to Destroy

Of course one might be destructive of concept because one enjoys the hunt, the chase, and the kick and the kill, because one is cruel.

Or that one is merely a vandal and likes to deface the monuments of order and will run away if caught.

Or one feels that it is one's solemn duty or that one will be rewarded with honors or that one will conquer ignorance and permit the Truth to shine at last.

These are concepts and must be destroyed.

The Order

The current loosening of order would appear insanely chaotic to time travelers from the past.

But we tolerate the fragmentation of world view, shrugging off other views with 'lunatic fringe'.

We surround ourselves with like-minded individuals who grant us sufficient validation to form a self-identity and join a lunatic fringe of our own.

The system of fragments provides a larger society in which business can be conducted.

Like our currency, our ideas are no longer required to have an intrinsic value in order to be valued. They have value even when rejected because they reinforce someone's membership in a political subculture, which stands in opposition to the foreign concept. The total structure is stable and resilient because of the skepticism of outside ideas built into each subculture. A single concept, which might be seized upon by a subculture is unlikely to catch on and destabilize the entire structure. Thus the entire planet is being transformed into a huge football tournament in which one is perfectly free to take any side and count oneself special for doing so while someone else collects your price of admission.

This process is evolving much faster than the anti can detect and destroy. One can only hope to fight minor skirmishes in weakened flanks and exposed individuals somehow wandering unattached to one of the larger spectacles.

Modern society is a factory for producing consumers of spectacle who feel left out unless they participate with the badges, insignias, fashions, slogans, and brand names associated with success and style.

Philosophy

The love of knowledge comes with a toolbox and a set of sample projects.

The tools treat statements as members of classes. Formal logic is a primary tool.

Rhetoric, the effective delivery of argument, is secondary but necessary. To be effective, you must be able to introduce or detect formal and informal arguments.

Informal fallacies are convolved with the informalities of everyday language. Being unable to keep up with production, logical analysis of everyday language becomes a tedious and thankless affair. To be effective, philosophers ought to contribute voluminously to production rather than attempt to sort out what has already been said for an uninterested populace.

The sample projects include some of the works of philosophers who bothered to write. Most are discarded. The declarations, decrees, pontifications, judgements, proofs, dismissals, stack on stack, the detritus of the publishing industry, the entire dense cacophony is perfectly natural. We are social and we must tell each other things, whether anyone listens or not.

In the attention of the common man, whose voice ought to be heard, as well as the economy, whose voice will be heard, science has seized center stage. Astronomy and particle physics have displaced conjectures on the metaphysical nature of the very large and the very small. The biology of perception has pre-empted aesthetics. Each science has adopted a child of philosophy.

Some philosophers have responded with attacks on the well-defended towers of science and technology. Some have retreated to language studies, only to find cognitive linguists arriving in force. Some have taken refuge in religion, philosophy's ancient ancestor and recent enemy, in a quest for shelter from the all-consuming intellectual, economic, and cultural onslaught of scientific discovery.

Rhetorical Existentialism

The philosopher may justify his culture by presenting any argument, for or against. He exists because he tells tales or criticizes stories or professes a love of wisdom. Any narrative is sufficient to existence. Narration reinforces the individual, tending to insulate and stabilize the individual with respect to experience, even as a pastiche of juxtaposed stories applied gratuitously to circumstance. On the judgement of appearance, the individual might reject some kinds of narratives.

The statements need no object, target, nor even a direction, although they ought to have at least one claim or they won't be distinct from nothing at all.

Knowledge becomes a fashion statement. Just as some go for black leather, head to toe, or 100% cotton, or hopefully outrageous hair, some dress with information, accessoried with logic.

All conversation reduces to story or criticism of the story.

As criticism, there can be no substance, no form, but only deconstruction of the changes in fashion, observations on the convoluted meanders through the mall, the objects of desire glittering on the glass shelves, perfumed with moral tales of disillusionment, political plugs, or a new and improved car wax.

As story, conversation is the reconstruction of fairy tales from experience or the shards of received wisdom with which the individual assembles his statements, an attempt at reillusionment.

When everyone has his own opinion, no one is obliged to listen. Knowledge is just another rant.

New philosophical work is continually subsumed within the larger culture. Philosophers must respond as any other marketing alliance. Enlarge the scope of the claim. Engage the bulk of received statements. Outflank, outrage, out-produce, and exceed.

The Objective Persona

after Merleau-Ponty

The objects of perception, of which we have only the sense data, begins with the preprocessing of sense data by the retina, skin, cochlea, nose, tongue, etc., into shape, texture, sound, odor, taste, etc. The eventual holistic evaluation of the object, which involves all the components of the body and memory, also interprets and

adds value to the perceived parts. For example, in a set of crudely drawn marks that could be arranged to form a cartoon face, two of the marks could be ‘revised’ to become eyes. Their value is reassigned to ‘eyes’. Of course, the set is not necessarily predetermined. The marks for ears might, by some, be assigned as ‘eyes’ and in fact some could be rather playful about the interpretation. The next time we see the set or one similar, we might go right for the eyes and thus the act of perception is not at all passive but an active act that imposes as much as it is imposed upon.

The evaluation takes place within the network of associated objects and does not need a discrete evaluator. There is no need for an ‘observer’ apart from the objects already mentioned.

But the observing persona has appeared.

How is the persona constructed? Apparently, even for humans, it has not always been apparent and for lower animals there is no reason to suspect it exists at all. How, in the network of memories of objects, advice, and intentions, as well as the current sense data, is the ego constructed? Selfishness is easy, as is greed, aggression, even sympathy, love, and hate. We can observe this in animals. But how is that which experiences selfishness and generosity identified as a thing itself? How is it identified as an object outside of the network? It does not seem to be necessary to any of the actions of the ‘individual’.

We can easily see the legal definition: the law assumes that you are responsible for your observed actions. Law, as a social construction, in its reciprocal relationship with society, serves to stabilize its society. The positing of the responsible individual by law could be the source of the idea of the self, that the self is the internalization of the relationship between law and society, constructed by the network of associations as a placeholder, that which ties everything together, an object of convenience, a fictional keystone that enhances the equilibrium. Perhaps historically there was no ‘self’ and the self was invented and reinvented to harmonize with the current set of epistemes, the informal rules of knowledge that spontaneously erupt from time to time and place to place. There was no ‘self’ before Hamarabi.

In post-modern analysis, you can say that you have solved a system in as much as you can talk about it. The completeness of your talking-about-it is the measure of your success.

The analyst should always apply the talk to science. Can science or the objects of science be talked about?

Can you talk to the science-trained? The science trained and not only the science-trained but those who attempt to join the tribe, with pretenses to its vanguard and rear guard, are likely to call to arms all within earshot at the perceived attack. The slumber of the Alliance for Progress will be disturbed. Those who have shown that two things plus two things equals four things will extrapolate geo-politically on the way to Cosmic Pontification. Even more, the Omniscience of the Omniscient Personality will feel a threat to his very existence. Hence the will to power and the craving for godhood and worshippers sneak into the front door.

The talking-about science does not in any way deprecate scientific fact. It decouples the fact from the political environment and deflates the swollen personality that craves acting as the connection between the illusions of political power and scientific fact.

Perceived as threatened, most will resort to a practiced catechism. The philosopher must get underneath and between, fundamentally, the points of the catechism, an action that will confirm the threat to the threatened. The continuing threat proves the evilness of the threat. The degree of evilness is proportional to the degree of fear that one’s world or one’s personality is in danger. The smarter of the threatened will retire and patch up the catechism and return to the challenge another day. The lesser of the threatened, having identified the enemy, will merely avoid the confrontation by characterizing the perceived enemy as evil, insane, and stupid. It is not, after all, about the truth. For modern humans, it’s about ego and politics.

Stability and Political Illusions:

A convention might become unstable. It might self-destruct or be destroyed by its enemies.

This leads to stability, since conventional illusions isolate themselves from each other. If convention disappears, it is no big loss. They were kooks anyway.

An Objectivist Project

In spite of our independent understanding, we are engaged with a set of objects and relationships that appear similar to some. Evidence convinces many that many physical objects have an objective existence and consistently measurable characteristics.

Many are convinced by the convenience of the argument. In its continuing invasion and conquest of all subjects that it does not choose to eliminate, the triumph of physical science evidences itself most convincingly in its darling children. Technology is wonderful to those it pleases.

It is not that the world is merely apparent. It is our views of the world that are in error. Our job is to bring our views into congruence with the world. The world is not required to be apparent.

