

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

Message 75 11/13/99 7:52 AM
Subject: Re(3): getting someplace real fast
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

I just thought of another film (besides TV coverage of last week's NYC Marathon) in which people run very fetchingly, something I watched on video a few months ago: "The Seven Samurai". Maybe running was part of Samurai training, but everyone, even the older leader, and especially the kid, and the madman Toshiro Mifune, dashed very nicely, with quick, compact strides as they tried to be at the right place to repulse the bandit attack. (Distribution is key.)

While I'm on the subject, I remember when Kurosawa died, a commentator on NPR cited as an epitomic exemplum of the late director's the following exchange from the end of "7S":

young samurai: (running up to old one, breathlessly, sword in hand): The bandits??
older samurai: All dead!!
young samurai: (collapsing, as if about to throw up) Aieeeeeeee! Aieeeeeeee!!

A good choice. this sequence tersely conveys the release of tension at finally and suddenly achieving some all important but almost unattainable seeming goal -- an instant of disbelief giving way to elation and immediate doubt as one wonders "was this really right? and necessary? and worth it?" and perhaps even worse, "what will we do now?"

(cf. Gene Wilder to Cleavon Little at the end of "Blazing Saddles", "Gosh, you've killed the bad guy.")

so many movies end with the hero vanquishing evil, apparently forever, but it always comes back in the sequel (and even if one hates sequels, one must concede they teach this valuable lesson that victory, like meaning and everything else, is limited and temporary and contextual. ["The Terminator" sequel showed how the rules can always be changed in the middle of the game, which is where we always are, since the context can always be expanded and the game itself never ends.] Which doesn't mean it's not worth it to fight to secure some peace, say, for one's lifetime [though wouldn't one pray to live another noon?] Unless there really is an absolute, and getting it would be the final triumph, but then we're talking about God and I don't think "The Omega Code" is playing in Bayaria yet, but if and when it arrives, I'll probably see that along with "End of Days", though probably before.)

(This cuts both ways, too: when good is powerless in the face of unimaginable and overwhelming evil, as in the end of "Chinatown", hope still survives.)

While I was at it, I watched "The Magnificent Seven", which really couldn't compare, though Steve McQueen was terrific in a show with everything, even Yul Brynner, and no last names (or if so, as Ordell Robie would say, no Christian names) . "Where you headed?" "Drifting south. And you?" "Just drifting." It was interesting the way they combined the kid and the madman/farmer's son characters and brought in Robert Conrad's nerveless dandy. And the idea of the

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7 stupidly being forced to surrender and leave, then come back, was innovative as well. But then, none of the deaths of the gunfighters seemed to be as well motivated as in "7S", more like a sudden realization in the last five minutes that hey, even those these guys are the heroes and up and coming or name actors, we've gotta kill some of them off. The whole film, as an analogy of incipient US "advisory" involvement in a little country in Southeast Asia of which no one had yet heard much, especially the "adoption" by the kids of one of the gunfighting squad, makes an interesting comparison to "The Green Berets". Anyone know if any of the same people worked on the two pictures, or to what degree they were actually suggested or encouraged from within the government for political purposes? nessie?

Knowing that even when I've written down everything about every movie, there will still be more to write, and that I'll never quiet all my demons and rest in the eternal present, but having decided arbitrarily to battle a few, for a while,

Eddy

Message 74 11/13/99 2:44 PM
Subject: Re: getting someplace real fast
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Eva Luna writes:

hey there Deep Eddy, have you got some personal issues against spoiler warnings?

oops. In contrast to earlier posts, I thought I was speaking vaguely enough (or perhaps ambiguously enough -- is there a difference?) that no warning would be required, but you're the law in this town. I'll hand in my shootin' irons to the Marshall same as everyone else.

SPILLING OF BEANS AND SPOILING OF ENDING AHEAD:

Deep Eddy writes:

The really strange thing was that I was glad for the happy ending.

I just realized, though, that what was unexpected was not that the film ended happily by somewhat supernatural means, but that this happened without the intervention of Peter Falk, Bruno Ganz, or Nastassja Kinski. The latter I'd especially have liked to see show up.

Far away, but so close,

Eddy

Message 72 11/14/99 9:09 AM
Subject: Re(2): getting...someplace...really...slowly
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

I don't think there are any SPOILERS aboard, but others might find them, qui

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igitur caveant.

sirin writes:

unless we're in roman occupied judea, and HDS is playing saul (he still woulda made a better jesus than dafoe, tho).

I actually rather liked the casting of "Last Temptation" (as an eschatologist, I collect movies that have "last" in the title in the sense of "ultimate", though from my practice of endurance sports I like the other meaning as well.) Well, in general. Barbara Hershey's tattoos were way ahead of the fashion curve. David Bowie's Pilate was bomber (as has previously been discussed or disgust here.) But Dafoe was the weak keystone copout. Larraine Newman and Gilda Radner would certainly not have thought him the cutest Jesus they ever saw (though he was a good Jesus-figure in "Platoon", carrying his machine gun over his shoulders like a cross. Are metaphors better than literality?) But I would not really have a nominee in this category, especially since I cut my own hair over two years ago (I looked like Jesus, so they said. But Mr. Jesus was very far away; I guess I'm the only one who can tell if it's true.) Does the new "Dogma" have a Jesus character? Eric Stoltz might be good, not so much because he looks like the Europeanized Savior of Western art and kitsch (I definitely prefer my Kings of the Jews dark and Semitic for ease of identification), but for his expression of beatific calm.

And yes, I liked Stanton as Saul, though Tarsus-Schmarsus, he was Paul already. The zealot just switched causes. He showed that in the Mideast as in the West, when the legend becomes history, print the legend.

Just another thought on "The Straight Story" (and in flat Iowa, the roads really are straight): I kept expecting him to ride into some town that happened to be holding a parade and to have him join is as in "Easy Rider". (Don't some Shriners ride mowers in such parades, or am I just thinking of something Dave Barry claimed he wasn't making up?) Now that I think of it, can anyone who has seen that lately draw any parallels or find any references to Billy and Captain America's trip? Well, analogies can always be stretched. As must legs. So I'll be running, and go silent.

Eddy

Message 69 11/14/99 9:15 AM
Subject: Re(3): Hackman Alert!!
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Steve Omlid writes:
Seriously, how was it?

I think that the Sheriff who so effectively kept the peace of Big Whiskey and the Moderator of film would have had many stories and much mutual advice to share!

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Eddy (learned his lesson from English Bob)

Message 68 11/14/99 9:26 AM
Subject: Re(2): Dogma
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

was "Dogma" a DOGME film?

which parts of New Jersey did they show? (as a Garden Stater, admire Kevin Smith for that we have so much more along with aliens named John than just gangsters.)

Did Silent Bob finally speak, as in "Clerks"? As orange shows best on gray, the way to make something stand out in film is to define it as impossible. Hence the drama of Ken Howard's Thomas Jefferson speaking out for independence, or Secretary Thomson's showing emotion, in "1776", or Marcel Marceau's uttering the only line in Mel Brooks' "Silent Movie", or Peter Sellers' Dr. Strangelove rising from his wheelchair. There's something end-of-the-worldish about such reversals, as if, as in the "Far Side" cartoon with the fishermen and the mushroom clouds in the background, all the rules are now off, all the asymptotes have touched the axes.

Not repenting, though the end of GOL is nigh...

Eddy

> 65
Message 65 11/15/99 6:51 AM
Subject: Re(4): getting...someplace...really...slowly
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

sirin writes:
and keitel? aye,

don't you mean "aie"? "aye" generally shows agreement -- a typo?

he was ridiculous. and yet, there was an undeniable suspense between him and dafoe, along with an homoerotic twinkle. judas' inner battle was as a result far more compelling than that of jesus'. judas, the perfect fighting man,

I thought that was the Comedian.

following around a guy who wants to put an end to fighting.

It's been a long time since I've seen this film, and you're generally right about these things, so I'll just agree with you totally in your interpretation -- of the film. (The accents, by the way, did not really bother me. Jesus and his droogs were working class types, from Galilee, which was the stix. Only Judas was from a city in more cosmopolitan Judaea.) But let's go back, as

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Steve Omlid would say, to the base story. Well, no. I really can't support the (literally) unorthodox view I'm about to present with anything in any Gospel (including the Gnostics, which I haven't read) but I haven't found anything to contradict it either; it's never seemed that the New Testament is favorite literature here, but if anyone wants to take a look and verify or disprove me (though in the latter case I would fall back on nessesisms like "Consider the source" and claim the Fab Four of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John could not be called objective.) But here, from nowhere except the perverse depths of my emotional seat, is my idea:

Jesus may have something special about him, but not about Him. He's not the Son of God, he's just a guy with an insight and a message. But he very quickly realizes that people don't pay a lot of attention to message alone, and pure faith is not enough; they want physical demonstrations. So the carpenter's son learns a few sleight of hand tricks, and remembers some practical medicine he learned in Egypt, and pretty soon he's performing MIRACLES, Hallelujah! and people are paying attention to what he's saying! Or so he thinks. Really, as Martin Scorsese's character says in "Quiz Show", they're watching the money, or the food, the wine, the free health care. And things get out of control pretty quickly. Pretty soon, this guy who wants people to stop worrying about who is ruling them and start worrying about being nice people is being hailed not only as a religious figure, but as a political one, as a temporal king who is supposed to chuck out the Romans with a wave of his hand. By the time of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, they're ready for rebellion. This simple Galilean has gotten carried away with the adoration -- wouldn't you? He thinks people are really paying attention to his call for a return to virtue and a concentration on things of the spirit, not the world. Wrongo. He finally realizes what's happening. He knows that if the Jews rebel, they will be crushed and suffer horribly not only at the hands and spears of the Romans, not known for their tolerance of insurrections, but at each others' hands, since plenty of Jews had discovered the advantages of the Pax Romana (you know, stability, aqueducts, education, sewers, it's safe to walk the streets at night, roads, baths). The result will be that the last thinkg on which people will be focusing will be treating each other nicely, as he has been preaching, and in fact, everything he stood for will become smeared, and with blood. He realizes there is only one way to show that you really believe in a cause, and that is to die for it, especially painfully. (Think of the self-immolating Buddhist monks in Vietnam.) The rebellion won't happen without its leader, and they'll pay attention again to his message. So he decides that he has to be executed by the Romans. He **needs** to be handed over. When he says, "One of you shall betray me", he's not making a statement. He's giving a command. He's asking for volunteers. Why Judas? He was the favorite. He was the outsider, the City Boy; the Galileans stuck together. Or maybe, with his more sophisticated background, only he could appreciate the subtleties of the Rabbi's plan.

Unfortunately, no one else did.

What's this about Christian (!?) Bale playing Jesus? He's a bit angular for it, wouldn't you say?

Also, does anyone know anything about either of these films I saw advertised in my Sunday Times (including if or when they will be heading this way): "Where's Marlowe?", starring Miguel Ferrer, son of Jose, of "Twin Peaks" and "Robocop", and "Last Night", which I guess is about the world coming to an end -- sounds like a certain Ray Bradbury story -- and should provide ample metaphors for the impending demise of this place?

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Rising and singing and Apocalypsinking,

Eddy

> 64

Message 64 11/15/99 7:10 AM
Subject: Re: Fwd: altcity (I tried it!)
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL?

Kelsey Gadoo writes:

*My browser (yes, I'm on AOL) repeatedly returned to a "cookie failure" page. I don't even know if I have cookies or the ability to turn them on and off. I *have* used other pages that are able to "remember" me when I return, so I would guess that my cookies are doing fine on other websites, yes?*

So if I can't access the site, then clearly, I won't be able to bring my sparkling wit and fine personality to the site.

So much for seeing me over at altcity, you guys.

Hmm. I had no trouble accessing the site and sending mail from it using AOL 4.0 on a five or six year old 486 PC. But this machine, which I got for free, I use only for online stuff, so I don't care so much if it gets full of cookies. (Got milk?) I guess even these could be dangerous but thinking about it would make me go crazy. Maybe if this were a nicer machine on which I kept my whole life, I'd worry more. But let's face it, a lot of people know a lot of things about me; maybe that explains some of the weird things what don't quite go right in my life, but for most of those there seem to be less paranoid reasons. I could go to the other extreme and not only refuse all cookies, but sweep my apartment for bugs daily, like Harry Caul or nessie. I simply don't feel, realistically, that I'm important enough that anyone would (or find it worth their while) target me. Or maybe I've already created a complete false identity (second social security number too!) which I keep completely secure and which is all anyone could learn about, or into which I could retreat if my real identity were compromised. Well, that's my strategy, I'm sharing it, like Ed Pankau, Houston P.I. and author of "How to Hide Your Assets and Disappear" (www.hideyourassets.com) if it works for you, you're welcome to it.

In deep cover, or in too deep,

Eddy

> 63

Message 63 11/15/99 7:13 AM
Subject: the disadvantages of equal status
From: Deep Eddy
To: politics

something fascinating on the radio Sunday morning: parents suing schools to prevent the reading of Harry Potter books to children, on the grounds that since the books glorify witches and witchcraft, which (yes, that spelling) is demanding and receiving recognition as a religion, for public school teachers to share the books with the class amounts to state-support of one faith over

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another. (Imagine the objections if a class were obliged to listen book about a young woman's path to nunhood!) Some might call this a Catch-22, but I think itt's neat the way the analog universe regulates itself, that you can't have the advantages of something without the downside, that there is no free lunch.

Man, I love this universe. if only it weren't part of my destiny to bring it to an end.