This objective description of the world does not conflict in the slightest with subjective view. If there were an objective set of objects, we would still have to come to know them. Knowledge is a subjective process, trying to try to build order out of chaos.

Logic and Cognition

How did the connection between the actual world and the abstractions of philosophy evolve? If philosophy is derived from the actual world, from where did the art of derivation come?

The higher animals, those that undergo some training, learn by remembering sensory-motor experiences. For example, in the chase, they associate similar successful experiences in memory and the association tends to increase the probability of success, which benefits the life form that is learning.

These creatures develop classes of sense data intimately coupled to classes of motions. For example, the hare and the coyote chasing it benefit from past experiences of running and turning and jumping and dodging into the brush. For creatures with different modes of existence, such as hunting, chasing, fleeing, eating, social interaction, and bedding, they can be presumed to classify sets of sensory-motor experience that are characteristic of each of the modes.

The rules of association are constrained by the sensory-motor system.

Success promotes survival.

Cognition

Cognition is the act of association, in memory, of similar events.

Cognition is important only for creatures that have memory, motion, and sense, that experience change, and that can have some influence over change.

Cognition is only important in its relationship to recognition, which increases the efficiency of survival.

Cognitive Primitives

The following elements are classes of sensory-motor memories that provide an instruction set sufficient to the metaphors that follow.

Motor Primitives

Turn left

Turn right

Forward

Stop

Open Mouth

Close Mouth

Up

Down

Visual Primitives

Concave, Container

Convex, Object

Trajectory, Motion

Face, Eyes, Teeth, Mouth

See(Object())

Taste

Sweet

Sour

Salt

Bitter

Taste(Object())

Smell

Water

Decomposition
Animal
Territorial markers
Fruit
Smell()

Touch
Rough
Smooth
Wet
Dry
Hot
Cold
Hard
Soft
Touch(Object())

Sound
Pitch
Volume
Direction
Snarl
Cry
FoundIt
Listen()

Possessives
Its(Object())
Mine(Object())
Whose(Object())

Timing
Duration
Before
After
When()

Identity
Me
It
Who()

Spatial Relationships
Front
Behind
On
In
Between
Intersect
Speed
Where(Object())

Abstracts

Decision: If ... Then... Else

And

Or

Exclusive Or: Either ... or ...

Not

Memory

Push

Pop

The above primitives can be combined consistent with the following syntactical examples.

Object(A)

Object(A) In Container(B)

Object (A) Behind Object(B)

Trajectory(Object(A)) Intersects Container(B)

Its(Object(A))

Mine(Object(A))

Any salamander can handle the motor primitives.

In some lower creatures, the sensory primitives of sight do not include much shape information but merely shades of lightness and darkness and motion. However, most vertebrates perceive lines and shading sufficient to a judgement of convexity or concavity. If a perceived object is lightly shaded on its top, the eye (or its nerve or the visual cortex) judges the object convex on the first approximation and it registers with the brain as a solid object. If dark on the top, it registers as a hole. That this is so, and useful, is evident from counter-shading, which, among most vertebrates, is an effort to gain advantage in predator and prey circumstances by confusing the concave/convex judgement apparatus.

From these, the higher creatures may construct literals. A cup, for example, is concave or convex, as in *Where is the cup?* or *What is in the cup?*

Is a face a primitive? We can talk of the judgement of *face* as built out of convex and concave judgements or as a single unit. The creature is pragmatic and, if it survives the lesson, will develop an efficient path to the judgement. It is capable of changing its judgement on new data.

When the hare runs into the bushes, are they a container or a set of objects? The space between the harder, less penetrable elements of the bush, is the concavity containing the hare.

From salamanders to empires, higher order assemblages of data are sufficient to cognition and efficient to success if they address the quandary posed whenever the creature objectifies an object: Is it good to eat? Is it going to eat me? Has it already been eaten?

Formulae

From the point of view of the coyote, the hare's trajectory ought to be intercepted before it disappears into the brush. Assuming the coyote has learned from prior experience that hares are more difficult to catch in the brush, here is the coyote's logical process to keep the hare in play.

Trajectory(Object(Hare)) Intersects Container(Brush).

Forward/Left/Right between Container(Brush) and Object(Hare).

Metaphoric Extension

Humans extend the process of sensory-motor classification beyond the modes of physical survival into a wider domain of problem-solving. We use the survival-mode sets of associations to build new sets of objects and operations, sometimes related to but possibly independent of the physical world.

We create an additional class of objects, labels, which we associate with the sets and the elements within the sets. Language and symbolic processing follow.

Up is good.

*High is more.
More is better.
Down is bad.*

Kant's Categories and Cognition

Kant sought to discover how we know what we know.

Our judgements as to truth and falsehood can be modeled on survival-mode elements that are associated with real, physical entities.

Kant's categories include 4 classes and 3 moments per class. The first category in a class is that which is conditioned. The second is the condition. The third is the resultant of the first two.

Kant claimed that the categories provide a sufficient foundation for any science.

Modes of Truth Judgement

Problematic (Probability)

We can presume that coyotes maintain a probability distribution with respect to hares and areas.

Assertorical (Evidence)

The appeal to evidence is a primitive. To the coyote, any sensory evidence of a hare is sufficient to chase. And likewise with the hare.

Smell(Animal(Hare)) Or

See(Object(Hare)) Or

Hear(Sound(Hare))

Forward

Apodeictical (Necessity)

If the hare was seen entering the bush and the hare was not seen leaving the bush, then the hare is in the bush, even though the coyote cannot see or hear or smell the hare.

The proof by necessity proceeds from earlier statements based on probability and evidence.

Forward/Left/Right

Smell(Animal(Hare)) And

See(Object(Hare))

Quality of Judgement

True

The coyote discovers a hare.

False

The coyote does not discover a hare.

Infinite

The judgement of Infinite proceeds from judgements that do not reduce to a finite categorical judgement within the bounds of the predicate.

Some hares are not here.

Quantity

Universal

Every time the coyote visits this area it discovers a hare.

Forward Container(Area A)

See(Object(Hare)) Or

Smell(Hare)

Particular

Some times when the coyote visits this area, it discovers a hare.

Singular

Once when the coyote visited this area, it discovered a hare.

Relation

Categorical

There are four moods of categorical propositions.

Universal Affirmative

All hares are worthy of chase.

Universal Negative

No skunks are worthy of chase.

Particular Affirmative

Some deer are worthy of chase.

Particular Negative

Some deer are not worthy of chase.

Hypothetical

In survival mode, 'if' can be modeled as a decision point.

If Smell(Hare) Or

See(Object(Hare))

Then Forward

Else Smell() And See()

Disjunctive

This judgement involves at least two mutually exclusive predicates.

Either the hare is in the bush or the hare has escaped.

Propositional Calculus and Cognition

Syllogisms can be modeled consistently with the primitive language.

Inclusion Principle

The hare is in the bush.

The bush is in the gulch.

Therefore hare is in the gulch.

Object(A) is In Container(B).

Container(B) is In Container(C).

Therefore, Object(A) is In Container(C).

Qualification of the Mutually Exclusive

A syllogism begun with a disjunctive judgement:

Either the hare is in the bush or the hare has escaped.

The hare is not in the bush.

The hare has escaped.

Intelligence and Symbol

The coyote and hare relationship is for the coyote primarily one of immediate perception conditioned by memory of past experiences.

Presumably the coyote does not depend for its survival on the ability to symbolize the objects and containers, beyond memorizing a list of objects and responses that resulted in a meal. While some exceptional coyotes might have posited objects as a class in which they had a general interest, we can expect that little advantage was gained by the conception and in any case the advantage was not propagated throughout the species such that we heard about it.

In as much as coyotes have a language, their words refer to immediate objects.

How can a symbolic language evolve from the immediate language?

A symbolic language can incur an advantage. The ability to talk about objects and containers (and the other elements) divorced from immediate experience suggests the discussion of options, which suggests the improvement of the process of encountering the objects in the future. The ability suggests the evolution of technique, in that similar processes may be brought to bear on different classes of objects and containers. With symbolic processing, the creature can construct transforms of the experience-space that map into concept-space. Perhaps problems can be solved conceptually and then mapped back into experience. The mapping-back is an attempt to conciliate the concept with the actual event that is being conceptualized.

Humans do this as a matter of course. Much of the conversational advice passed around, one to another, is of the form "When you are trying to do _____, you always do ____ and so your attempt fails. Stop doing trying to do _____."

In this light, intelligence is defined as the ability to process concepts, such as the sensory-motor primitives, in memory and apply them to immediate experience.

Principles of Formal Validation

With symbolic language, we can extend our analysis of elements into the symbolic domain and process symbols as convenient substitutes for experience. Without symbolic language, we would exhaust our abilities by making each statement in terms of the content of the statement rather than its characteristic form.

Square of Opposites

The square of opposites formalizes the relationship between the four moods of categorical propositions into 6 cases.

Necessary:

1. If all S is P, then some S is P. (Universal Affirmative and Particular Affirmative)
2. If no S is P, then some S is not P. (Universal Negative and Particular Negative)

Invalid:

3. If some S is P then some S is Not P. (Particular Affirmative and Particular Negative)
4. If all S is P then some S is not P. (Universal Affirmative and Particular Negative)
5. If all S is P then no S is P. (Universal Affirmative and Universal Negative)
6. If no S is P then some S is P. (Universal Negative and Particular Affirmative)

Conversion

By interchanging the subject and predicate of a proposition, a new proposition is formed.

Necessary:

- If all S is P then some P is S. (Universal Affirmative by limitation)
If no S is P then no P is S. (Universal Negative)
If some S is P then some P is S. (Particular Affirmative)

If all S is P then no S is not P. The obverse of a categorical proposition is always true.

Invalid:

- If all S is P then all P is S.
If some S is not P then some P is not S.

Existential Fallacy

If the class of elements S is empty, the quality of the argument is undefined.

That the king of France has a hare can be neither true nor false if there is no king of France.

Mood and Figure of Syllogistic Propositions

When a syllogism is in standard form, it contains 3 categorical statements.

Each of the 3 statements has one of 4 moods.

Universal Affirmative (A)

Universal Negative (E)

Particular Affirmative (I)

Particular Negative (O)

The number of combinations of 4 moods over 3 statements is 64.

Each syllogism corresponds to one of 4 figures, depending on where the middle term occurs.

1st Figure	2 nd Figure	3 rd Figure	4th Figure
M cupola P	P cupola M	M cupola P	P cupola M
S cupola M	S cupola M	M cupola S	M cupola S
S cupola P	S cupola P	S cupola P	S cupola P

P is the predicate. S is the subject, cupola is the connecting verb (often 'is'), and M is the middle term. The qualifiers 'All', 'No', and 'Some' that could accompany any S, P, or M are omitted as they are included in the mood of the statement.

For example, in the case of a syllogism with all three statements Universal Affirmative and Figure 1 is always valid irrespective of its subject matter.

All M is P.

All S is M.

∴ All S is P.

The number of combinations of 4 moods over 3 statements over 4 figures is 256.

Irrespective of the elements of the syllogism, some of the mood-figure combinations are always invalid and some of them are always valid.

The systematic evaluation of all 256 formal cases is tedious even with a versatile symbolic language. Most humans can and do handle pieces of it and most could handle all of it if they could extend their memory with a writing system.

Quantification of Intelligence

We've seen how the creature with a rudimentary syntax for associating sensory-motor memories with current experience can lead to logical judgements that enhance the creature's survival. If we model the coyote as a structure containing elements and operations, some of the operations enhance the survivability of the structure.

If we define intelligence as the ability to relate past experience (sensory-motor memories) with present experience and the ability to act accordingly, we can easily see that the creature would be gratified by success. Intelligence is fun.

If we add another operation to this structure, we obtain another potential survival enhancement. Consider the operation of reflection on sensory-motor objects in memory. In the presence of symbolic processing, the possibility arises of logical judgements from virtual experience. In addition to sharing real experience, the creatures could relate their virtual experiences and their subsequent judgements to each other.

For example, when isolated from the heat of the chase, the coyotes might relate to one another what they regard as actions that typically lead to success and what actions to failure.

The creatures could break the habitual reactions and consider virtual alternatives that could be translated back into the real domain.

For example, coyotes might play the What-If game, surround a bush while another searches within the bush.

It is easy to suppose that the new operation might have an impact on the structure's survivability.

Reflection reinforces the coupling of some memory to sensory-motor elements.

Reflection adds to the mere sharing of the characteristics that coupled the elements to the class in the first place.

Additional coupling takes place within the organ that processes the symbols.

Errors notwithstanding, the structure acts autonomously in a virtual space in its own interest.

Memory, vocabulary, and syntax operate on metaphors originating in the sensory-motor system. Reflection permits the structure to enhance its survival.

Before attempting to measure the structure, the axes must be identified.

The axes are the memory characteristics (such as depth of stack), ability to acquire symbols (vocabulary), and the use of interchangeable symbols (logical syntax).

Quantitatively, one can measure the intelligence of one creature relative to another by its ability to acquire new symbols and to link the symbols syntactically. One can also measure the creature's ability to conciliate what it has learned with real-world experience.

For advanced creatures, the depth of penetration into the matrixes of logic noted above indicate another level of intelligence.

Consciousness

No definition of consciousness will survive attack nor should it have to.

If consciousness is defined, we can posit an evaluation of a creature's consciousness with respect to the definition.

If consciousness is indicated by self-awareness within the context extended above, we do not need to add a new element or process to the structure. The creature will be able to symbolize itself and reflect on that symbol, processing this symbol in a manner similar to other symbols. Thus consciousness, in this definition, extends intelligence.

The characteristics of an individual conscious creature can be evaluated by how well it can form and process new symbols that represent aspects of itself. How well can the creature integrate these self-symbols with the other symbols and the logical processes? For example, can the creature consider its own destruction?

Syntax can be extended into the complex transformation of narration. When representing a real experience, the transformation involves gratuitously excerpting some features of the experience, labeling the features with symbols, which is often a narration itself, and linking all the symbols together into a sequential statement with purportedly some surviving correspondence with the actual event. Of course, the narration cannot be the same as the actual event.

The creature may even construct fictions, lies, philosophical systems, and other fantasies offered as something besides a representation of actuality.

The ability to excerpt and narrate can be measured as an extension of symbol-processing, a lengthening of that characteristic vector.

The creature that only remembers the present experience cannot conciliate because there is no prior experience to compare with immediate experience. Thus conciliation requires memorized excerpts from prior experience to be compared with immediate experience.

Analysis of rudimentary categorical judgements (AIEO) seems possible when the creature can compare memory with actual experience, which is intelligence.

Narration, however, cannot be accomplished without the excerpts being associated with symbols, a metaphorical process.

Some fictions, such as lies, can not be accomplished without a concept of the Self.

The creature that is self-symbolized is conscious, if not mendacious.

Syntactical Capability →

	Conciliation	AIEO	Narration	Fiction
Immediate Exp	No	No	No	No
Experience Excerpted	Intelligence	Intelligence	No	No
Experience Symbolized	Intelligence	Intelligence	Intelligence	Intelligence
Self Symbolized	Consciousness	Consciousness	Consciousness	Consciousness

Symbolic Capability ↓

Characteristics of Consciousness

Additional axes may be posited. For example, Spatialization is the ability to remember events as collections of events that happen in the same spatial reference, one influencing another. Spatialization is important for Narration, especially when positing cause-and-effect relationships. Narration of time-sequence events depends on metaphoring time into a spatial reference.

However, Spatialization may also be thought of as a syntactical element and can be in fact intimate with logic, especially when logic is expressed in class-and-subclass statements. Thus Spatialization and Syntax are not orthogonal.

25 Kinds of Foolishness

If you're lucky, your precious pretensions to knowledge will be ridiculed with misunderstandings propagated joyfully within the convention of the deliberately ignorant.

The less than lucky won't be noticed at all.

Here are some of the fallacies commonly encountered while threading through the maddening crowd.

First Conditions

The salient conditions of a statement seriously uttered are that it be true, controversial, and important. If all conditions are met, the statement has a strong beginning. If not, find something better to do.

Strategic Issues

Humility

Unless you want to focus attention on your personality, avoid arrogance. Admit that you know nothing and few will argue.

Merely posing as a student invites all sorts of parades of the bearers of glorified ideas, battalions of preachers strutting their uniforms. In a modest style, assert that you are the biggest of fools and are looking for a bigger one. Interview the candidate.

Philosophy is not the love of oneself.

Love is only as great as its sacrifice.

Virtue

When justifying his self-indulgence and pressing you for validation, eagerly fail to see his point.

It is easy to show that it is in the interest of the self-interested person to publicly advocate virtue. Without virtue, there is little mutual interest.

Persistence

Remind the wit of his original proposition. Don't abandon the quest until it has been completely examined.

Don't offer a second argument without resolving the first. After a few honest questions, your opponent will be desperate to change the subject. Your failure to cooperate will often result in the abdication of one whose depth of argument plunges to no more than an amusing statement or two.