> 62

Message 62 11/15/99 7:14 AM
Subject: Re: What does it mean
From: Deep Eddy
To: the dream pit

Kelsey Gadoo writes:

Sometimes I feel as though different pieces of myself exist in these separate parallel universes.

"A Chinaman of the T'ang Dynasty -- and, by which definition, a philosopher - - dreamed he was a butterfly, and from that moment he was never quite sure that he was not a butterfly dreaming it was a Chinese philosopher. Envy him; in his two-fold security." -- Tom Stoppard, "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead", Act II, about five pages in

Message 58 11/15/99 10:57 PM
Subject: Re(6): getting...someplace...really...slowly
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

reading sirin's gospel truths, I realize it's a good thing I didn't try to cite scripture for my purpose. I regret my blasphemy, and acknowledge, that like Charlie the Big Bopper, you don't have to work with no blasphemers. but everyone, I think, is entitled to see Jesus as whatever type, color, or gender he or she likes. there's a bit more to mine, but that revelation will is not yet ready to be read.

sirin writes:

your comments, however, do invoke an interesting comparison between the plight of the jews under the romans and the plight of the jews under the egyptians. after all, in those earlier times, the jews spent basically 40 years in the wilderness bitching about the superior material conditions they abandoned in order to follow mo' and his bro. jesus didn't want a reprise of that. on the contrary, it was his job to behave as unmosaically as possible, so as to signal a conclusive break with the traditions of the OT, and the beginning of something entirely new.

this is true. moses didn't mind the blood, because he didn't really have a message. he had 'instructions.' one might speculate that if god had initially sent jesus instead of moses, the jews would still be in egypt to this day...

as I write this, I am listening to a reprise of this morning's "Forum" program on KQED, which is devoted to Moses. Some interesting views. Moses the giver of the law, Jesus in a sort of ambiguous position to it, claiming that not one

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jot nor tittle (checked that three times for typos) would pass from it, yet shifting his emphasis away from it.

to justify this post, let me say that i saw 'dogma' last night, the ending of which revealed to me (spoiler) that it is mathematically impossible for god to exist within the boundaries of his own creation.

why should God be bound by mathematics, or by our puny, contextual logic? I would have little use for such a God. what point to a God we can understand completely?the whole point of religion is to be irrational, to be mysterious, to make an emotional appeal to faith, not an intellectual appeal to reason. as far as I'm concerned, if there is a God, he or she or it is perfectly capable of making a stone so heavy hOsOi can't lift it. God is not bound by Godel, only mass and energy and space and time and information are.

According to some Jewish lore, in order to create the material universe, God had to withdraw Himself (this tradition assigns gender) from it a little; since God is absolute unity, the variation we see could not exist if He were fully there. Pull my finger and I'll tell you all about my informational theology.

staying up all night wondering if there really is a Dog,

Eddy

> 57

Message 57 11/15/99 11:01 PM
Subject: new SAG President
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

the new President of the Screen Actors Guild (in the illustrious tradtion of Ronald Reagan, Ed Asner, and Charlton Heston, among others) is William Daniels, whom, despite his many roles in films such as "The Graduate" and TV shows like "St. Elsewhere" I will never be able to see as anyone but John Adams, "obnoxious and disliked", railing against his fellow Continental Congressmen's resistance to American independence in the musical "1776". Give 'em hell, Bill!

> 56

Message 56 11/15/99 11:04 PM
Subject: Re(2): the disadvantages of equa
From: Deep Eddy
To: politics

jon harmon writes:

Please say more about your role in ending the universe.

We all increase its overall entropy with every action. some just try harder than others to give that little extra push.

"I've seen mountains, compared to which these mountains are valleys!"
("Through the Looking Glass")

Eddy

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> 46

Message 46 11/16/99 7:18 PM
Subject: What Inspires Buchanan
From: Deep Eddy
To: film
 politics

I was thinking today how the title of Pat Buchanan's book, "A Republic, not an Empire", has curious associations coming out only months after the blockbuster "Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace", which deals with the transformation of one of the named political systems into the other. Do you think Pat was trying to capitalize on ideas that pop culture had put in people's minds? Does he mention jedi virtues in his book? Or was he simply inspired by the Lucasian worldview? Buchanan was in the Reagan Administration -- does anyone know if he had any particular involvement in that Hollywood-oriented regime's own borrowings from the Skywalker Saga, the "Evil Empire" speech, or the "Star Wars" Strategic Defense Initiative?

There are always connections. Our job is to trace the connections and reveal them...and everything has a cause. Except of course James Dean.

My creed is decreed,

Eddy

Message 42 11/16/99 9:08 PM
Subject: Re(2): Introduction
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL?

Kelsey Gadoo writes:

Or will there be some sort of selectivity to determine which conferences/hosts will get a chance?

Survival of the fittest, perhaps? E-volution? Virtual selection? Darwindows 2000?

Message 41 11/16/99 9:25 PM
Subject: Re(9): getting...someplace...really...slowly
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Keela Merrin writes:

*sirin writes:
in order to save humanity, god sacrificed something even dearer than his son
-- his credibility.*

Brilliant line.

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I disagree. Any god worth a damn (or a blessing) has no need of credibility -- if you really are the supreme being, if the universe is simply your thoughts (rather than you being the universe's thoughts) what need have you to be believed in? You're the friggin' SUPREME BEING! You don't have to talk about it; you're doing it! The whole beauty of being God is that you can do WHATEVER you like!

I've also observed that many who come to reject their church want dearly to keep Christ. He remains charismatic and compelling to people, even after they've left the fold.

I think a lot of people invent their own versions of God or Jesus or other things they "believe" in -- political and social stands, and feelings, included -- just so that they can continue to say that they believe, which there is a lot of social pressure to do (which gets internalized.) People want to believe, so that they can feel "like everyone us", and have a common platform for communication with the rest of society. (Also, they are taking Pascal's bet -- on the off chance there really is a God they want to be able to tell HIM or HER as well that they believed.) Because to a great extent belief in some sort of divinity is still the norm, the default, or people would not even ask the question.

Those aren't the rules I play by, but isn't that called blasphemy?

I'm glad, because it's been a blast for me as well.

Eddy's bit is a popular secularization of Jesus, though -- an attempt to explain him without any mystic froo frah, to preserve him historically in some way that removes the necessity of believing in him.

Actually, it was more of an idea for a screenplay. But then, ideas must come from somewhere, so no one makes up anything that does not have some roots in his psychology and which he does not believe at least to some extent. But then, everyone does everything at least to some extent.

I'm not trying to throw any stones, here, I'm just pointing things out.

By all means throw stones, especially if I take the secret name of God in vein humorous; if I'm living in a glass house, I'll find out quickly enough (or put on my helmet.)

And I can't think of a more appropriate title for this thread.

but we are getting someplace? but will we get there, or just approach asymptotically?

Message 40 11/16/99 10:04 PM
Subject: Re(8): getting...someplace...really...slowly
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

sirin writes:
misspoke.

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I'm loving this Rorschach-like omission/implication of the first-person singular pronoun! Hrrrrm!

meant to say 'mystically' -- not 'mathematically.' the paradoxes spawned by god's incursion into history are legion.

possibly. but it's only because life is so full of paradoxes and incomprehensibilities that people believe in God in the first place. it's a matter of distribution, of where you want your paradoxes. neither alternative is actually simpler. (paging Tim Walters! white courtesy telephone for discussion of Occam's razor!)

if only they could be cast out into pigs and herded happily off the cliff at the edge of the omniverse. on the other hand, it might be argued that a paradox is a small price to pay when countless human souls are at stake.

there is no such thing as total consistency. it depends on the way you organize the information. remember the "Star Trek" episode with the two guys with the half-black, half-white faces? well, that was how the Enterprise crew saw them -- to them, it was a matter of life and death which side was which; to them, they had nothing in common, any more than we might say a purebred white South African would have with one whose ancestors were all black. We tend to classify all people who are attracted to their own gender together, rather than putting lesbians and straight males in a folder labelled "gynephiles" , with another, separate one, "androphiles", for gay males and heterosexual women. this is even though describing "people who love people of the same gender" seems more subtle and complicated -- taking a derivative, an information reducing statistic -- than just saying which gender you like. you can always find commonalities or patterns at a higher or lower level. this is what the government is doing when it announces that though the trade deficit is up, the rate of increase slowed (or the rate of the rate of increase, or whatever...) so we can celebrate and wall street can go up another thousand points. if the idea of god seems contradictory to you, maybe it's just contradicting your own ideas. including that things must be logical. I mean, I love logic as much as anyone. I'm obsessed with causes and effects. but that's just an emotional choice, a matter of faith. there may not be any causes or any effects. in which case, i don't have much to talk about. but then, would that be the worst thing in the world?

eto budyet poslednii i reshitelnyi boi....but boy, could I be wrong, if nothing ever ends, Adrian...

bleakly and Blakely,

Eddy

Message 36 11/17/99 11:56 PM
Subject: Re(11): getting...someplace...really...slowly
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

sirin writes:

talking about different kinds of gods, here. i'm talking about the christian-judaic god. the OT god pandered to the tribe's desire to propagate itself. in this way, god becomes answerable to humanity, and thus credibility

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becomes an issue.

ultimately, though, it is the 'deliverables' that render any visible god visible. and as soon as there are deliverables, there is credibility. god might avoid the credibility problem by offering no deliverables, but then he would remain unperceived.

I think that you are confusing the needs of God Him or Herself with the needs of those who base their power on religion, whether an actual priestly caste or a sort of Moral Majority. These people need to make God credible to the masses so that they will keep obeying the priests as His or Her representatives, bringing sacrifices, etc. But an omnipotent God could just, with a thought, make everyone believe in Him or Her. If you see God as the creation of the priests, I can understand your position. I imagine you are not much of a fan of clerical rule and I can't say that I am either. But whether there is a God or not has very little to do with what the priests say, since after all, all the priests say different things and they can't all be right, but some of them could be (well, an omnipotent God could be all things to all people.)

perhaps it is because i live in such a cosmopolitan zone, but i do not see the social pressure you refer to. nor, looking around, can i discover any indication that belief constitutes primarily a 'platform for communication with the rest of society.' this conversation is itself an anomaly, and a majority of the participants, i daresay, atheists, or at least non-church-goers.

every society or subset thereof has gods -- whatever its members hold to be absolute and not subject to question, whatever they base all other reasoning on. In your case, the gods would seem to be certain literary and artistic standards and works. You try to bring yourself into line with the rest of your society by acknowledging its standards as "good", promoting them (even when you don't personally like what they endorse) and begging pardon for deviations from them as "guilty pleasures".

also, i think people are much less cunning than you make them out to be.

it could be that I've spent too much time among fellow linguists. but the sort of "cunning" pondering (and punning quandaring) I described is not the sort of thing of which we're really conscious, and in fact, I'll leave it up to you to prove that, or how, we are conscious of anything in particular.

is this your 'informational theology'? i don't recall pulling your finger.

no, I haven't opened the seventh book yet. but I wasn't pulling your leg either. pull my leg, if you like; it's a moderately fast one.

this is the whole point, exposing one live wire to another, for the pretty sparks.

so are you endorsing argument for its own sake, rather than as a path to truth (which, if already established, precludes the need for argument?)

i would be surprised if you thought otherwise, given the vehemence that you have in the past brought to the conversation-deadening 'everyone-has-a-right-to-their-own-opinion' argument.

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

I think that the argument that really deadens conversation is the one that goes "I'm absolutely and universally right, and you're absolutely and universally wrong." there's not a lot to talk about from there.

I think that the (or at least a main) difference between us is that you are sure of lots of individual, specific things, and I'm only sure of one thing: that you can't be sure of anything else (and sometimes I'm not so sure even of that.)

I actually admire, even envy, your confidence, your ability to draw the arbitrary lines between true and false, good and bad, right and wrong, necessary and not, and to feel comfortable doing it. I often wish I could do the same, and share in the absolute values of some group (or have my individual ones) rather than feeling all truth, beauty, morality, and necessity contextual and contingent, believing only in the broadest and most general statements about knowledge or in those so specific and provable as to be tautological, redundant, informationless. As berenger, the last non-pachydermal holdout in Ionesco's "Rhinoceros" puts it, "Maybe it's really they who are beautiful...."

And I admire the way you defend your views, to a point. Because that's as far as you can. No matter how many proud generations back a noble may trace his line, it ultimately starts with someone carving out some turf with sweat and blood; Napoleon had no problem maintaining that his nobility began with him. It's certainly more interesting to be able to explain one's artistic tastes in terms of smaller units rather than immediately claiming they're "non disputandae". But no matter how far back you can trace the causes, you will always come down to something you just like or think good. You can explain this with evolutionary psychology, "I like this because our ancestors hunting and gathering on the savannah found it useful for survival", or the personal kind, "I don't like this because I first experienced it while falling out of my crib at age 2". Or you can appeal to some absolute, some inscrutable "it just is" that stops all further inquiry like an IRQ/3. But that's basically God. It's all a matter of your assumptions which your codebaters are not bound to grant, but which once they've been granted lead inevitably, mechanically, to your answer with no surprises or excitement. (Even the rules of logic, of argument itself, must be agreed to; see Lewis Carroll's dialogue "Two-Part Invention".)