Those that survive might be worth some time.

Practical Rhetoric

That the art of effective speaking and writing ought to be in service to the love of wisdom is true from the very fact of the publicity involved. Mindless sarcasm is fine for situation comedies, designed to entertain the nodding masses between commercials, but analysis of statement and synthesis of reply is a better line of work. Take the higher road.

To achieve an immediate rhetorical advantage, live off your opponent's ideas. Question his belief. Put his statements into your own words, asking him to clear up your confusion. Put his thoughts at center and his self-congratulations will give you some time. Most people love to talk about themselves and what they think they know. A man who won't be moved by a convincing argument might be tempted to destruction by vanity. Ask him where he got his idea. Ask him to explain himself.

Don't expect him to hold forth on you and your glories. That subject does not interest anyone. Avoid inviting him into your ideas and don't expect mercy if you do. Claim to know nothing except what you have heard and don't take that seriously.

Don't present your conclusions before your proof. He shouldn't see the scaffold until his head is securely in the noose.

Avoid discussing what you believe unless you have completely worked out your case or are willing to gamble with your reputation.

Blunt his point by getting him to admit to something.

Work on reputation, yours and his. Sharpen your point with logic and drive it with sarcasm.

Sentimentality

Commonly, we legitimate statements based on how we feel. That the truth of a proposition depends on how we feel about it leads to constellations of foolishness.

For example, you'll hear that one should vote one's sentiments. If you feel glad or impressed or happy about a candidate, vote for him. That he's got a good smile, or friends with good smiles, or a nice family, or an amusing dog, is sufficient to a landslide. The minute he stops smiling and his friends and his dogs no longer cute, reject him.

If sentiment were sufficient to action, after being informed of a condemned man's crimes, I should throw the switch myself. When learning of his upbringing, I might petition the governor for a pardon. Upon hearing the victim's surviving sister's tale, lead a mob to the jail and save the state some trouble.

Reason is an island on the sea of sentiment.

Definitions

Arguing over definitions is failing to converse. Ask the speechifier to define his terms, accept his definitions, and argue from them. Crave his definitions. If the definition leads to true statements, celebrate. Then prove that he disagrees with himself.

Don't attempt to argue backward to a definition. The almighty Knower will likely choose a disagreeable usage and then you'll be fighting over the meaning of words. Posit your statements carefully and precisely and argue forward. Claim progress when the argument leads your opponent where he does not want to go and he retreats to amend his definitions. Start again. Claim victory when he has retreated full circle.

If your opponent is not confident of his words, provide superior definitions.

Formal Language

Human languages are informal. Most words are used without regard to definition. A single word can be used in several ways.

Formal languages, such as plane geometry or symbolic logic or computer languages, are composed of words and statements that refer to objects that have one explicit meaning.

Discussion most often flops around a tangle of usages.

The benefits of formalizing your language can be astonishing.

Epistemology

Never mention the term, since that might create a distracting turbulence of ignorance, but maintain your theory of knowledge.

View a statement as a proposition about which a judgment can be made.

Judge a proposition true if it is derived from things that we know to be true, or because it is both possible and probable, or because you have seen actual evidence that it is true.

Is it always true?

Hypothetically true? Although any hypothetical statement can be countered with a least one other hypothetical statement, offer hypothetical counterexamples just to see if he knows this.

A proposition is not true merely because it makes you happy nor false if it makes you sad.

A proposition is not true just because someone says that everybody knows it. Wouldn't the world have lain flat before Columbus and then rolled into a ball on his return to Spain?

A proposition is not true simply because a quoted authority claims it true. If you've read the authority, sincerely ask your opponent about what you didn't understand about the author. Examine his replies for self-consistency, correspondence with what you know, and relevance to the argument. If you have not read the author, ask him to explain what he has learned and, by persistent cross-examination, ascertain whether he has really gotten anything from his reading or if he has just read the raving reviews on the cover to wallpaper his reputation.

A proposition is not true because someone is a recognized authority on something else. A surgeon is not necessarily useful as an engineer and neither is a therapist a mechanic. Expertise in one subject is not immediately transferable to another. Your opponent won't allow this to prevent him from dispensing nutritional and political advice and becoming offended when not respected for it. Fail to take him seriously.

A proposition is not false merely because it raises a laugh. Ridicule is a foil for those who cannot be troubled to reason. Ridicule is an activity of the person doing the ridiculing, not necessarily a property of the proposition being ridiculed.

If a point is obvious, it is easy to prove.

Knowledge is a relationship between the knower and what is known. There can be no knowledge without something to be known and someone to know it. Atheism can not be a form of knowledge because it has no object to know.

Avoid puffing yourself up with knowledge obtained from nowhere. There is no shortage of empty-headed lecturers determined to teach.

Assaulting an Induction

If your opponent infers a conclusion from an example, blunt the induction by asking if it's perfect or imperfect. A perfect induction is true in all possible cases. Examine his rules of evidence.

Look for counterexamples, consider the null solution, divide the universal into particulars, and break them down into pieces. Reassemble them in a better way. Attack the evidence.

Statements about human systems, politics for example, always contain exceptions and so can be judged problematically true.

Be ready to be an exception.

Be agile in the continuum between the general and the particular. Pick a direction contrary to your opponent's. Look to his replies as a measure of his strength.

Sophistry

Some of the foolish have learned to level the mighty charge of sophistry whenever they encounter an argument they do not understand.

Literally, the sophists were paid professionals who educated the students of Athens.

The erists argued from of a sense of pride.

The heurists argued for a glimpse of the truth.

Polar Argumentation

Sedated by the vast and featureless platitudes that pass for modern culture, your self-appointed pontiff might be amazed to find another point of view disturbing his lethargy. By reflex, he might attribute this to the enemy.

If he is polite, accept his mood as an invitation to discuss the matter and express the extremes of the proposition as two poles of a legitimate argument. Take either one. If he rejects one of the extremes, show that he or someone he admires occupies that extreme.

If you can prove an extreme, then the vast ocean of intermediate propositions are also true and entire battalions of ideas will fall into rank. If I am the tallest person in the world, then I am taller than you. In stretching your imagination and exercising your interpretive skills, it's possible to glimpse the significant when considering the range of possibilities.

Uncertainty

Argue for certainty. While words float near reality without actually touching it, dare to approach closely the abyss of ignorance. Invite pride in existence, primitive definition, and examine these phenomena for as long as they bear the weight.

Experience

There is no shortage of opportunities for philosophical debate, no lack of prideful advocates of slogans, puffed up, arrogant, and claiming profound and special knowledge as if they had actually thought about it. There is no level of foolishness without its annual parade.

Engage in conversation, taking either side or both, adding wile and guile to your library of ready ideas. Philosophy is a dynamic relationship. To fail to advocate disagreeable or unpopular positions produces a decadent state of the art, a soporific craft, panels of empty heads nodding complacently over their rubber stamps.

External References

Even in the unlikely event of him having read a page or two in an effort to justify a preconception before giving up and switching to the daily funnies, references will carry little weight with your opponent. Saying that "Kant says..." or "Leibnitz proved..." will be regarded with frowning suspicion by the ignorant and hostility by the slightly educated.

Quotations are abbreviations used by people who have done their homework. Argue explicitly on principle. Never drop the name of a philosopher or scientist or of anyone not present. Avoid mentioning what your opponent said yesterday. Modern man lives in the moment and is not responsible to the past or the future, even his own.

Always be alert for the educated person. If you suspect that he has reflected on a book or two, quickly determine if he has read *The Critique of Pure Reason* at least twice. If not, sigh and suppose that the entire *Platonic Dialogues* or Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* or Heidegger's *Being and Time* are acceptable introductions.

If your opponent has done his homework, you are in a lot of trouble. You might learn something.

If you are not reading these books, admit, to yourself at least, that you are one of them.

Theological Techniques

There was a time when the revolutionary argued atheistic propositions. Now atheism is solidly fashionable, which is sufficient reason to argue the contrary. Become familiar with Anselm's ontological proof and its principal refutations.

Find out if the atheist believes in astrology, crystal gazing, or acupuncture. If so, ask him to speculate on the physical cause-and-effect relationship between the position of Jupiter and the current price of IBM stock. Ask him why he isn't rich. Keep a straight face for as long as you can. A high degree of self-control will impress those actually paying attention.

Inflict one or two simple proofs of the existence of god from Aquinas or Anselm on atheists and agnostics who appear to have thought about their beliefs.

The occasional theist is probably shy, having been blamed for the Inquisition. Determine if he is a member of an organized religion. If he is of one of the middle-class Protestant churches, ask him to distinguish between the Presbyterians and the Methodists or between the Lutherans and the Episcopalians. Estimate his shrug to determine if you should continue.

Fundamentalists can be interesting. Yearn for discussion with a Jesuit. They read books.

Question self-proclaimed authorities on the history of their church, on how it bears the experience of mankind, and on how they see themselves as a force. Discover their relationship with God. Ask them why they would have their gods searching through the vast rubble of the universe for biological forms who invented the Mandelbrot set.

Conservative and Liberal

Intellectually, the middle-aged are likely to be living off an idea they discovered, more or less originally, twenty or thirty years ago. Everything has changed except the words. There is a list of good and bad ideas. We all have the list.

Wear a spiked collar, arguments researched and rehearsed, armed with sarcasm and prepared to use it. The Sage will claim that America is a Let-a-Thousand-Flowers-Bloom type of country. He will extol tolerance while tolerating only his own ideas.

A new generation is idealistic and eternally committed. By thirty, it gives over to cynicism, hedonism, or sullen failure before sinking, briefly mourned or not, into the abyss of actual space and time. Today, the 60's counter-culture is preempted by those attempting to sell again and again a fading trace of nostalgia while the older, established culture of military, corporations, and colonialism thrives unimpeded.

The insipid tendency of culture toward the bourgeois crushes the spirit. Everything has changed except the way we think, which presents an opportunity to those who have the will to do so.

Attributive and Essential

The essence of a thing pours out from its being. Its attributes are painted onto the outside by critics. Attributes are unnecessary to essence.

That an argument is true or false or great or ridiculous is attributed by an observer.

If the characteristic can be withdrawn without changing the object, that characteristic is attributive. Gold, for example, has the attribute of value and the essence of a certain number of protons in the nucleus of its atoms. If the price of gold drops, gold continues to be gold. If a proton is removed from a gold atom, it ceases to be gold. Peel away the attributes of your opponent's argument to see if his ideas have anything at all independent of what he says about them. Statements that survive such trimmings might have value.

Fallacies arise when someone confuses a label, which is always an attribute, for the thing it labels. One common class of wits dismisses entire classes of ideas without actually examining any of them. For example, that Christian Science cannot be both science and Christian (and is neither) is just a joke that provides an excuse from real thought. You will recognize these profoundest of teachers by their uncanny ability to derive entire systems of knowledge merely by reflecting on the label. They need only read the title of the book to know everything about it.

Cultivate their company and pray fervently that some of their intelligence is contagious.

Hedonistic Intellectualism

Many of those who would know acquire facts without their connective passions, growing muscular at first but eventually obese with information and failing to use the energy, saving the calories for the great work that never comes. Encapsulation heals the wound that should not heal. We should never cease to feel the pain.

Happiness is the luxury of those who think they have no problems, only dispensable mysteries, dismissed dispassionately.

Existence effuses fountain like from the singularity of the individual.

Personality

In discussion, the master debater argues, more or less convincingly, to support his vanity, which is nothing more substantial than his own reputation of himself.

Because the origin of speech and idea is often unconscious, exposure of his personality will often halt your opponent, stealing his energy, deflating his blimp, and forcing a bit of sullen humility on the otherwise vainglorious and impudent actor behind the mask.

Of course, the personality need not be modeled as a single entity. The ghost in the machine may gratuitously present a customized mask for each situation and thus exhibit a vulnerable and irreconcilable inconsistency.

In rare instances, the character might know he is an actor, lying in wait behind his disguise.

The Clown

The buffoon is convinced of his own wit. He provides his own laugh track. He will not take anyone else's ideas seriously. Ridicule is his weapon of choice. He might even ridicule himself in a generous gesture of modesty or, more cleverly, to remove the focus from himself.

The Brute

The Brute admires force and the cunning way it cuts to the very heart of the matter. The basis for his humor is someone's suffering, generally some one else's, but sometimes himself in a gesture of modesty and good humor.

The Philosopher

The Wise Man seeks to bolster his reputation as the very pope of the moment. He craves being seen as a builder of intellectual bridges that enable the transport of ideas.

He is easily distinguished from the heurist in that he always charges a toll.

To assess his sincerity, ask him to provide you with an assessment of himself.

The Encyclopedist

The Know It All is a walking, talking repository of facts and will add detail and corrections to anything said. Having the last word in matters of fact is his greatest need.

There is probably at least one topic upon which you have more information. He will wait impatiently silent, waiting nervously for the opportunity to construct a tangent on your statement that leads to his area of expertise.

The Moralist

The moralist righteously aspires to the high ground, either by making the climb himself and turning to accept modestly the applause of the adoring audience, or by deprecating others and thus making him appear the better.

The Pragmatist

The Savvy Pragmatist claims to cut to the very core of the matter by presenting the practical solution. HE might be a materialist. Always point out to the materialist that materialism is just another idea and therefore, for the materialist, does not exist.

The Others

Similarly the heedful student will discover and unmask the Purist, the Innocent, the Martyr, the Athlete, the Ladies' Man, the Stoic, and the Epicurean. Each personality imposes a direction and point on its bearer that can

be recognized. They are simultaneously a great weakness, in their rejection of logical freedom, and the very basis for individual action, in their impulse to display and discuss.

Continuous and Discrete

A somewhat clever but fallacious attack is sometimes made when one attempts to excise a detail from its larger matrix. For example, if one premises an argument, citing a period of history as evidence, the opponent might make the claim that there are no periods of history, that periods of history are fictions, that time is continuous and has no intrinsic divisions, that one day fades seamlessly into another and all statements to the contrary are fallacious. Even the sun comes up gradually, not all at once, and so there is no actual beginning to the day.

This is true enough as it stands. Not just time but space and meaning and just about everything else that can be referred to in particular is connected to every other particular.

But as a particular attack levied on your particular argument, it is very partial. It really applies to everything, including arguments that your opponent cherishes.

Without conventions of division and classification, traditional or invented for the moment, speech becomes impossible.

Your opponent probably does not believe his own argument.

That Might Makes Right

The statement that Might Makes Right contains what appears to be a logical syllogism but on examination is not formally logical at all.

The truly mighty could just as well say "Might makes wrong and what are you going to do about it?" Both statements appeal *ad hominem* to the conquered or the would-be conqueror. It is a physical threat.

The truly mighty do not need philosophical justification.

Of the well-informed, only the less than mighty would try to increase support with this tactic.

Since it can not be true, the statement can only be rhetorical.

Suppose that formal logic is really a subset of all possible logical systems. Thus a statement may be issued as a logical primitive, as the foundation of a new logic. A new system of logic with its own unique set of operators then could be posited.

This is advanced work and should not be attempted by beginners *ex post facto* to justify brutality.

Myths of Scientism

Unless you are a scientist or an advanced student of the sciences or work with scientists, avoid attacking science. It is a holy profession and will not be profaned by the casual critic without risking vehement charges of heresy, capital sentences, and summary execution.

Avoid thinking you are a scientist if you are an engineer or a programmer or a doctor. Scientists employ scientific methods to do fundamental research and discover new principles of physics or medicine or other fields. Technologists merely apply those principles to marketing opportunities.

Scientism is that conventional collection of myths that include terminology from physics or psychology or biology and consequently whose veracity is accepted without question by the laity because they superstitiously fear certain words or they feel the need to appear wise or wish to benefit from being on the winning team.

There is never a shortage of cheerleaders for the conventional wisdom.

Many arguments embellished with scientific terms proceed from an understanding of science that is nowhere to be found. Ask the profound Knower to explain the relationship between the scientific method and knowledge.

Ask him to identify and define the antithesis of Science. Determine if he treats scientists as priests.

A myth is a belief commonly held by a culture that provides intellectual support for behavior, that can be shown to be formally false, and that is stubbornly defended. The holders of Scientism are utterly devoted to their gods.

If religion is a set of rituals mnemonic to the rote learning of cosmological, political, and moral code, lay science is the religion of our time.

Here follows some of the fallacies of Scientism.

That the Universe is Understandable

Despite evolving on a little rock circling an average star in one of billions of galaxies 15 billion years after the universe began, some animals tardily assert that the cosmic immensity and complexity must have been designed in such a way as to be understandable by them.

The elder priests of each generation of these animals solemnly assert that they have finally reached the very summit of knowledge.

The next generation always teaches them otherwise.

That Science Describes the Universe

Mathematics and science are languages used to construct self-consistent models. Some models appear to have reliable correspondence with observed phenomena. Some folks equate high degrees of reliability with certainty.