I don't like to ask this since if the real answer is yes, the given answer will be no (just as if the real answer were no), but I'll speculate. (it's one of those things like nuclear deterrence; the superpowers could never admit even for a moment that they might NOT use their multimegaton arsenals.) I believe -- well, even less surely than most things, though-- it was Searle who, in order to escape the philosophical trap of whether statements about non-existent things could be judged true or false, posited that every statement about something asserts its existence as well. I could imagine as well that implied in every proposition you present as fact is the statement "this is how I perceive it", whether you're saying that the sun is yellow or that Nabokov is the greatest writer of the century. It just saves a layer of quote marks. But then, you could not admit this -- and why bother, when it's obvious? In 1984, I participated in a model UN, representing Singapore, trying to convince the Vietnamese to withdraw from Cambodia; the "Vietnamese" representative, who was from Texas, I think, played his part well and with relish, repeating just the right rhetoric as he rejected any recommendation of

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

retreat. Suddenly, though, he stepped out of character, telling me about how the Vietnamese seemed actually to believe what he was spouting, incredible as it seemed. if you really, really believe what you say, and really can't see how any intelligent person could think otherwise, then you are lucky, as your gut instincts and intellectual processes show unusual synchrony, when in so many people they are often in opposition. however, if this were the case, then you should not experience the doublethinkful dichotomy of "what I like" and "what is good". I find it preferable to think, "some people think this, but I think differently, but this does not put me under and obligation to try to bring my views into tune with theirs", though I can't always manage this (see above), and to let everyone assume that if I say something, say, about McCarthyism, I really believe it, but don't expect anyone else to necessarily. this is no less of a doublethink, depending on how the information is organized; how can something be true for me and not universally so? it's like believing that your own god will take you to heaven but that others' totally different gods will do the same for them, a concept which was fairly prevalent in the world until the Jews decided their god was the one and only.

which brings us full circle, and to a good place to stop.

Message 34 11/18/99 12:05 AM
Subject: Re(10): getting...someplace...really...slowly

From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Keela Merrin writes:
Deep Eddy writes:
eto budyet poslednii i reshitelnyi boi

Explain this now.

Are you pulling my finger? It's not informational theology, yet; it's just the chorus of the "Informationale".

Sure, I see the expression of doubt as travel. In fact, I'll soon be unveiling a complete line of doubt-propelled transportation devices.

This sounds like a weapon from "mystery men".

But if you think that it's you who is planting the seeds of doubt in my redoubt, check your readout; you're a little late, a wag tailing this dogged dogface. I don't see how I could be more dubious about doing, being, and us.

Staying up all night wondering if there really is a Dog,

Eddy

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

Message 31 11/18/99 6:34 AM
Subject: Re: Well, what about "The Well"?
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL?

or has anyone mentioned Salon magazine's Table Talk?

Many, many conferences/threads, people from all over the galaxy.

Message 30 11/18/99 8:47 AM
Subject: just out of interest..
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL?

and not necessarily on principle....if a person were minded to keep a version of GOL (say, with the major conferences still running but the moribund ones deleted, and maybe no internet email..) going, what would he or she need? could one set up a server of sorts with a used machine, tack on a few modems, have an internet connection for most users to TCP/IP into?

can anyone give a ballpark figure as to what one would have to buy, where it could be bought, at what price?

idly speculating,

Eddy

Message 23 11/18/99 9:59 PM
Subject: Harris as Jackson?
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Pollack, that is. I've heard that Ed Harris, a native of Tenafly, New Jersey and generally the coolest actor around, will be playing the Abstract Expressionist (did I get that right, art lovers?) and maybe even directing the film. Can anyone confirm, deny, give status of the project?

Message 20 11/18/99 10:38 PM
Subject: Re(10): getting...someplace...really...slowly
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Tim Walters writes:

Alvy explains that he can't be bothered with schoolwork because the universe is expanding and will one day be extinguished forever.

One can only hope ... but if this happened it would probably just turn out thar our universe really is just part of something larger.

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*His mother says, "You live in Brooklyn! Brooklyn is *not* expanding!"*

Jonathan Lethem and They Might Be Giants might disagree.

It seems to me that your situation resembles Alvy's. You've been captivated by the undeniable fallibility of knowledge. I acknowledge this fallibility--who could not?--but still find that some assumptions are preferable to others, by virtue of their fruitfulness.

so -- utilitarianism. Truth and goodness are what's useful?

It's all very well to doubt an accepted axiom, but it remains the responsibility of the doubter to demonstrate that the alternative is equally interesting.

so -- the more people believe something, the more reason that I should accept it as true?

Even though we must build on sand, it is still better to build.

Doesn't that depend on what you are building? Say, hospitals as opposed to concentration camps and nuclear plants?

It seems as if what you define as fruitful is awfully dependent on circumstances that could be changing even as we perceive them, and that's even if we perceive them properly.

Message 18 11/18/99 10:38 PM
Subject: Re(13): getting...someplace...really...slowly
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

sirin writes:

no. look -- one of the beauties of the bible is that it asks you to take it at its word. this i have done, and am merely measuring it against itself.

are you saying it's not consistent? how do you know you are using the right criteria to judge? maybe you need to use more subtle and complex ones than you are willing to. the most crooked graph can be made into a straight line by adjusting the grid. (ever used log paper?) the bible -- it's consistently biblical, as I'm consistently terrible, and you always like the movies you like, which can only be described and predicted, when it comes down to it, by knowing everything about you. again, tautology -- or total randomness. if you say the bible doesn't make sense, I could say the same about any slice of history you might choose, and prove it as well as you could prove your point.

you are, as tim said, so 'captivated by the undeniable fallibility of knowledge' that you have taken to projecting the opposite upon others. for heaven's sake stop rushing about so much, or you'll never get anywhere. two years and you haven't changed a jot.

and if I had, you'd argue that I was flip-flopping. change means difference, and difference in a matter of which criteria you use and the ground you use

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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for comparison. take a long enough view and there is no change. have you changed? if so, why did you need to? were you wrong in the first place?

and if by "rushing around", you mean, asking why, I'm only doing the same thing to you that you have been doing to others for so long, demanding that they justify what they are content to call their tastes. or are you starting to have trouble doing this?

And why would I necessarily want to get anywhere? It might be a lot worse than here, and I wouldn't know until I got there.

Let's go then! says one hobo. (They stand immobile.)

Message 17 11/18/99 10:44 PM
Subject: Re(11): getting...someplace...really...slowly
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Steve Omlid writes:
Philistine.

If you're using this as an insult, it's rather offensive to West Bank and Gaza Arabs.

Message 12 11/19/99 8:18 PM
Subject: Re(12): getting...someplace...really...slowly
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Tim Walters writes:
You know perfectly well that I said nothing of the kind.

How would I know this? How would you know I know this if your next statement is true?

The whole point of my statement was to distinguish truth (which is unknowable) from fruitfulness (which is not).

Wait -- honestly, how do you define fruitfulness except as "leading to truth"? if truth is unknowable, how can you know whether something leads there or not?

You know perfectly well that I said nothing of the kind.

see above.

What I'm saying is that if denying an accepted axiom leads to fruitful results, ala Lobachevski (hoi!), then there's a reason to deny it.

but how do you know if it leads to fruitful results until you try it? and if it works, how do you know that it did not work only in that particular situation? this morning my driver in the casual carpool asked me if I thought that cutting through Emeryville on a street would be faster than taking the

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freeway. Since I had no way of knowing what the freeway was like that particular morning until we took it (and then, conditions on the freeway would be affected by our presence there, since we would be part of traffic too), I just said, "It's your car. Try it if you like!"

since nothing can be said about a universe controlled by such a god except that it's indefinitely arbitrary.

Can anything really be said surely about this universe (assuming it's not controlled by such a god?) There are laws of physics that seem to have worked up until now, but there is a first time for everything (remember, Newtonian mechanics seemed to work until Michelson and Morley. The sun has risen, and for that matter, so have you, every morning as long as you can remember, but there will come a day when neither of you will.) rules only work until they don't work; but by the time we realize they don't work [or how they actually work by factoring in the new evidence] it's too late to apply them to the situation because it's past.

as I've pointed out so many times, in the end, every thing about our lives is arbitrary UNLESS we postulate some absolute which is what God would be.

The postulate could be wrong, of course, but we have absolutely nothing to lose.

We have lots to lose. All the time spent trying to come up with rules for how things work without god, if really there are no such rules and we need to just live from moment to moment, accepting whatever the inscrutable one sends us.

Because, unless you want to postulate some sort of extrasensory or hyperspatial perception (which you might) we can't process information faster than the universe does (see John Barrow, "Impossibilities"), we can't predict anything for sure. The better we simulate something, the closer to real-time our simulation will have to run; to simulate it 100% we have to do the thing itself, which is what we were trying to avoid by a simulation. Like the professor in Lewis Carroll's "sylvie and bruno", we have a one to one scale map which we can't unfold so we might as well use the land as the map. YOU might say that we can leave out or control for certain things as not relevant but we can't know if they are relevant, possible deciding factors, until we have actually run the trial, and then we only know they are deciding in that particular trial (tautology again.) In order to run a simulation that is useful (in that it gets done in time for us to use the results), we have to leave out information which could be key for all we know. So the more true something is, the less useful it is, and utility, far from being truth, becomes the very opposite of it.

I think we've been here before, so enough from me.

It's true, we've covered much of it before, and come to a certain amount of agreement (or at least an agreement to disagree. Hey, what do you think of this formulation: "Information content of something is equal to the log to the base two of the number of things it COULD BE ." Except that if you apply this, then it sort of implies that infinity equals minus infinity. Which it might.) I tried to get you into this exchange when it was a discussion simply because I appreciate your interest in and understanding of information issues; now that it's turned into an all-out (possibly the final) argument between the two biggest intellectual bullies, sirin and myself, over who will rule the

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soon to be condemned brownfield playground, I regret getting you involved and apologize for it. You are a well-rounded human being and a fair man, Tim Walters; stay that way, and go in peace.

Message 11 11/19/99 8:18 PM
Subject: Re(15): getting...someplace...really...slowly
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

sirin writes:

perhaps we could discuss this further, once you reacquaint yourself with the text in question.

no, no, I want to discuss it now!!!!

since I deferred to your possibly superior testamental knowledge a few posts/days ago, I've been studying vigorously (and from what you've written, I'm starting to doubt you actually have read more of the Bible than I have.) besides, I'm sure that you will be able to back up all your examples, citing chapter and verse (and I AM a stickler for footnotes; good thing it's so easy to refer to the Bible -- King James version all right? or are you going to insist that there is some "real" bible of which the ordinary people are ignorant? just give me the title and I'll get it at the library...)

I mean, when were you planning to have this discussion? in a month and a half?

tricky....

or are you thinking that on rereading I'll suddenly decide that you were right, without you having to prove anything? sorry. I'm like the criminal who, when the ADA tells him he has a witness to finger him and he'd better cop a plea or he'll be going inside for all day, says, "I think you're bluffing. if you've got the evidence, tell it to the jury. I'm not going to do your job for you."

or have you lost your enthusiasm for this argument as you feel it going against you, and because I'm out-sirining sirin? what's the matter, Ramon, the heat and light of the sparks of the crossed wires affecting your aim? shoot for the heart, Ramon -- el corazon. you won't stop me unless you hit the heart...

when a man with a rifle faces a man with a forty-five, the man with the pistol is a dead man. your own words, Ramon. or now I'm seeing you as Tim Roth's cunning and dashing Cunningham, slashing and gashing with your rapier wit while I flailed and failed with claymore and way more broad words. did you ever think I'd just grab your blade and bleed and not mind? and it turns out it's not actually as sharp as everyone -- myself included -- seemed to fear it was!

come on, sirin. let's finish this off. you know that whatever "contradiction" you might point out, I'll just suggest that you are failing to grasp a subtler or higher consistency. if you try to compare the bible to science, say, I'll point out that for centuries physicists debated the nature of light, whether it was a particle or a wave; at times it seemed to act like one, at times the other, and, current theory went, it could not be both. but then a clerk in the

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Swiss patent office understood that there was really no problem...you know, since I'm caught up on my scripture, maybe I'll actually take a glance at yours, at Nabokov, if I can stand it; I'm sure I'll be able to find plenty there that just plain don't make sense...or is a text allowed to do that if it's your favorite? if you say the bible offers only paradox, I'll remind you it also offers paradise, and that whether the latter is worth the former is completely up to the individual reader and potential believer.

come on, sirin. after school, 3:15, the playground by the jungle gym. fair fight; I'll give you ground. be there.

Message 10 11/19/99 8:21 PM
Subject: Re: Guilty Pleasure
From: Deep Eddy
To: What I Bought

Spidra Webster writes:

I bought a solar panel for my laptop so that I could fire up the thing regardless of what emergency I'm in. Of course, I was dumb to do this right as winter was setting in...

where did you get this? what machines will they work with?

I want to be able to compute after the fall of civilization too...

Eddy

Message 106 11/21/99 7:10 PM
Subject: Re(4): nyo (was hmmm....)
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

Kelsey Gadoo writes:

I think a bunch of us could easily breathe life into it.

do people there have long drawn out arguments?

oh -- umm, I'm not asking this for me -- umm, I've got this friend, yeah, this friend, who likes to argue, wanted to know.

Message 105 11/21/99 9:41 PM
Subject: Re(4): anti-alienation
From: Deep Eddy
To: Women<-->Men

Spidra:

have you tried riding your HPV to a meeting of the Bay Area Bicycle Coalition (or similar organization)? Men outnumber women six to one at those things, and I would think any sort of exotic bike must be a real guy magnet.

Just a thought. Maybe it attracts the wrong type -- only ferrous guys (save

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ferrous!) while you're looking for feral.