Scientific models can't correspond exactly to what we actually see in the world because the models are not the things themselves. For example, the mathematics of triangles can enable us to solve classes of problems in ballistics despite the fact that no one has ever seen a triangle, which is composed of lines and points, and no one ever will. You cannot see a point. There is no empirical evidence that they exist at all.

Scientific models can't correspond exactly to what we actually see in the world because the models are events in the brain, which operates on a network of electrical pulse trains. The universe does not look like that.

Inasmuch as a science is a description of a system of particles, science has an impossibly huge task to describe complex systems of particles extended in time and detail. The number of possible influences that each particle has on all other particles creates an enormous mathematical system of equations.

In general, scientists have neither the time nor the money to describe the universe.

That People are Predictable

Human systems include, as particles, not only the human individuals themselves and their motions and the physical objects that they wish to manipulate but also the ideas that each individual person has.

In addition to the physical degrees of freedom of space, time, temperature, pressure, and humidity, we must add psychic space to the system. Economics, for example, is driven by advertising, which is composed of lies and gross exaggerations. Systems of ideas have a variable number of degrees of freedom. Their contributions make human systems unpredictable.

That Science Leads to Certainty

Scientific methods can be used to design, run, and interpret experimentation. Many steps are problematic. Scientific theories are models whose components are the results of the interpretation of experiments. Theories evolve. Some are rejected. Most are modified and many are discarded. When someone stops doubting, models become dogmatic.

Critical philosophers hungrily feed on dogmatism.

While theories, as survivors of professional scientific processes, might have a high degree of correspondence with phenomena and enjoy a high degree of confidence among their advocates, they remain independent mental constructs that ought to be subjected to doubt, improvement, or rejection in the light of new argument and evidence. None equal their referent.

That the Idea of Science Prevents its Corruption

If the idea of Jesus could not protect Christians from the horrors of the medieval Inquisition and the modern molestation of children by priests, all in the name of Jesus or at least under the shelter of his minions, how can the idea of science protect science against falsehood, error, and fraud?

The answer is simple. Both institutions are composed of people, who work for results, not the truth, who strive for rewards, accolades, prestige, reputation, honoraria, and a convenient place in the pantheon of power, rather than knowledge that transcends the petty struggle.

The answer is even simpler: It is not about coming up with a better idea than science or religion (and then we'll be free!) because all ideas are constituted by people in their time and reconstituted by a later people in their time. Even if we use the same words to name them and the same ideas to explain them, we mutate the ideas to suit our convenience. The selfless revolutionaries of today are tomorrow's tyrants.

Myth of the Objective Observer

And above all, as criticism and its obstacle, is the implicit, personal assumption that the observer is objective, an impartial, uninvolved human being with a desire to see the truth and armed with perception and interpretation. He envisions himself against a background of physics, from which he admits no physical escape, but holds that his observations are in no way dependent.

By asking the right questions, one is accused of attacking science. But the right question more than merely attacks the sacrosanct conclusions of science, which form one aspect of its surface, but, much more insidiously, attacks the scientific personality, a being constituted as objective, perceptive, independent, intelligent, discriminating, truth-seeking, in short, in possession of every virtue required for sainthood, if not omniscience.

Scientists, in general, can be expected to be objective about their particular object of study. It is part of their discipline.

But the scientific study connects to more than the intellect and the set of sensory instruments. The study constructions the potentially omniscient being connected to institutions, funding, political bodies, reputation, colleagues, products-for-sale, market place, pride, envy, greed, lust and, in short, every temptation paving the way to the Hell of ignorance and ignominy.

And of course, unwelcome criticism, inasmuch as it is fundamentally effective, can conveniently be dismissed as evil, stupid, and insane. The appropriate degree of dismissal (ridicule, shunning, or burning at the stake) is limited only by the political power of those issuing the dismissal.

Soft Science

Any chemist can independently arrive at a description of oxygen that is consistent with every other description of oxygen.

But demographers (as well as economists, sociologists, anthropologists, and many other researchers) bring to their science their own set of 'atoms'. Since the atoms are individually defined, the results will differ. This is because there is no genetic (derivable) autochthonous basis for the definition of entities such as race, gender, supply, demand, price, labor, ethnicity, good, bad, and many others.

Of course we may suppose that the researchers might universalize their definitions but that takes time. Someone must concoct the definitions, a board must debate and approve them and then they must be propagated throughout the research community throughout time and against, in some cases, the vested wishes of existing research conclusions. We can imagine this happening but it is just as easy to imagine it breaking down when there is no genetic basis for definition.

Holes in Science

The following topics from science and mathematics deny the proposition that science can do anything it chooses.

Increasing the number of degrees of freedom in a system exponentially increases the number of operations that must be performed. It is possible to construct a problem that cannot be solved within the lifetime of the universe with the fastest possible computer.

Inevitable errors in the measurement of initial conditions become significant over time. This is an actual problem in astronomy whereby the position of the planets cannot be predicted for more than a few thousand years.

The incompleteness and inconsistency of logical systems as complex as arithmetic means that contradictions and unjustifiable truths nest in our juxtaposed set of logical systems, including mathematics, all the sciences, all languages, and human and computer logic.

Heisenberg's uncertainty principle states that the velocity and position of an electron can not be known accurately deny's LaPlace's boast that if he knew the velocity and position of every particle in the universe he could predict the future.

That Science = Progress

There is plenty of evidence that science, along with history, art, bricklaying, and all of the forms of knowledge that accumulate fact and systems of facts are progressive. Improved techniques tend to be remembered in such forms.

But no forms of knowledge are upheld by necessarily good people. Bricklayers want to lay bricks and artists wish to paint pictures.

Just as bricklayers can be hired to build the crematoria, scientists are eager to hire on to projects of mass destruction. If a nation wants the bomb or biological weapons, there will be no shortage of career-minded technologists to design the systems. The scientific community is, on the whole, utterly without social conscience.

A Scientific Definition of Science

What is Science? Can we construct a scientific definition of science?

Is science the diligent observation and interpretation of the experiences of scientists? Generally, we cant assess their experiences by reading their publications, formal and informal.

Fortunately, there are tens of thousands of scientific journals published each year. Who has read all of those? Who has done a diligent observation and interpretation of these publications?

What about all the laboratory notes of scientists? Lectures and lecture notes? Interviews and speaking engagements?

Isn't much of scientific research directed toward an economic outcome? Is that a pure search for truth? Don't scientists have to fund their research? Do the funders have anything at all to say about the direction, content, emphasis, and conclusions of scientists? Isn't the funding a part of science, being necessary to it?

What about the facilities, instrumentation, and communication that are required for successful science?

Is the proportion of topics under investigation somewhat related to the proportion of education devoted to those topics?

Is there really such a unity as science? Or are we really talking about an amorphous, heterogeneous collection of personalities, experiences, inputs and outputs, sites and promotions, conferences, disputes, logical and mathematical derivations that cannot possibly be organized in the degree of ideality that we expect from a math or a science? Even if we restrict science to a smaller field, the science of chemistry, say, we will experience the same set of difficulties in making conclusions. We are left only with the possibility of revealing the individual facts or a chain of diligently arrived at positivities of some science.

Abstractions above the level of scientific facts and their relations cannot constitute a science.

Dysnomia

Resolved: That a society can purify itself by law, that by passing the appropriate laws and adopting proper institutions of judgment and enforcement, a society can eliminate all crime, poverty, and disease.

If law is a system of logic as complex as arithmetic, then the proposition is suspect, according to Godel, since no such system of logic can be both complete and consistent.

How do we know that those who write the laws are themselves law-abiding, even before the laws that they are supposed to obey are even written?

For example, if the succinct body of laws were:

1. All sin is punished by death.
2. All humans are declared sinners from birth.

Eliminate all humans and sin will be eliminated perfectly.

How can anyone say whether the society is lawful when no one exists?

Can we guarantee that the last human would kill himself without the enforcement deemed necessary to the system?

We will have a perfect society but will that society be the society we originally desired?

Who will write the laws and what will be their criteria? Do we know the criteria? When enforced, will any set of laws, a particular set, or a single set of laws satisfy the requirements?

How do we know that the lawmakers will act properly in the face of a conflict of interest?

How much will implementation cost? Will we be able to do business under such a system? Will we have enough court and police personnel? How will we make the transition from lawlessness to lawfulness?

How do we account for the many differences between and within cultures? Should there be a planet-wide system of law?