Eddy (stopped going to Critical Mass except for the Sausalito ride)

Message 100 11/23/99 12:12 AM
Subject: Re(14): getting...someplace...really...slowly
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Keela Merrin writes:

Deep Eddy, you have been acting like a Huge Spigot of Hooey.

Who, I? (For a second, I thought you had written "honey".) Are you playing taps for me? Will you poke holes in my theories, will I be Keela-awled? OK, I don't want to force it, but false it is. I'm fighting discrimination. Better a spigot than a bigot, especially the hugest, surely.

(OK, I'll stop calling you surly. I appreciate your taking the time to write a non-dismissive missive.)

Arguments like yours are for folk who like nothing more than to toil with mental Gordian Knots. I thought Tim played an excellent Alexander, much better than I could have, but you fearlessly re-assembled your tangle.

You should hear Tim playing other instruments...But I'm pro-Gordian and I vote. you are forgetting the rest of the prophecy. whoever could release the chariot tied with the famous tangle in the temple would rule over all Asia, but since Alexander but the knot instead of untying it, his rule (and life) were cut short. (Like Alexander's idol Achilleus, who gave up long life for eternal glory, or the Alexander of the Iliad [an alternate name for Paris] who destroyed his city for ten years with Helen. Who got the best deal? The tortoise?) This is what we do with all decisions; it would take too long to attain certain knowledge, so we have to leave out some information, jump to a conclusion in order to have one at all. The question is, how much chance of empire, glory, love, is worth how much likelihood that it will be short-lived? We really don't know the odds, and maybe power makes you stupid and less powerful in a feedback loop. We just have to close our eyes and gamble.

You're just cloaking Zeno's Paradox in different disguises. Sure, sure, we can never really know anything for certain; just like there's no way an arrow can ever hit its mark. Please go stand in front of the archer.

Archly put! Since as I've pointed out, every comparison is equally valid (and invalid), I can't really dispute this analogy, though I'm not sure it means what you think it does unless you are speaking very generally. (I mean, *I* can see the application, but do you want to play by *my* rules?) Zeno was talking about physics; I'm talking about epistemology (and 'e pissed 'em all OFF, oh gee!) Zeno's problem was that he did not understand the possibility of adding up an infinite series of smaller and smaller numbers; this had to wait until the 1600s or so. Now, I suppose that you could make the comparison that just as Zeno said you can't get someplace until you get halfway there, and you can't get there until you get halfway to halfway there, etc., I am saying you can't prove something until you've proved what you use to prove it, which in turn rests on deeper assumptions, etc However, in Zeno's case the intervals of

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time and space got smaller and smaller, and in mine, they don't; the underlying assumptions are pretty big too (an entire system of logic, for instance.) If the assumptions got smaller and smaller, you would have a sort of bootstrapping arrangement, a benign spiral. The original cause would approach nothingness, and you would in effect have "un systeme ou tout se tient", as Saussure called language, a system in which everything holds each other up, like the girl scouts in a circle who all sit down on each others' laps, or logs stacked in a conical pile. The system is internally consistent, so it seems it must be true. The problem is that there may be other systems just as consistent internally, and there is still an assumption here: that consistency, and consistency according to the criterion we have chosen, means truth. And this, as Gershwin put, ain't necessarily so.

I think a much better analogy would be a version of Zeno's paradox in which we can't say when the arrow got from point A to point B because we don't know where the two points are. The arrow appears to go somewhere, but whether it reached some goal, we can't tell. Another analogy I'd like better would be one of the reasons Einstein gave that things can't reach the speed of light: as things accelerate, they gain mass; therefore, it takes more force to accelerate them, causing them to gain more mass according to a formula, so that to get to the speed of light would require infinite force.

This latter is another example of a feedback loop. A benign cycle is a feedback loop in which the reaction is greater than the action to which it reacts (but whence the energy for this?) though it can just as well be vicious if you don't like the result. Something keeps increasing. (This can also give rise to chaotic systems, out of control conflicts.) When action equals reaction, the loop cycle repeats endlessly. When the reaction recursively engendered by the action is less than the action itself (and remember each reaction becomes the action in the next cycle), the system approaches a point of stability. (Remember, fractal curves have finite area, the sum of an infinite series, if infinite perimeter.) The so-called Laffer Curve in economics is an example of this, or any supply-demand curve. (It's like solving two simultaneous equations in two variables.) You could say that to know your own mind will take a certain percentage of that very mind's capacity. As you reduce the amount in your mind, your mind can keep up with it, though now it has to keep up with the meta-information, etc. Only if you keep reducing the lowest-level information in your mind, and only if it takes less room to store the information about this information, can your mind approach a state where it can know itself. But I kind of doubt the second "only if", so it doesn't look good for self-knowledge.

Okay, that's unnecessarily mean,

that depends on what your goal is.

I take it back; I couldn't resist the turn of phrase. But the meaning behind it, I would preserve; you think you've won a conversation, but you've merely rendered it pointless. Congratulations.

But isn't that the whole point, to convince you of the pointlessness of discussions, that these issues can't be solved rationally? It's kind of a win-win situation.

Of course, i use logic in my arguments. So to the extent that I'm right, I

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must be wrong. Which means I'm exactly half right. A communications channel with a fifty percent error rate transmits no information; if you have no idea whether each bit is supposed to be a 0 or a 1, you can't make anything of the message. (If you know the error rate is 100%, you can just reverse each bit. If you know someone always lies, you can just do the opposite of what he says. It's when he sometimes lies, sometimes doesn't, that you have to fact-check him. Some time ago, I reached the point where exactly half, I felt, of what I wrote online was made up as far as I knew. Plus all the puns, the linguistic ambiguity. I'm not sure of anything -- why should y'all be? If there are no explanations for me, why should there be any for you?)

Have you read Roth's "The Conversion of the Jews"?

I'm going to do a great show today, and I'm going to help people, because I'm good enough, I'm smart enough, and doggone it, people like me.

Be good to one another and keep your minds open.

> 96

Message 96 11/24/99 7:50 PM
Subject: Topsy-turvy
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Mike Leigh's new movie is about Gilbert (William Schwenk) and Sullivan (Arthur Seymour)!!

Cool!!

I haven't seen any good G and S onscreen since "Chariots of Fire".

Eddy (I think, therefore I'm a D'Oyly Cartesian)

Message 95 11/24/99 8:35 PM
Subject: Re(5): Felicia's Journey
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Eva Luna writes:

Strangely enough, while I was at Disneyland last weekend, I sat behind the actor who played "Henry" in that movie while watching an awful Disneyland musical production called "Animazement!" He was there with his kids, and he dozed off through most of it.

is that Michael Rooker? He always scares me, but I've liked him in things like "Eight Men Out" and "JFK". Another Michael who always scares me is the gravelly-voiced Wincott, who has played everyone from the villain in "The Crow" to the Sheriff's ill-fated droog in "Prince of Thieves" to Cardinal Richelieu's ill-fated droog in "The Three Musketeers"... ok, there seems to be a theme running here.

I'm also kind of scared of Michael Madsen. Maybe there's a theme running here.

Message 94 11/24/99 8:35 PM

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Subject: Happy Birthday, Eva! (No spoilers, I hope)
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

My big aim's legit: not to rig it
To ruin your birthday gig -- swig it!
Don't fret, frown or fidget
Pig out, from the fridge! It
Ain't midget, my wrong, though. So dig it:

That Smart Alek called me a spigot!
(Sounds part phallic, though I'm no prig.) It
Ain't right! So abridge it!
(S)he gave me the digit!
That Merrits the brig on this frigate!

Message 93 11/24/99 8:45 PM
Subject: Re: Fave Bond Film (was Re(4): The World is NOT Enough(
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

I really like "On Her Majesty's Secret Service". George Lazenby is a nice change of pace, and my impression is that he looked more like the way Fleming imagined Bond. (Which was like Hoagy Carmichael. Now, I may be wrong about what Hoagy Carmichael looks like.)

And Diana Rigg, driving the car through the snow to rescue dear James!

Bond had finally met his match, and knew it!

And that wonderfully sad but appropriate ending!

And father in law with all the firepower!

And the icky thing with the snowblowing fan!

Though I actually liked both Timothy Dalton films too, but Maryam D'Abo, Talisa Soto, and especially Carey Lowell had a lot to do with that. I guess I like it when Bond takes things into his own hands, bucks the Service, makes it personal (as in "OHMSS".)

I read most of the books as a kid and I think "Thunderball" and "Goldfinger" were my favorites. I read "Moonraker" just a few years ago, and thought it was awful.

Three times is enemy action,

Eddy

Message 92 11/24/99 8:50 PM
Subject: Re: Purchase Envy!
From: Deep Eddy
To: What I Bought

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

Nine writes:

or it's screaming 1984.

you mean, it has "War is peace", "Freedom is slavery", and "Ignorance is strength" emblazoned on it?

Or it's fifteen years old?

If the latter, is that bad?

Pining for the 80's, when things made sense,

Eddy

Message 91 11/24/99 8:54 PM
Subject: Re(3): Bucky Pillow
From: Deep Eddy
To: What I Bought

Kelsey Gadoo writes:

Yes it's filled with buckwheat (I think) hulls.

Are there Alfalfa and Spanky pillows as well?

(I guess the latter would simply move back pain lower down?)

(And do they come with handpuppets?)

Thankful for my heating pad,

Eddy

Message 90 11/25/99 4:07 PM
Subject: Re(2): Topsy-turvy
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Steve Omlid writes:

I saw a preview for this and it does look good. It looks like they're trying to give G&S the Shakespeare In Love treatment, and if they do as well as those folks did, this could be a real treat, even for people like me who don't know a lot about them.

Does that mean anachronisms? I hope not....it's only a century or so ago, close enough to us that they should not be necessary.

I actually think this movie might be a lot like "The Commitments", or "The Doors", or even "Spinal Tap" (or the Frank Zappa song "Joe's Garage") in that it will chronicle an artistic collaboration, its rocky start, its sudden, giddy success, and how the collaborators are torn apart by the success and their personalities. Then one will die and the other will be left to think, and tell everyone, what a great guy he was and how sorry he was that they fought.

One difference between Gilbert and Sullivan on the one hand, and, say, David

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

St. Hubbins and Nigel Tufnel on the other, is that the former pair were never personally very friendly. Gilbert, trained as a lawyer, liked to argue and engage in verbal combat; he was a curmudgeon, who, if I remember correctly, married a woman very much younger than he was (not that that is so strange, especially among successful Victorian gentlemen.) Sullivan, hailed as England's best hope for a serious composer, was always a little embarrassed about the operettas, fearing they would distract him from his more "important" work (all of which, except for the hymn "Onward Christian Soldiers", has been pretty much forgotten.) The Queen did not much like Gilbert; whereas Sullivan was knighted in 1884 (or thereabouts), it was not until the reign of King Edward that the retired Gilbert become Sir William.

The movie might also have some similarities to "The Man Who Would Be King" or "Mountains of the Moon" (which concerns the African explorers Sir Richard Burton and John Hanning Speke.)

I have high hopes for this film. I always like to hear show tunes in a movie, and I'm not sure I'm up to "Flawless". I hope they'll do "There Lived a King" from "The Gondoliers" and "When the felon's not engaged in his employment" from "The Pirates of Penzance".

Still a Savoyeur (another one that I hope it won't cause Steve too much embarrassment to get),

Eddy

Message 83 11/26/99 1:10 PM
Subject: Re: insomnia
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

sirin writes:
*"all that
caterwauling elfman music? mindless music, headless cast."*

It's a dead man's party. who could ask for more?

Eddy (prefers Roland, with or without his head and/or Thompson gun)

Message 82 11/26/99 7:00 PM
Subject: Re(3): Fave Bond Film (was Re(4): The World is NOT Enough(
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Keela Merrin writes:
I haven't seen the thing in years, though, I wonder if it'll hold up...

It's been a while for me, too. I seem to remember seeing it in black and white -- maybe that was just because it was so white with snow. (Was the blood on the snow done with chocolate syrup, "Psycho" style?) I'm trying to remember color in it -- the pattern of Bond's kilt when he's posing as a scots genealogist? Speaking of which, I heard on the radio that the actual Bond family, whose motto is "non sufficit orbis" (the latin for the movie's title -- I might have used "mundus non satis"), is rather upset with Fleming's -- is

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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this in Fleming somewhere, or an invention of the screenwriters? -- making 007 their relation. I myself would love to have come from a good Scots family with a unique title to pass on, like Thane of Glamis and Cawdor, or Master of Ballantrae. Then I could use it as a sig line, the way Greta Christina did until other started imitating her or something. As it is, I'll just have to use the honour bestowed upon me recently, and remain,

Yours faithfully,

Hugh, Spigot of Hooley

(I always wanted to be like Hugh!)

Message 81 (Unsent)
Subject: Re: END of DAYS
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

John Barrymore writes:

One minor "flaws" in the film: It's now November, 1999, and the film was set in December, 1999. That was a minor problem that bothered me. It probably won't bother anyone else.

Barrymore, I'm surprised -- even a little hurt -- by your lack of faith. Of course it bothers someone else. It bothers ME, though I haven't seen the film and probably won't (though Gabriel "What heart?" Byrne is way cool.) I mean, who wants to see the world NOT end? (This is not a SPOILER. I haven't seen the movie. but I'm assuming that if Arnold is the hero, he saves the day. I don't think this will be surprising to too many people, will it?)

this illustrates the convergence of several tendencies in the settings of action/suspense movies. Such movies, to make them immediate and relevant (to the viewers) and thus effective (meaning, suspenseful) tend to be set as close to the present as possible (the present being the time of release. I think most movies are still made with the cinema release audience in mind, not the video. People watching videos are a little more pardoning of slight staleness.) If a plot is set too far in the past, we know it did not happen or if it did, won't affect us (unless the evil force is "still out there"); if in the future, we have too much else to worry about before then. (This is why science fiction can sometimes get away with dealing with issues, such as race, with which films set in the present cannot.) Also, since the situations in these films tend to be a bit unusual, the setting must be familiar to make them understandable; in movies set in unfamiliar times, the characters and situations tend to be familiar (even anachronistically so, cf. "Shakespeare in Love". Also, after a time, certain situations become familiar just because we've seen them in so many other movies, so we can understand a medieval legal thriller since we've seen so much John Grisham.) But I think -- from experience -- it's easier to create immediacy and relevance through surface similarity of look and feel by setting close to the here and now than through more metaphoric or analogical similarity of situation. ("Star Wars", which uses primal almost universal myth themes, being an exception.) Also, creating other worlds, past or future (or alternate present) is just more difficult, more expensive, even with computer graphics. So movies tend to be set in the vague present, or, or including, the recent past, or the near future (this last because they don't want to scare us *too* much sometimes, want to give us a little time and warning and hope to avoid the crisis depicted in the film. I

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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guess "Terminator 2", released in 1991, was supposed to be 1994 or thereabouts. But there was no need to design new cars to put on the streets.) There is a trade-off between setting things close to us to scare us more, and farther away to have a greater shelf life.

Science fiction films still want this immediacy so we can relate to them, but they need to give themselves a little time to develop the new technologies and/or associated conditions. Otherwise people will look around and say, "I don't see robots or spaceships." Well, you will in a year or two; technology moves fast. So "Robocop", made in 1987, was set in 1994 (imagine, Ford Taurus police cruisers! privatization of city services!); "Escape from New York" (1981) in 1997. While the movies are in their original theatrical release, the future is still far away; watching them on video or revival, it becomes quaint to think how folks used to see things to come.

But the third tendency is the millennial one. There is just something about the year 2000 that has always attracted sci-fi writers. it's simple and dramatic. it has religious significance. the years leading up to it, the NINETEEN NINETIES, also have that dramatic sound. (Perhaps the only other date with such intrinsic significance was 1984.) For a long time, things could be set near the millennium, and it was so far away it did not matter, so in the 60's we have 2001, and in Star Trek, Khan's Eugenics Wars took place in 1997 (and Khan should have been born already, in the 60's! unless part of his superiority was rapid maturation.) As we actually entered the nineties, there was less and less room to set millennial, end of the world movies, for the situations leading to them to develop. Things got pushed into the end of 1999. (cf. the 1995 "Strange Days".) Now the millennium is almost here, and we have no room.

!2 monkeys

Now 1999 is within range not just of video, but of theater release

Action movies tend to be set in the near future.

But there is definitely a problem with having a movie set too close to when it takes place. Well, can we agree that the "closer" a movie is to us, the more effective it is (meaning, if it's "trying" to scare us, the scarier it is.) Now let's argue about what "close" means. It doesn't necessarily mean close in time, or place; a character or situation could match something from our own lives very closely, analogically, despite taking place a long time ago or with a gal at sea far away. But I've generally found -- with no guarantee of course that this will continue in the future -- that the closer to the surface, the less metaphoric a similarity is, the less readily it is perceived. (Even though the Star Trek guys looked at the two half-and-half guys on a more generalizing level, instead of comparing them pixel by pixel.) So the closer a movie actually is to us in time and space, the more we'll appreciate its message. We'll appreciate a plot set last year more than one set last century, and one set in a midsize city by a bay on the North American continent more than one set in, say, Tashkent. Again, all other things being equal, in general, blah blah blah. If anyone doesn't want to grant me this, I don't feel like adducing any more proof; it's really not the main point anyway. I'm just trying to explain how Barrymore and I seem to be reacting; if you are reacting the same way, this might explain why.

I mean, this movie probably won't last long in theatres, but there is still the chance that that place on Market near Powell, or the Elmwood or the

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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Serramonte or whatever, will be showing it in say, January of 2000. (If civilization hasn't collapsed. Then it will be more like that scene in "A Boy and his Dog".) The whole point of setting the movie in the very near future in to make it imminent and immediate; scary movies set, say, in the Hudson Valley in the 18th century work on quite a different principle. then, the idea is that this happened and was never solved so could happen again; in the movie set in the near future, the idea is that "this is about to happen". If this has already happened, the tension is considerably reduced.

Message 80 11/27/99 11:21 AM
Subject: Re(3): Purchase Envy!
From: Deep Eddy
To: What I Bought

Meg Cotner writes:
"!!!"

well, for me. but I have high hopes for the 00's.

Message 75 11/28/99 10:58 AM
Subject: Re: Lipstick on your Collar
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Spidra Webster writes:
the last thing Dennis Potter ever did.

I was surprised to find out that Potter had written "Track 29", starring Gary Oldman, Theresa Russell, and Christopher Lloyd (oh, and Sandra Bernhard!! How could I forget!) And it wasn't all that good. I mean, it was OK, but considering the raves I've heard about other Pottery, it wasn't so impressive. But 50% of everything is below average. I'll have to see some of his other work. The idea of a detective who lives his life by old songs has particular appeal to me.

Hugh, Spigot of Hooey

Message 40 12/4/99 10:57 AM
Subject: Looking closer at "American Beauty"
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

too closely?

HOBOY, is this choc ful o' SPOILERS!!

(don't even THINK of reading this if you haven't seen the movie [and many others -- intertextuality, you know] or decided irrevocably not to.)

Reverse Suetonius style:

I thought this movie drew out too long. For about the last half hour (I didn't

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want to look at my watch) I wanted to look at my watch. On the other hand, it didn't seem as if it covered a whole year (isn't that what he announced at the start, that it was the last year of his life?)

Wasn't this just another "revenge of the middle-aged white male against the dehumanizing system by going nuts" movie? Like "Falling Down", or "Bulworth"? He was just too right (while they were wrong), it was all too easy and simple. Why aren't there any revenge of the middle-aged female -- or would that be movies like "Thelma and Louise", "Crazy in Alabama", "Anywhere but Here"? Do these just feel different due to the asymmetry in sex roles in our society?

I thought Annette Bening's character was too much of a cartoon. Giving her one moment of humanity would have been very affecting, as when Secretary Thompson finally shows emotion in "1776". When she tore her hair after failing to sell the house, or clutched the clothes in the closet after finding Lester dead, that came close, but still seemed to be making fun of her, not eliciting sympathy. (It was different with Lester; see below.)

Umm, I'm not thrilled to see teenagers sexualized that way, with gratuitous nudity. But then I guess we are supposed to be "sutured" into the point of view of the protagonist Lester, and his conflict. As the daughter admits, she is jealous of Angela because Angela gets the attention from her (Jane's) father she (Jane) doesn't get. And of course, we as the audience see Jane take off her shirt first, when we are expecting to see Angela. (I remember a friend, a cinema manager of a certain fame [anyone remember the "Schindler's List" incident at the Grand Lake?] summarizing "The Player" as "the wrong girl took off her shirt" -- not just literally, Cynthia Stevenson rather than Greta Schacchi [who is really the same person as Sharon Stone*], but in the sense that what you were expecting to happen didn't [or something.]) That, that desperate teenaged expression of trust and intimacy, or that call for attention, reminded me of scenes in "Pump Up the Volume" and "Palookaville".

But didn't Angela look a lot like Heather Graham?

And of course, Spacey was brilliant. Because he was not always cynical. I suppose that since he always seems cynical, when he genuinely displays emotion (as in "L.A. Confidential", when he decides to be a real cop) it is all the more affecting.

I liked the music a lot.

I really liked the character of Ricky and the actor who played him. He reminded me of Keir Dullea. I liked the way he accepted his father's behavior, without judgment, without a lot of talk -- he just did his own thing. Spoke with his behavior, or rather didn't need to talk about it. I liked his obsession with remembering, an obsession in the sense that it was pointless -- he was never going to watch all those videos, he would never have time. And he said something about how at the point when something becomes inevitable, it might as well be said to have happened. (Though in the mechanistic universe I inhabit, everything is inevitable, so everything has happened already.) I liked the idea that sometimes kids, if left alone, can come to better choices -- certainly no worse ones -- than their parents. In their love and sex they create a world for themselves, and any adults who might say they are young and foolish are screwing their own lives up worse. (cf. "Say Anything", when Lloyd and Diane sleep together as Dad is taken off to prison.) But I was bothered by how easy their life would be in New York. It takes the danger, challenge, romance out of it. I would rather they actually planned to live on Jane's

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babysitting savings and sling hash or whatever to survive.

I thought though that it would be Ricky who would kill Lester (as the opening suggests.) When Col. Fitz first came over to Lester in the rain, I thought he would kill him then. Perhaps a knife in the back during the embrace. When He left, I thought Carolyn would be the killer. I thought the sudden reappearance of Co. Fitz was kind of *deus sex machina*, but I thought it was interesting, even a Trautmann paradox, that he killed Lester for refusing him (and because he could not bear to have someone know) rather because he thought Lester had corrupted Ricky, his son. I did not expect Col. Fitz to turn out to have homosexual feelings; others may have seen that coming.

The violence was limited enough, scarlet on gray, to pack punch. It upset me; was it supposed to?

Mrs. Fitz was weird!! Where have I seen her before?

Hard to believe that was the same Chris Cooper from "Lone Star"!

Always nice to see Peter Gallagher, who reminds me of a friend who has achieved peace. (see below)

I kind of foresaw Angela's revelation that she was a virgin. I liked the idea that she could be both ordinary and extraordinary at the same time, depending on who was defining it.

Thanks so much to Hope Gray (whose last name is half of the ancestral battle cry of the Holden/Ridley clan, since Bannockburn the proud Spigots of Hooey), assistant manager of the California 3, for getting me in free, and on a Friday night! (I was ready to pay; the surprise added to the pleasure.) The California being of course the most beautiful theatre in the Bay Area.

I love plots in which you know from the beginning what has happened, and the question is just HOW it happened. It kind of takes some of the pressure off. Remember that for most of human history, people always knew the end of the story -- the Greek epic-listeners and tragedy-watchers, and Shakespeare's audiences, and hearers of Bible readings, knew the stories from the mythology, but liked to see them dramatized. Another good example of this is the film "Before Turning the Gun On Himself". And again, if everything is determined from the beginning, you might as well reveal it then. There are really no spoilers. I especially like the subcategory of these plots that play out the last days of an obviously doomed character, like John O'Hara's "Appointment in Samarra" (not a very good book, but a neat idea.) The character is already dead (now I'm thinking of Sarah Connor's rant at the hospital staff in "Terminator 2"); he just hasn't fallen down yet. A walking ghost; everyone looks at him strangely; it's obvious to them. (cf. "Jacob's Ladder", and, I guess, "Sixth Sense". Even the police captain's comment to Malone in "The Untouchables" when the Connery has so obviously sealed his fate by going against the mob.) It seems that a lot of films noirs work this way, so many that I can't think of any in particular at this moment.

I liked the idea that you can only achieve peace and "feel great" just before you die. (It actually reminded me of the end of "Of Mice and Men".) The universe doesn't seem to tolerate it otherwise. It seems like a catch-22 but I guess it's worth it to achieve peace. Maybe it's that once you have reached this point, you are ready for the end. Maybe something about the process of

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

reaching this point causes self destruction, or you can only do the things necessary to achieve peace if you are on the way out and know it, because peace isn't a state that's sustainable for any length of time. Better to die happy, at the top of the parabolic arc, during the few moments of weightlessness! People used to believe that death and glory (in the Iliad) or death and victory (in the Widener Library fresco) or even, in Catholicism, death and a state of grace (you want to die when you've just confessed, without your sins upon your head; cf. "Hamlet", or "Let Him Have It") went together; in our frantic society, where we never have time or information to decide what is right or the energy to carry it out, maybe death is the only path to peace, the only way to get off the wheel. As Warren Zevon sang, "I'll sleep when I'm dead."

This probably relates in some way to the impending death of GOL as well, but I think I'll develop that more fully elsewhere and -when.

The idea expressed by Lester that you run through your entire life in the moment before death reminds me of how time stretches out infinitely as you enter a black hole so that from your point of view, you never get in. Since your life which passes before you should in turn include the last moment, you get a sort of infinite recursion, which prevents you from getting to the end.

(Yes, Keela Merrin, I'm sort of talking about Zeno's paradox.) Which is comforting, I guess; from your point of view, the state of peace lasts infinitely. Maybe Zevon was wrong.

Always ready to admit that it's possible,

Hugh, Spigot of Hooey

PS Is posting more like graffiti, "getting up", or like making a breakaway in a bicycle race (in cycling terminology, "attacking", as a "chase group" forms to "recapture" the breakaway rider back into the "peloton" or "pack"?)

There is still a month left. Death closes all, but something may yet be done, some work of noble note, not unbecoming men who strove with gods. Old men forget, yet all shall be forgot, but he'll remember with advantages what feats he did this day. We few, we happy few.... E

*besides that they have the same chins and pudgy cheeks, same hair, same age, same bodies, Greta Scacchi's career seemed to end just as Sharon Stone came onto the scene in a big way in 1991. Did Greta just realize the limited opportunities for foreign actresses in this country and its film industry, get some voice coaching? does she still do foreign films under the old name? I can't prove anything, just suspect. -- E

[More]

Message 35 12/4/99 6:28 PM
Subject: Re(2): Looking closer at "American Beauty"
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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Eva Luna writes:

Actually, Paul Newman has been quoted many times as having summarized "The Player" thusly

Thanks for this info. I imagine that my friend was quoting without attribution! There are no original ideas, are there? The Bible -- specifically the Preacher -- was right. We can always take it one step further and ask, "But from where does THAT in turn come?"