In the matter of enforcement, how do we know that the enforcers are law-abiding and not yielding to conflicts of interest? Lawmakers and law enforcers will have much power. How do we know that their weaknesses will not corrupt them over time? How will we deal with the cruelty that appears on all levels of society from the lowest peasant to the highest office, from the powerless to the powerful? How can we guarantee that all activities will be monitored for legality? How can we be sure that the logic will be propagated to every corner of humanity? How will we deal with mass protests and civil disobedience against the implementation of the system?

How do animals figure into the system?

Do we think that society might change and the laws become obsolete? If so, how do we know that future law-makers and enforcers will be law abiding in the face of profound changes in themselves? It suggests that the process of writing and enforcing law must be continuous and adaptive and neither absolute nor unchanging.

How do we know that the current system, in all its diversity, is not the only way it can be? How do we know that the demand for such a system is not already just one more component of the current actual system?

Premodern, Modern, and Post-Modern

Some early generations insisted on only one path to reality. There was only one god and one way to worship that god. You remained in your parent's class. Sons were bound to the trade of the father. Daughters were sold into marriage. Monarchy was the form of government.

This bothered the man about to be modern. He observed many claims to the only true path. Folks in other countries or other times had other beliefs and did well. Even at home, some doubted. Some successfully changed their minds and their class, encouraging others.

The modern man concluded that there were many paths to reality, which was a great relief to some and a disaster to others. You have a right to your own opinion. Seize the power to express it.

Then there was the twentieth century. Uncoupled from the universal monad, folks did what they wanted. Cities were burned again. World wars were numbered. The survivors defined right and wrong. Ways were found to split the planet. We brushed aside the forest, the lion, and almost ourselves.

The post-modern thinks the world is in his mind. He thinks that the world is composed of symbols, memories, plans, and current expectations of the distant future, a pastiche of irreconcilables. The post-modern believes that being here and now is not a choice. Opinion is all we have. The post-modern believes only in paths.

The post-modern makes the modern man look like a solid conservative.

Knowledge and Intention

Humans are much given to discussion, some of it fact-based, especially in the workplace when focused on the work at hand and especially when evidence can be brought to bear on its facticity. Even in advertising and politics and news and fiction and poetry, where the facts are not in the content but in the effectivity of the delivery of the content, ones job depends on veracity, measured in dollars.

In more leisurely discussions, the incessant geopolitical debate among the politically impotent reinforces the member's position within a click. The individual may jockey for a position in the click somewhere in the spectrum of compliance to independence. The position reinforces its holder's imagined reputation within the click. Facts are mere props, true when useful, and discarded when not. The truth is not the objective of leisurely debate. Using whatever seems handy, one merely persists towards the goal of membership and reputation.

Compliant individuals can become agents of their click, accruing evidence of their compliance by deriding the political enemy as stupid, insane, or evil. The click does not require us to confront anyone outside of our click but merely identify the enemy. In as much as there is a knowledge war, it is within the click. It is not about defeating the enemy but about membership. To fail to deride the common enemy is to arouse suspicion.

Independent individuals run the risk of ejection from the click, often taking positions on the fringe. Some occupy that position with smug self-satisfaction.

The individual can be a member of many clicks, on the fringe of some and at center in others, some of which overlap others, and some of which have irreconcilable differences with others. The individual wears the appropriate mask for the click and, consciously or not, identifies the appropriate enemy.

Some, especially the young, may rebel and join another click. Not all clicks are closed. Some adopt new members without closely examining credentials.

One can imagine membership in an extended click, which can include a province or a nation or an empire of people one never actually meets. The supposed alliance is tenuous.

The art of the politician lies in issuing positions vague enough to appeal to a wide array of self-images of individuals within their imputed membership in extended clicks.

One might argue that the purpose of the leisurely debate is fluency. But why would you want to be fluent? Isn't fluency an attribute of reputation? Isn't fluency a requirement of agency?

It is not about what you know but who you think you are.

Tangential Rhetoric

If you are for him, add examples that exemplify his idea, improvising ancillary benefits. Match them with examples having the same velocity. Create positive spin-off.

If against, add exceptions that steal energy, that slow the argument to a vulnerable, stumbling slog through odd questions.

Or pave the way smoothly toward self-destruction.

Tribal Impulses in Urban Society

Modern mankind is a tribal animal living in multi-tribal cities. Civilization breeds discontent. Arising from anger inappropriate to expression, stress is an essential property of urban life.

In part, a society defines itself by identifying its enemies. The tribal enemy is evil and stupid and insane while friends are good, intelligent, and well adjusted.

Much of what is taken for reasoned argument is a mindless sequence of slogans designed to identify virtual tribes.

A society without external enemies tends to division.

The philosopher who recognizes these vital facts might successfully navigate this dangerous social terrain.

The Psychological Attack

In today's highly educated urbane society, simpler vulgarities are disdained in favor of more elevated methods of putting oneself above an opponent. The *ad hominem* attack, formerly aimed at ones parentage, gender, or physical disabilities, now targets ones childhood and supposed psychological disabilities, as though the attacker actually had done university-level research, or studied under some great healer. Advocate an unpopular idea, and the diagnostic frown will doubtless appear.

Ascertain the medical experience of the doctor. Immediately assign a high value to free medical advice, even from the rankest of amateurs.

Read Eric Erikson's *Childhood and Society* and you will more than master the vocabulary of most of your self-appointed medical advisors.

In any case, the modern metric for therapeutic cure is operability. If you can drag yourself to work, you are sane.

That Weariness is Sufficient to Falsehood

It can be heard that we are weary of certain ideas.

Perhaps we tire easily because of deficiencies in nutrition or in the atrophy of the organs of justification. Perhaps we would benefit from training, some roadwork, or a clinic in agility.

We might issue the judgement of weariness because we have seen the idea many too many times. It is simply no longer in fashion.

We might be tired of swimming. We'll just drown.

Ship of Fools

The apparently superior man posits his enemy as a collection of fools and then suffers them poorly. From his auspicious height, he pretends to separate himself from the rest of the crew, post-rationalizing his loftiness with logic and wit, teasing a titter from the bored and idling mob.

When the ship sinks, we all are in the water.

Irreversible Processes

It's completely common to assume that because one pretends to know how we got here, we will always know how to get back.

It's possible to become so exhausted in digging a hole as to be too poor in resources to dig oneself out.

This is akin to the proposition that because all crows are birds, then all birds must be crows.

Fallacies of Relationship

Your interlocutor must not be allowed to suppose that you are here to make sense for him, to amuse him, to please him politically, to provide him with works of great beauty, or otherwise to flatter his vanity. Break that supposition early or suffer into the endless and insatiable labyrinth of another's desire. As soon as possible, resign as his student to be tested and his patient to be examined.

Truth as an End

Classically, philosophy has been about people seeking the basis of all knowledge, the fundamental meaning of life, or the absolute truth. Various solutions have been suggested. Ideals were thought to exist in a real sense someplace and every detail of reality was an imperfect instantiation of an ideal. Ideals were the absolute and men could understand them merely by reflection.

God was posited as the original cause: the being that made and wound the clock. God was the absolute.

Formal logic and eventually symbolic logic were posed as the means by which the absolute truth could be determined. The universe was thought absolutely logical.

Lately science has been advertised as the means to the absolute truth and the conclusions of science as the truths themselves.

In all these pursuits, it was supposed that the truth was something that could be found and that, once found, it could be kept.

Truth as a Means

Karl Marx was not the first to suggest that knowledge was not the end of philosophy but a means by which human consciousness evolved. In his opinion, any solution that philosophers discovered would be exceeded and the sooner the better.

At best, philosophical solutions provided a temporary tool by which society might be adjusted and that, once adjusted, society would discard that tool. The change in the process would make the old tool obsolete. It would be worthless, even a hindrance, in dealing with the change brought about by the solution it successfully provided for the earlier problem. He thought that philosophy, in his time, was burdened with archaic tools that did not serve the desperate pragmatic circumstances in which people found themselves.

Philosophy itself became useless, a bad habit, something some of the elite did while the populace starved. Philosophy's best course of action was to destroy itself.

Many post-moderns eagerly seized on this principle and have dispensed with all aspects of the truth that are not actually marketable. Apart from the ever-fainter cries of those who now must be called conservative because of their dedicated pursuit of the fundamental, in our time, the truth is only valuable if it is handy to the circumstance. Fashion is more important than philosophy.

The epistemology of fashion is a slippery subject. It contains multiple feedback and feed-forward loops. The effects of its predictions must be factored into the predictions. Some people are paid to teach their theories by those who listen. Most of those who really know are presumably too busy making money to comment. Some winners of big money are merely lucky.