Or maybe they just derive from the same source.

Cause? Correlation? Derivative? Cognate? Fish? Cut bait?

Ughh. Which is an anagram for

Hugh, Spigot of Hooey

Message 29 12/5/99 9:21 AM
Subject: Re(3): Looking closer at "American Beauty"
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Steve Omlid writes:

I think Cynthia Stevenson is cuter than Greta Schacchi. The latter is too ice-princessy for me.

I think we had all better give up on trying to spell Greta's last name right.

oh, that's just because she played an Icelandress in "the Player". she can be pretty passionate. and that chin!

she's in some sort of rather unconventional relationship, isn't she? some sort of menage a trois with her cousin or something? anyone have the gossip on this?

And Eddy, great post! I may have something to say about it when I have more time to write....

your comments will be welcome.

It ain't over 'til it's over.

Was it over when the Germans bombed Pearl Harbor? I'd like to buy ten thousand marbles please.

Message 28 12/5/99 9:33 AM
Subject: Re(2): Is it lust or is it love?
From: Deep Eddy
To: Women<-->Men

to a great extent this, like any other argument, is about the meanings of

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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words. we can define "lust" and "love" however we like, or the words can mean whatever we all agree they mean. but if by "lust" we simply mean "physical, sexual desire", and "love" we mean "a full concern for the welfare and happiness of another based on a total character", I think the two are in a feedback relationship. if you lust for someone, or enjoy them sexually, you will become concerned for their welfare, if only for the selfish reason that you want them to continue to exist and thrive so that your pleasure will continue. and if you really admire someone's character, find them beautiful personally, I think there is a tendency to seek a sort of "mystical union" with them that is expressed physically. one thing leads to another. but since it seems we are defining "love" as the broader category, then I think it follows that you can have love with less lust though more easily than lust with less love.

Eddy (came up with and has meant to post this formulation since about January 1996)

Message 11 12/6/99 9:55 PM
Subject: Re(2): The World Is Not Enough (Again)
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Michael D. Sweeney writes:

Auric Goldfinger was the toughest villian Bond ever faced. He had the upper hand all the way through.

Bond: (strapped to table, with laser burning its way towards his crotch) "You don't expect me to *talk*, do you?"

Goldfinger: "No, Mr. Bond!! I expect you to *die*!!!"

And Oddjob!! Much scarier than Jaws any day!

It also seemed that Bond was much more dependent on others coming through and saving the day, on ----SPOILERS-----

--

Pussy Galore's changing sides, on the Americans being able to fake the annihilation of a whole city's population....or was that just in the book?

Once is a happenstance, twice is a coincidence, and three times....

Message 10 12/6/99 10:01 PM
Subject: He's the man!!
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Just got back from hearing Joe Jackson flog his new book at the Page St. library. (Booksmith, which arranged the event, wouldn't let you get in line

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for autographs unless you bought a book. Wait, would they really have been able to stop me?) He mentioned that he has done seven movie soundtracks, but I can only think of two, "Mike's Murder" and "Tucker". Anyone know the others? (and have any opinions about them?) Yes, i could look it up the web. But as Eric Idle says to Vulcan in "Baron Munchausen", where's the fun in that?

Don't you know you can't get near me?
You can only hope to hear me
On the -- GOL --

Eddy

Message 369 12/16/99 7:48 PM
Subject: Re(2): Ed of the week
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Eva Luna writes:
And "The Blue Dahlia" too.

See, I can't pronounce the word "dahlia" and I'm afraid to look it up. I keep turning it over and over in my mind, trying the stress on one syllable, then another, thinking of Samson's girlfriend.

But I'll try to find it.

I've heard about Ladd's ladlike stature, but there's a scene in "Glass Key" in which he's shown from head to foot (it's the one where he kicks Taylor Henry, whoever played him, in the shins -- ow!!) and he looks pretty normal. It must be....

Acting!!!

Message 368 12/16/99 7:50 PM
Subject: Re: Looking closer at "American Beauty"
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Deep Eddy writes:
Mrs. Fitz was weird!! Where have I seen her before?

The actress, Allison Janney, is considerably more animated on the TV show "The West Wing".

Message 367 12/16/99 7:56 PM
Subject: Re(3): Moving conferences
From: Deep Eddy
To: Altcity Content Ideas

Well, as I said in my post "Independence Day", I find this conference QUITE moving.

Message 366 12/16/99 8:12 PM

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Subject: tricolon crescens
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

no, it's not part of your intestines. I was reviewing my classical figures of poetic speech as brushed up my Ovid after seeing the Berkeley Rep production of "Metamorphoses" at Zellerbach. Now, I had always admired the way John Barrymore's post titles almost always follow a certain pattern: bum, bum, and bum, (each bum representing a stressed syllable, with one or more unstressed ones around it on either side.) Usually, the first two items are pretty concrete, people or things, with a clear relationship, and the last one is more abstract and less clearly related than the first two (or related in a way that might offend.) Now, I am very fond of such rhythmic tropes. After all, my favorite movie in the world is "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly". (Good and bad are opposites, ugly is more tangentially related.) And I'm really tired of movie titles that are just "bum and bum" -- "Thelma and Louise", "Benny and Joon" (though I loved "Rikky and Pete"), as if the names were enough to denote. So I appreciated Barrymore's use of them. His consistency, you know; he always fit everything into that pattern. People should have trademarks. It's neat.

I had encountered these sorts of things in classical literature and since the ancients had names for pretty much everything, I was sure they had one for this. But I couldn't remember it. And then I found it, "tricolon crescens", literally, "growing triple phrase". And now I can share it with you. And now we're all just so happy, me, Barrymore, and the entire film conference!!

nourished, rested, and sedated,

Eddy

PS: I'm listening to a speech on the radio by Christopher Reeve. Because he uses an artificial breathing apparatus, he can only say a limited number of words at a time. So he speaks in phrases of roughly equal length, with the same number of stresses per line. Very little enjambment (breaking a sentence or phrase in the middle at the end of a line -- he chooses his words carefully. of course, once you get into the pattern, it's easier to, it carries you along.) It's like Old English("Beowulf") or Icelandic ("Voluspa") poetry, with two half-lines, each with two stresses, per line, or iambic pentameter. It's strangely hypnotic. It's got rhythm, it's got music. Who could ask for anything more?

DE

Message 365 12/16/99 8:44 PM
Subject: Re(5): HELP: Track down bike thieves!!
From: Deep Eddy
To: Heyer's Cocktail Party

Spidra Webster writes:

That's what I mean. I want to find out how I can legally detain someone until the police get there.

I'm all for idealism and assertion of my full legal rights (and my natural right to do whatever I can get away with -- I mean, life, liberty, and the

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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pursuit of happenstance). But there are a lot of things you can do legally that you can't quite do practically (not saying that you oughtn't to be able to do them, though there are things like that too), and I think this might be one of them. People who break laws in the first place by trying to steal bikes probably won't care too much if you have the legal right to detain them. (You could try, with a quick swipe of the krypto, locking *them* to a pole for the cops to arrive -- or giving them the choice Max Rockatansky gave Johnnie the Boy.) But again, you are kind of inviting a violent physical confrontation with people who are probably, for better or worse, more used to violence than you. (Unless the Telegraph Avenue bumper sticker is right and property is not just theft, but violence. Or is that poverty? I haven't been to Telegraph in a while. Now we see the violence inherent in the system!) I'd tend be content with scaring the thieves off with my presence -- they don't want a confrontattion that badly, and there are plenty of other bikes to steal -- and to leave the violence to the cops. After all, it's their job.

That's what I thought. Apparently the rising popularity of 'bents, means a rise in theft.

They might, once they had stolen the bike, decided it was unsellable and junked or cannibalized it. You might have gotten the frame back. I wonder whether whoever stole my fixedgear got tired of it (or tired by a car, or forcibly retired from the theft business) and scrapped it. In a way, that's more depressing, to think that if he or she had known how pointless the theft was, he could have stolen someone else's and left mine to its loving owner. I suppose I could put a warning label on my current fixedgear, but everyone's riding them now so everyone knows how.

How about some sort of homing/tracking device hidden in the seattube?

What's the motivational opposite of a filibuster?

Eddy

Message 364 12/16/99 9:55 PM
Subject: Re(4): Ed of the week
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Steve Omlid writes:
Doll-ee-uh

Hello?

I thought maybe it was two syllables, Doll-ya. Like Daria. I dare ya.

Hey, is Dahlia one of the friends you're always quoting -- "I asked my offline friends what they thought and they agreed with me?"

Just....KIDDING!!!

Jesus Crisis. Everyone's so serious these days. You'd think this place was about to cease to exist or something. I say, enjoy not having to worry about

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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tomorrow. You know, like "On the Beach"? With Annette Funicello and Frankie Avalon?

Message 362 12/17/99 8:55 PM
Subject: Re: yikes...
From: Deep Eddy
To: politics

isaac reuben writes:

(p.s. the guardian is part of the conspiracy! they plan to take this system down on 1/1/2000 to prevent us from communicating, while bruce brugmahn ascends to his rightful position as the leader of the new world order. i called it first! ;-)

um, not quite; see my post "Independence Day" in "Death of GOL".....not exactly the same but I could probably beat you in an intellectual property lawsuit...

Auntie Em's possession of the paranoia crown shall not go unchallenged!

Message 359 12/17/99 10:33 PM
Subject: Re(7): Ed of the week
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Eva Luna writes:

Oh, touchh!

(the above to pronounced with a heavy, heavy dose of sarcasm.)

Well, it must be time for GOL to end if Eva Luna is taking the revolutionary and desperate step of resorting to sarcasm.

Well, no, but it must be time for GOL to end if she feels the need to point out that she is doing so.

(By the way, I'm sure it's just a typo, but it's <<touchie>> -- two e's for you, acute accent, a very cute accent, on the first.)

speaking of which, I'm thinking of the Norse idea of the end of the world. Ragnarok. It was envisioned as a final battle between the forces of basically good (the gods or Aesir) and evil (the giants and their allies.) But unlike, say, theApocalyptic battle of massed forces lead by the Beast and the Christ, this one would come down to a set of single combats between folks who had been gunning for each other for time eternal. (A bit like the end of "Silverado", or even "The Princess Bride". The rather amusing little film "Erik the Viking", with Tim Robbins and directed by Terry Jones, is set in "the age of Ragnarok", but this refers to the "time of swords, time of axes" before the battle, not the battle itself.) The thunder god Thor will take on the world-girdling Midgard Serpent, and kill it, but drown in its poisonous blood.

Chief god Odin will kill and be killed by the Fenris wolf (whose eating of the sun will signal the start of the end. There are some other great images,

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

too. The giants will sail to attack Asgard, home of the gods, in a ship made out of human fingernails. The Norse were blown away by the fact that nails continued to grow after death. the fire-giant, low-key trickster, and former companion of the gods [and parent of the various monsters] Loki will pilot it.) And so on. Anyway, by the end of the battle all the old scores will have been settled and pretty much everyone will be dead. but then, some of the children of the gods, who will have survived, will build a brand new world, and everything will be pretty peachy. a happy ending! don't you love it? (for the text of one version of the story, from around the last millennium, see <http://www.personal.u-net.com/~midgard/voluspa.htm>. you can trust people named heidi!!)

so I'm thinking that with GOL about to end, it's time for our own Ragnarok, our own Armageddon, our own final settling of scores. there are all these long simmering feuds of polar opposites, which have recurred from time to time whenever there was a good issue to argue about. I'm thinking of Steve Omlid versus Eva Luna, of Auntie Em versus nessie (mainly in politics), of J. Mark Andrus vs. kollontai. (Note: I'm not taking a stance on who is good, or a god, here. but it's interesting that in each of these cases, there is a male/female opposition as well.) There's me versus...well, pretty much everyone at one time or another. Anyway, I see the old Steve/Eva (Steva?) battle arising again, and kollontai and J. Mark are getting going too, so I think it's time for the rest of the gods and giants to join in. sharpen those axes! open the gates of Valhalla (we'll all go there in Volkswagens...) It's time for Gotterdammerung, and the opera ain't over until the Fatal Eddy zings....

Message 358 12/18/99 10:36 AM
Subject: Re(9): Ed of the week
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Eva Luna writes:

Either no one got the joke in my pointing out the pronunciation of the sarcasm--in reference to the previous posts talking about the pronunciation of Dahlia--or it was too feeble an attempt to acknowledge.

Oh, I get it now!!!!

Message 357 12/18/99 12:14 PM
Subject: Re(9): Ed of the week
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Tim Walters writes:

Au contraire, mon frere. The correct spelling is "touchi" (one e, acute accent), as any dictionary will confirm. Perhaps the word is lacking a second "e" because it's derived from mediaeval French (compare the heraldic term "estoile", with its now-extraneous "s") or perhaps it was originally transcribed by a non-Francophone, but that's how Webster's tribe spell it.

Tim, the expression comes from fencing. It's short for "j'ai iti touchi" -- "I have been touched (with the sword point)" -- "you got me". (It's not a noun as in the last scene of Hamlet.) But since Eva Luna is female, ("for you", I

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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wrote) she should use the feminine form of the adjective, "touchiE" -- with the extra E. I mean, the expression has only become standardized in the masculine form because for centuries, women did not get to do much fencing, physical or verbal. ` la fin de l'envoi, je touche -- "Cyrano De Bergerac", Acte I

Untouchable,

Eddy

Message 354 12/18/99 4:06 PM
Subject: Re(3): yikes...
From: Deep Eddy
To: politics

Auntie Em writes:

Ack ... you're all out to get me and my crown. ;-)

that's just what we *want* you to think!!!

> 353

Message 353 12/18/99 6:10 PM
Subject: Re(5): yikes...
From: Deep Eddy
To: politics

Auntie Em writes:

No, you just want me to think that you're trying to make me think that, but I know that it's all a plot.

and I knew you knew that.

> 352

Message 352 (Unsent)
Subject: Re(11): Ed of the week
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

I'm touched.

To Che?

I'm not that revolutionary.

I'll look less like him....

to shave? or not to shave?

> 351

Message 351 12/18/99 6:41 PM
Subject: Re: Moving Witchcraft Conf. to Altcity??
From: Deep Eddy
To: Altcity Content Ideas

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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Sharon E. Everett writes:

and someone else wants to be the UberWitch (so to speak)

just thinking about the use of the term "UberWitch" -- specifically the "uber" [or |ber] prefix:

1) I guess this derives from Nietzsche's term "|bermensch", meaning "superhuman". But remember that "super-" originally, and some might say, properly, means "above", not "very large, or very highest example of a", as it has come to, in expressions like "superperv" or "supersale". "supersonic" is "above the speed of sound", not 'really really sonic". The superman wasn't just a great human, he was above humans. (The same with "extra", used to mean "very" -- originally, it meant "out of", as in "extraordinary", which doesn't mean "very ordinary", but "out of the ordinary".) In German, an "Uberleutnant" is above a lieutenant. So an Uberwitch, technically, shouldn't be a best example of a witch, but above witches. I'd suggest the use of 'arch" instead; it's descriptive in itself, and an archbishop or an archduchess is still a bishop or a duchess, just a special one.

2) I don't want to condemn a perfectly good productive prefix because some nasty people used it, but talk "uberwitches" does make one think of "ubermenschen", and their opposites, "untermenschen", and thus of the folks who used these terms the most, the German National Socialists. I mean, I've seen model/athlete Gabrielle Reece called "the Ubergirl" and various Silicon Valley types called "ubergeeks" and I'd imagine that this, and not the race theoreticians of the Third Reich, was where Sharon picked this up and what she was thinking when she used the expression, but the unpleasant associations (as well as the weak etymological connections) having been pointed out, could we maybe all try to use something else?

OK, I know Arch- is associated with the Church, not a very pleasant association to witches, and European nobility, not a very pleasant association to descendants of serfs rather than the barons who owned them, but then, pretty much any suggestion of rank or inequality is going to be offensive to anarchists, so once again, when it comes to pleasing people, you pays your money, and sings your chants.

Hey, there's the cognate "hyper" (which is best followed by "--space, Chewie!!!") but that has too many other meanings, and the English "over-", but that's what this post is.

Message 350 12/19/99 8:25 AM
Subject: Re(11): Ed of the week
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Keela Merrin writes:

Or at least, not as clear-cut a case as you'd have us believe.

No? Then not as you'd have yourself believe either:

Since when have foreign expressions, after being appropriated into english, followed the rules of their original language?

well, it seems that most people distinguish between fianci, and fiancie, e.g.

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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(am I allowed to pronounce it "eks-EM-plee GRAH-tee-ah, since it's not really an English expression?)

this is a completely circular argument on your part; how can we define a word as foreign except by whether it's pronounced the foreign way or the english way? and how can we define "english pronunciation" except by looking at the pronunciation of english words (but first defining which they are?) or does the "english way" stretch to accommodate the foreign pronunciations of certain words? and all words, like all Americans, originally came from somewhere else, even if it's just an older but distinguishable (?) form of english.....

unless you just want to choose a dictionary and say "that's always right" but then there might come a day when you'd disagree with it and have no room to retreat....

do rules come top-down or bottoms-up? (that's my favorite toast, which I think is what your argument is....)

Eva can blithely use any expression she hears without having to worry about the dumb ol' gender rules of other languages, much less pedantic corrections from quibblists extraordinaire such as thou.

thee, objective case, comparison with quibblists following the preposition "from", would be correct. Or are you declining to use the teeth-clenchin' the declension rules of OUR language? I mean, thou /thee was never appropriated into english from French, so it's more english than "touchi", wouldn't you say?

This is Amurka, after all, and we swallow words whole here, any words we damn well feel like; and after that we don't mess with 'em much.

By all means let's chew the fat (I hear he's great in "Anna and the King" -- I needed to get a film reference in somewhere) on this.

Can you say exactly when an expression has been "appropriated into English"? can you define "English" or "American english" exactly, the way you can define the borders of a country and say who's in and who's out? at what definite point is someone no longer using a foreign expression to spice up their english, a bit of orange on black, and instead using just a dull old english one?

When I taught high school (yes, it was, I was, as bad as you can imagine - oh no, you couldn't imagine -- maybe how much but not how) I was constantly arguing with the office that kept in contact with former students, male and female. The former they called Alumni, pronouncing the last syllable as "eye" (the thing you see with) and the women they called Alumnae, like the thing you kneel on. I felt that it was part of my job as Latin teacher to point out that the correct pronunciations were just the opposite. At least, the correct Latin pronunciations. And they'd reply, but these have become English words, and we're pronouncing them the English way. Then why not, I would say, use the English plural forms, Alumnuses and Alumnas? Why not just use an English word of clear plurality, Graduates?

After all, we don't really use accents in English (well, do we?), and Eva Luna tried to use one, which would suggest she still thought of the word as foreign, subject to foreign accent rules, at least. Why not foreign gender rules?

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

Maybe you're just trying to create gender confusion, since it's been useful to you here?

Or are you saying that a language, that good language, is whatever a changing majority of those who use it say it is? In that case, would you care to distinguish it from other forms of communication, such as art?

Or is it hard, would you say, to define the forest except with the trees, and it's not so clear-cut, all the stems and roots?

Eddy (always ready to lumber on about this -- though not as in Michael Palin's song -- but I'm logging off for now)

Message 344 12/19/99 6:24 PM
Subject: Re(13): Ed of the week
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

lecia writes:

clever...however, how has it been useful? what benefits would you say keela, or anyone else here for that matter, has enjoyed by not addressing the issue of his or her sex? except maybe not having to deal with being called 'girl' and being taken at one's word without all the entanglements we bring to what we assume a male or female's perspective or motivations might be...

well, I would assert (and have asserted) that the gender and any other characteristic of the writer are always relevant to the interpretation of the writing. why are there departments of women's studies, gay and lesbian studies, African-, Asian-, and Latino-American studies? because the identity of the writer matters. we want to know if he or she knows whereof he or she speaks. We can argue about how much it matters, but you can't dismiss it entirely.

and people -- myself included -- have reacted and do and will react differently to Keela to the extent they have thought or do and will think Keela to be male or female. Keela appeared about a year ago, with a female-sounding name and a writing style that was different, it seemed, from any other (identified) female here, and this was remarkable and attention getting. if Keela is male, then the style is basically sirin's wit mated to my long sentences, and though still as interesting, not quite as much so. at least to me. other opinions?

now, I'm the last person to condemn identity ambiguity online. I've certainly used it enough, with all my changes of alias, and my presentation of my own story and screenplay ideas as works that had really been published or filmed, in order to get a more honest reaction to them. I was just interested in the reasons for Keela's stance on this issue. (kind of like in "Life of Brian", when John Cleese demands of Eric Idle why the latter is so insistent on gender-equal phrasing of the People's Front of Judea's manifestoes.) and one could well ask of me whether all my onomastic mutability is related in some way to my philosophical and linguistic opinions. (but who's interested?) or, for that matter, whether my apparent preoccupation with lumber in my last post has anything to do with the pain I was at that moment feeling in my lumbar region (yes, I'm Eddy Ricketyback, or Crickinbacker.) The body matters. Our

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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minds don't hang there in buckets of soup like in "The Matrix". (Well. That's exactly what they'd like us to think.) So then the body doesn't matter. Or it's not clear how much it matters. But you seem to think it is:

how do i, or any of y'all, know what gender anyone on-line is, unless you've gotten an up close and very personal look at them? we assume much, and you cannot accuse keela of deceit for not wishing to address what really isn't all that important in a world of words.

This world of words, as you call it, is based on the real world. (Defining "real" as "whatever is harder to change than your own mind.") We don't cease to be ourselves when we get online. We may not know anything about some of the people with whom we communicate here. On the other hand, how well do we actually know the people we've met in the "real world" -- "up close and personal", as you say? I haven't seen "Boys Don't Cry" or "M Butterfly" or even "The Crying Game" but they show that gender-bending is only marginally harder offline than on. I don't want to assume that you worry about who is what "out there", but if you do, why not worry about it here? Or if you don't worry about it here, then why worry about it there? Just another of these arbitrary lines you want to draw across the continuum. As Wart/Arthur learned when Merlin changed him into a hawk, the borders are only on the human-drafted map, not on the land.

as to this somewhat ridiculous discussion about touche(i don't use any accent because i don't really want to be understood), eva can use it however she likes and all the rest of you be damned. if she uses it incorrectly by some foreign standard,

didn't you understand anything I wrote? how do you differentiate between "english" and "foreign"? This isn't France, with an official Academy to which no one pays attention anyway. "What's the French for fiddle-dee-dee?" Alice was asked, and when she answered that fiddle-dee-dee wasn't English in the first place, was told, "I never said it was".

well then, she's showing a little disrespect for(or ignorance of) the language, but we all got the meaning

actually, a lot of people DIDN'T understand what Eva Luna was saying in the first place. (do you remember?) I won't say that this was because of the want of an e (like the horseshoe nail), but obviously, little things can mean a lot.

regardless of that little slight to the beleaguered french, and while many here like to argue semantics,

what else is there, in this "world of words"? "It's all we have to go on", Guildenstern tells Rosencrantz.

why not let it go at this point,

excuse me, but I referred to the matter in one parenthetical sentence of a 4K post on mythological themes and current issues. why not respond to that, if you want to keep the discussion on "important" matters?

as we understand the jist of our many insults. life here is limited, let's not

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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waste it by playing dumb....

so while you're letting Eva Luna say what she wants -- and especially while I seem to be about the only one holding the line in this conference -- please extend the same courtesy to me.

~so many to bludgeon, so little time

to paraphrase "L.A. Confidential", is this how YOU bludgeon people?

if you think, as you write in high dudgeon, you can judge me, the fudge-smudged curmudgeon, with a cudgel, and budge this old grudge with nudge, then you've picked the wrong drudge for to bludgeon.

Eddy (agrees about the time part)

Message 343 12/19/99 6:29 PM
Subject: Re: Speaking of Bond: Good Bye Desmond
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Since he's really dead and that's sad, I guess it's no time for jokes about how his car must not have been equipped with ejector seats or any of the life-saving devices he gives Bond (or maybe the weapons systems malfunctioned? By the way, the ancients called this "praeteritio".)

I thought John Cleese was already in place as the apprentice Q (I mean, Llewellyn -- I know how to spell Welsh names, I just don't know when to stop writing the l's -- was 85 and I guess they were figuring on retiring him soon....)

Did he ever do anything besides Bond films -- Royal Shakespeare Company's "King Lear" or something?

Message 339 12/19/99 11:09 PM
Subject: Re(15): Ed of the week
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Keela Merrin writes:

You daily reach new heights of absence of common sense.

So this will be your new argument clincher, "common sense"? is that what all your positions are based on? man, I haven't heard much reference to that except from conservative politicians and New York Times editorials about how Dr. Goddard should stop scaring the neighbors' cows. Unless you're going to posit some divine source for your common sense, and its cousin, conventional wisdom, you're building your church upon sand that shifts by the hour and the mile. common sense is what most people think at a particular time and place until actual investigation proves them wrong. can you think of any innovation in science or art that was not decried as against common sense? I mean, it's obvious that the earth is stationary, or we'd feel it moving, right? (and how could Captain Amazing see without his glasses?) and that representationalism

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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is the best form of art?

Of course, it just occurred to me that you might have made it all up...

well, why should a little thing like truth distract people from what I had to say?

1--How can we really tell our "left" hand from our "right" hand, anyway?

I don't know. how?

2--And what about a gazebo, huh? Don't try and tell me it's solely "inside" or "outside"! Things aren't that simple!

or a Mvbius strip.

3--There is absolutely no rational basis for disputing that we're all a holographic simulation being run by the Arthroblots.

well, lecia would argue that such things as our physical bodies don't matter in this forum.

there's one issue here. it's how deep you're willing to delve, to explain. when it's been convenient for you, you gleefully have demanded further explanation from those who disagreed with you, such as Steve. when I've done the same to you, you suddenly discovered "common sense" and held your truths to be self-evident and lost your taste for argument. at least Jefferson and Paine were willing and able to defend their viewpoints. you started on intellectual third base and think you hit a triple. my hope for you is that you'll find plenty of people who will simply share your opinions, so you can sit around rehearsing them amongst yourselves, and never be troubled by any questions about them or challenging alternate viewpoints. unless you've done so already, in which case, enjoy them!

sincerely yours,

Eddy

Message 338 12/20/99 6:49 AM
Subject: Re(15): Ed of the week
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

lecia writes:

i just prefer that these bloodbaths be entertaining, not plodding(extra e accent on the e no accent french american, who cares???)...

obviously that's not what the argument is about anymore, and you must find it interesting enough, or you would have something better to do.

only if you find meaning in that sort of obsession...