Assiduously avoid mentioning Marx's name but read him and his fans carefully for their cunning insights into what's left of the mind of modern man.

Open Warfare

Generally, open warfare is to be avoided. Desperate opponents resort to any means of inflicting damage on each other and wisdom is an early casualty. However, nothing teaches like experience. Reject the temptations of fear and soldier on.

The Surgical Strike

The ability to maximize damage to the target and to minimize collateral damage is an elegant solution.

Incisive logic directed on a point is indispensable to accuracy. Avoid complicating or multiplying the issues.

Assess the strength of a long line of defense and attack at its weakest point. Hit him where he isn't.

Incendiary Devices

Incendiary devices are most useful in starting trouble but useless in stopping it. Use it to raise the temperature of cold discussion and to draw your opponent's fire, exposing his position. When he emerges, feel free to abandon the flame-thrower and choose a more precise weapon.

When everyone is flaming, everything can become very hot and there is much collateral damage.

Backfires are sometimes useful in containing a general fire but be wary of the wind.

Carpet Bombing

As quickly as you can, drop several issues, including logical conundra, obvious hearsay, personal attacks, and irrelevant compliments. The wounds that are not fatal must be attended to.

Repeat the process.

Keep a list of issues that he has addressed poorly and repeat them.

This technique can be used to change the subject.

Attacking Supply Lines

Your opponent is likely to be getting support from something else besides his own wit. Someone else at the table or some one he pretends to have read or a single idea that he uses to improvise his attacks supplies his conversation. What appears to be a fountain of wisdom can be turned off.

When the secret advisor is present, this gives the opportunity of an enfilade. You might construct a retort that passes through one and hits the one behind.

Gunnery Assistant

If someone fires on your enemy or if you would like to create a feeling of positive self-esteem in a speaker, feed the battery with ordinance.

Provide examples for his generalities and agreeable generalities for his examples. Lead your own assault on the enemy's flank. It is a test of speaker to handle simultaneous attacks.

Do not expect loyalty from the speaker. He probably took complete credit for the win and kept one or two of your ideas as his own.

Be sure to pass him something to which you have a reply.

War and Existence

The armchair warrior, comfortably insulated from the stench of death by his newspaper, his ignorance protected by those making the supreme and unrewarded sacrifice far away, craves the glory that does not appease his appetite. The heartiest meal of abstractions can be utterly unfulfilling.

The armchair anti-warrior is in a worse position. If he's American, he must repress the fact that his warrior ancestors conquered the New World, decimated the native populations, and robbed them of their land so that he can hold his opinion where he holds it. He speaks English, a language carried to England by Germans who got it from earlier invaders of Europe. Without war he would have nothing to say and no place to say it.

Anyone who has actually seen action, has smelled the poorly paid and uninformed soldier spent like a shell casing in the field, like the shredded foliage caught in the crossfire, fleeing families bearing their exhausted children and pitiful bedding for all to see while the general staff calmly views the casualty figures from a safe distance and the news-hungry public, continents away, rattling their invisible sabers or denouncing the stupid effort, shouting or whispering their wise pronouncements will likewise not welcome the reinstantiation of mankind's grossest unkindness.

I suppose that what is possibly acceptable for most people is that no more will be stolen. That everything we have now we can keep.

Recognizing Defeat

It's a rare person who admits himself in profound error, most preferring denial. If you observe any of the following behaviors, you may judge that your Teacher has abandoned his quest and wishes to pursue your education no further. It is uncertain who is defeated.

He makes an excuse to leave.

He persistently changes the subject.

He violates any of the first conditions.

He asserts that philosophy is not important.

He advises you to go away and read books.

He says that everyone has a right to his own opinion.

He repeats a loud and loose association of justifications for his proposition and then ends the discussion.

He threatens emotional breakdown or physical violence.

He wishes never to speak with you again.

Synthetic Argument

Only after many years of diligent effort spent on trivia should the student venture an opinion on a matter of importance. Offer your proposition, humbly placing it before the august panel of critics, begging a bit of time. Do not expect your views to be welcome.

If they are viciously attacked, assume that you are on to something important or absurd and press for resolution.

If your synthesis fails, embrace the criticism, arm yourself with rebuttal, gather momentum, and head once again into the wind.

If consistently unsuccessful, return to analysis.

Glossary

ad hominem Attacking the bearer of a statement rather than the statement. A method to change the subject.

Anastasia Resurrection.

Apocalypse The end of the world as we know it.

Apotheosis Raising a person or object to the level of a god. Deification. Extreme marketing. A state prior to being turned to stone and set in the weather as a perch for pigeons. Becoming god is equal to becoming nothing.

Being A conscious undifferentiated state of existence meaningless without something else.

Deconstruction An effort to discover the origins of an idea. Historical analysis.

Deduction An attempt to prove a statement by logic.

Encapsulation A technique for minimizing, maximizing, spinning, or preserving the impact of a new idea, object, or experience. In rhetoric, to classify an idea and give it a label. In subjective idealism, all external entities are encapsulated with words and become ideas insulated from the original object.

Epistemology The science of knowledge. How we know what we say we know.

Erist A vain person who is not paid to tell the truth but tells it anyway.

Existentialism Existence precedes the plan. A handy excuse for any behavior. Tribal existentialism: That one exists because one is a member of a group.

Ethics The science of personal action.

Fact A statement about physical things.

False A judgement of the quality of a statement. Similar to *True*.

Fetish An symbol that replaces the object that it symbolized.

Foundationalism The effort to derive all knowledge from a system of first principles. Philosophical fundamentalism.

Formal language Logic based on a set of well-defined terms. Informal languages, such as conversational English, rely on words that are defined by usage and context, extraneous gestures, inflection, volume, tone of voice, pretenses, threats, bribes, flattery, sarcasm, and anything else that tends to legitimate the statements or deprecate the alternatives.

Golgotha The Place of Skulls. Calvary.

Heurist Someone who is not paid to tell the truth but tells it anyway.

Induction An attempt to prove a general statement by evidence.

Judgement: A statement associating speech with action.

Knowledge A relationship between a person and an object.

Learning The appearance of new associations in the mind.

Legitimate An attempt to lend credence to what we say we know. We use history, epistemology, and consensus to legitimate our statements.

Liberal Someone very concerned about social issues and who wants someone else to do something about it. Conservative: An offended liberal.

Local With respect to knowledge, the inescapable conclusion that not everybody knows everything.

Logic A set of words and operations used to verify statements.

Metanarrative An over-arching story that serves to legitimate what we say we know. A premise of a culture.

Metaphysics The science of science.

Model An intellectual or physical system of statements.

Mythology A set of cultural fundamentals accepted uncritically from within and ridiculed from without. Other people's religion.

Narcissist: Anyone who does not worship me. Deity and flower.

Nothing

Objective Independent of idea or holder of the idea.

Ontology Judgement of truth springing from being.

Operable Being useful. Effective. Sane. Generally a complement.

Philosophy A set of tools for examining what we say we know. Comes with sample projects.

Politics The science of communal action. A set of feedback-driven success stories claiming to be the best way to sustain itself.

Postmodern A state of mind that is suspicious of metanarratives, foundations, and epistemology. Originally a term describing an architectural movement asserting the right to include classical and other out-of-fashion motifs into modern structures.

Progress The belief that things are getting irreversibly better. Always capitalized. Always sacred.

Realistic Incapable of delusion.

Rhetoric The art of effective speaking and writing. Unrelated to veracity.

Romantic Capable of delusion.

Science Shedding (of falsehoods).

Scientism A collection of truisms expressed in scientific terminology.

Sophist Someone who is paid to tell the truth.

Stasis Unable to change or move. Stagnation. Stability.

Symbol An object presented as representing another object.

Subjective Dependent on the beholder.

Subjectivism The set of concepts that put the individual in charge of what he knows.

Subjective Idealism An irrefutable set of concepts that holds that the universe reduces to idea.

Teleology Judgement of truth springing from purpose.

True A judgement of the quality of a statement. Similar to *False*.

Truth Any statement offered as verified or verifiable.

Acknowledgements

Some of the ideas and styles in this work can also be found in these books.

Archaeology of Knowledge Michel Foucault

Prisms Theodore Adorno

Critique of Pure Reason Immanuel Kant

Introduction to Logic Irving M. Copi

Logic Immanuel Kant

The Origin of Consciousness Julian Jaynes

Philosophy in the Flesh George Lakoff and Mark Johnson

Sirens of Titan Kurt Vonnegut

The Wish for Kings Lewis Lapham

I would to thank my dearest friends for their generous contributions to the article on *Foolishness*.