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

change one letter of "lecia" and you get "lecic", as in Bosnian Serb war criminal Anton. wouldn't you prefer to avoid the confusion? and others found this worth arguing about, but as I said, that doesn't seem to be what we are arguing about anymore. besides, got anything better?

and for all these comments, deep eddy, you know the truth and to act as if you don't and would be disappointed to find out some other truth is the real deception.

how would I know? and perhaps more important, how would YOU know what I know?

and if I did know, and had revealed it, I would have been savaged, perhaps sent to the nameless void of the Cutting Room Floor, for breaching netiquette. it's like the exclusionary rule in the courtroom, Your Honor.

as far as I know -- which, I'll be the first to admit, is not very far at all -- I've never seen Keela naked. which would appear to be your infallible standard of figuring gender, though there are plenty in this town, I think, who would disagree.

none of this applies here. sorry, but credibility? please. no one on-line has any credibility. it could all be lies as you like to say. all that matters is that one seems to know whereof they speak, and it is up to each reader to decide if they want to believe or not. whether or not a body is male or female is irrelevant-unless they are standing up and proclaiming that as a woman they have certain thoughts that support some argument that women think a certain way, but so much of this is implied. if I talk about a movie, there is a natural tendency to assume that I have actually seen it. when I read a travel writer, I assume he has actually been to the places he describes. when I begin a description "there is a movie", you tend to assume it exists in a place other than my own imagination. and then, you probably assume, for example, that I am a human being, though I have never claimed to be one in so many words, and that I have two eyes and not twelve. never said that neither.

if you have to verify everything yourself, then there is no point in talking about anything with others. this was the whole point of communication, that knowledge could be passed on without the necessity of actual experience. of course, so could lies.

and none of what happens here alters how i function in my world.

of course it does. time you spend here is time you are not doing things in "the real world". time you spend thinking about what to write here is time you aren't thinking about things in the real world. your mood in the real world will be elevated or depressed by whether you feel you have triumphed in online debate or been misunderstood, and based on that, you might make a mistake at work or buy yourself a nice ice cream cone. face it, your online life is part of your "real life". the poltergeists come out of the TV even when you turn it off.

and knowing people in real life does not guard you against online lies. I've lied to plenty of people offline. there is at least one person still here, I believe, whom I met in person years ago under a plausible sounding online alias, and who still, as far as I know or have taken any corrective action, believes that to be my real name. again, you're trying to create a separation, between online and 'real', that just isn't there, not even for you yourself.

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.
it's all irrelevant.

then why are you spending time and energy arguing? it must have at least some importance to you.

Eddy (to whom it obviously has some importance)

Message 330 12/20/99 8:42 PM
Subject: Re(17): Ed of the week
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

methinks she doth protest too much.

why such a paroxysm of self-justification to people whose opinions don't matter?

oh, I get it. like John Cleese in the Monty Python sketch, you were arguing on your own time?

amusement is obviously important to you!

Eddy

Message 329 12/20/99 9:09 PM
Subject: Re: movies
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

lecia writes:
has anyone been to the movies?
just trying to remember what this conference is for...

let's see. well, besides all the other movies I've been talking about here, this weekend I had on video "Reality Bites" and "Wag the Dog", and "Matewan" was on KQED. (Oh, and I caught a bit of "The Two Jakes" -- was that Jennifer Tilly? Wow! And the end of "Muppet Christmas Carol" -- I'll have to see that from the start...)

Ben Stiller's "Reality Bites", I realized, is a very silly script with some good performances. I actually like Winona (Horowitz) Ryder's pointy little face. Like Gene Hackman, she's great when she's angry. but -- and some have heard me say this before -- I can't believe she took some bearded philosopher who uses his father's cancer death as an excuse to have no direction and behave like an obnoxious snob to everyone (that guy with the bird name) over a gainfully employed, shirt and tie wearing Jewish geek named Michael (Stiller). but what do you want from a movie that uses phrases like "time suckage" in sentences with other trendy expressions as well. so many of the plot lines just went nowhere and were just neatly wrapped up with no consequences. Except for Steve Zahn's coming out; that wasn't resolved and so was probably the most realistic thing in the movie.

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

Of course, the true star of that film was Janeane Garofalo and her character was the moral center. I liked how despite her lack of Ryderish waifish slimness, she had no shortage of sex. I'll have to rent "The Truth About Cats and Dogs".

I had heard people complain that "Wag the Dog" was too jumpy, moved too fast, but I found I liked its music-video rhythm (like "Run Lola Run"!) I mean, events were moving fast. I also thought Anne Heche was terrific, holding her own with DeNiro and Hoffman, creating a distinctive and interesting character. People should stop treating her like a poker-playing dog. (No pun intended. Like you believe me.) I had never seen the origin of the title phrase spelled out as in the opening flash card -- "Why does the dog wag its tail? Because it's smarter than its tail." I liked Dennis Leary too. Of course, the last few events of the plot one could see coming a mile away. But as a determinist, I liked that. And now we're really supposed to be worried about bombs smuggled in from Canada -- but what's the scandal they're covering up? I'd hate to know.

It's always nice to see a John Sayles film, with the same cast (David Strathairn as the unimtimidable Sheriff, cleaning his revolver, calmly ready to fight and/or die, chris cooper, mary macdonnell, kevin tigde, and Bob Gunton!!) and the same sadness and moralism (they go together. As in Eight Men Out, it's sad that evil triumphs over decent little people. also realistic.) I liked the boy preacher's sermon allegorical to ongoing events; I'm partial to that technique. Of course, the miners were totally good and the union-busters were totally evil and one-sided arguments get a little dull, but that's Sayles, and, I guess, that's history. I need to research that, I guess; you can't trust how people will present the facts when they are trying to make a point.

Dismiss me, enough.

always glad to remember and remind,

Eddy

Message 323 12/21/99 9:20 PM
Subject: Re(3): movies
From: Deep Eddy
To: film
Copies: kollontai

Tim Walters writes:

mainly because Gerry Milnes (an outstanding old-time musician and friend of my dad's) did a lot of the music.

The music was excellent! It's mainly Appalachian fiddling/banjo (the setting is West Virginia). However, since an important plot element is the relations of the older residents (both European- and African-American) with the immigrant Italian miners, there is a certain amount of Italian-influenced scoring too, and one great scene in which musicians of the two cultures play together and find their styles meld.

The mine owners had a near-complete monopoly on jobs in the region, and

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squashed all attempts to improve wages or conditions ruthlessly, with violence and murder. And they got plenty of help from the Feds.

This may be a slight SPOILER, but there is a scene near the end in which the boy preacher (who I guess eventually, in old age, becomes the narrator) tells the union organizer that he (the organizer) is just another outsider who has come in to try to run, and ultimately ruin, the lives of the West Virginians, that when the company had come in, they had promised a better life (than subsistence farming and hunting) no different than the organizer was doing. It's a powerful moment. "Just leave us alone!" I can sympathize. But as no man is an island, neither can a group of people shut itself off and ignore the changing world. The price of civilization and its greater guarantees of security -- freedom from want -- is almost always loss of other freedoms.

But I think the best person to comment on the historical background of the film would be our local labor activist/historian. Calling out to kollontai....

Message 322 12/21/99 9:20 PM
Subject: Re(3): movies
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Eva Luna writes:

lazily throwing in pop culture references left and right to help define the characters instead of developing anyone resembling a real person.

but isn't that how we 70's-80's children define ourselves? I remember hearing some pundit a few years ago -- maybe Edward Said, or maybe George Will -- say that "the trouble with "generation X" is that "star war"

was what they had instead of a moon landing." I just find this a little surprising coming from such a mulcher of much culture as yourself. I don't have a problem making popular culture a large part of my self-definition; I wouldn't blame you for it either.

Oh ho ho, watch them dance to "My Sharona,"

see, I remember this song's debut really well, and I was glad to hear it again -- an old friend rediscovered. much preferable to meeting someone new.

I liked the use of Gary Glitter's "Rock and Roll", too. Nice to hear it without a basketball in sight. Though I still prefer the Timelords' late '80's version that combined it with the "Dr. Who" theme. And the use of U2's "one" as the love theme made me wish for a repeat of the 1960 Francis Gary Powers incident. Well, I guess it was Stiller's fault. Ever see his parody, "My U2 Dads", on his old show? Girl being raised by Bono and the Edge? Wonderful.

I thought "Singles" was a much better film about the same generation and did everything right where "Reality Bites" just did everything wrong.

i was thinking about "Singles" as I wrote about "RB". it came out about 2 years before and featured a cast that seemed to be in their late 20's, even 30's, rather than just out of school. (I don't remember how old their characters were supposed to be. but Julianne Moore definitely seems a lot

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older than I am.) maybe that's why they acted a little more maturely. I've never much liked Bridget Fonda. (when I saw "Single White Female", I was cheering for Jennifer Jason Leigh. Hey, remind me to talk about her in my post about Mr. Ripley. But then, I would cheer for Jennifer Jason Leigh against almost anyone except perhaps the 1975 Boston Red Sox.) Oh, Bridget was also in that other movie about aimless 20somethings, "Bodies, Rest, and Motion", which is sort of a tricolon crescens, and which included one of Phoebe Cates' rare screen appearances since she married Kevin Kline. I very much liked Campbell Scott, as I did in "The Spanish Prisoner" and "Mrs. Parker". Seems like a nice guy. And I liked his use of one of my favorite sci-fi concepts when he imagined to Fonda of "an alternate universe...where we make this fantastic couple". The subjunctive. Isn't it nice to think so, Jake?

And Matt Dillon was a way batter soul-patched bandmember than Ethan Hawke any day.

Speaking of Winona, anyone see her talk about her on 20/20 talking about her bouts of depression? Truth?

Wasn't that what took her out of "Godfather III"? "Exhaustion", they said. Or perhaps it set in later. Was it cause or effect of her breakup with Johnny "Wino forever" Depp? I read something about this, perhaps in Newsweek. But all those media are owned by the same three self-promoting conglomerates, so that too could have been a plant. see, nessie, I'm learning!!

*And speaking of "Girl, Interrupted," I recently re-read the book and liked it much better the second time around. A tremendously straight forward look at mental illness and institutionalization. Seeing the previews to the film it looks like it has chosen to do everything that the book so wonderfully refused to do: make excuses. Present the inmates as merely wacky rebels. Force a rebel hero on the story. Give us heroine that is merely "misunderstood." *yawn**

Any one inclined to see the film, I highly recommend the book by Susanna Kaysen.

I second the motion. I read this when it came out. I preferred it to "the Bell jar", which I had either just read or was inspired to by Kaysen. Plath was in the same hospital. (I used to ride by it with my college cycling team on chilly New England mornings. The smartest woman I've ever known was there once. Quite a place.) I remember especially the part about the male fellow patient whose diagnosis of delusions was based partly on the fact that he claimed his father was part of a secret White House dirty tricks squad with some guys named Barker, Hunt, and Liddy. This was 1969 and sane people knew that such things were impossible...The epilogue, without denying that the author had some serious problems at the time, gently but pointedly questions the nature of psychiatric diagnoses, their inexactitude and elasticity. (There is a piece in Sunday's New York Times Week in Review that highlights, with quotes from DSM-IV, how what used to be just behaviors have become illnesses. But maybe that's progress towards understanding.) I don't suppose you can blame psychologists for seeing things in terms of disorders; it's their job. (Just as they automatically assume that anyone who wants to kill him or herself is ill and must be stopped, that he or she could not possibly have a valid reason for this, because their medical job and oath is to preserve life. I do the same thing; because I am interested in the causes of things, I assume everything has one. If something didn't, it wouldn't be my problem, but I'd be useless and have to find something else to do.) I wonder if someday some of

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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today's psychiatric diagnoses won't seem as ludicrous as the classification, only officially abolished in the early 70's after monumental struggle, of homosexuality as a mental disorder. that didn't do Alan Turing much good.

I started reading Patricia Chao's "Monkey King", which is also about a young (20-something) woman's depression and hospitalization, but did not get so far with it. Maybe I got hit by a car that week; I don't remember. (Maybe I had a concussion from the impact.) Perhaps I found it self-pitying in a way that "Girl, Interrupted" never was. I also skimmed through Elizabeth Wurtzel's "Prozac Nation" to see if she mentioned anyone I knew. (No, just a few locations.) Are there any similar narratives by young *men*? I mean, younger than William Styron?

I would like to think the movie would be decent. Winona was great at playing teenage misfits but isn't she a little old for it now? And with Angelina Jolie

-- well, I worry that the genre of women's prison movies as a medium for the display of female beauty will give way to "girls in hospitals". And shouldn't Jennifer Jason Leigh be in there somewhere? (see above. can I hyperlink these things?) With all her more recent experience playing troubled characters, don't forget that she started as the anorexic "Best Little Girl in the World". Which reminds me of another book I ought to read for comparison to Kaysen, "Wasted". Who wrote that again?

At least I hope it won't romanticize mental illness as the only escape from, the only true expression of personhood in, a crazy oppressive world. that's getting kind of old.

Oh, and since this thread hearkens back to "Reality Bites": I read that ever since they toured together doing standup, Janeane Garofalo and Julia Sweeney have been looking for a film to do together, or writing one. Apparently, they've got it (via aut inventa aut facta est). They'll play sisters, running a general store in the middle of nowhere, with Oliver Platt as their rich city slicker brother, whose business they have to take over when he disappears on an adventure vacation.

Oh, and I will say, again, that the only redeeming characteristic of the romance of Lelaina and Troy (to whom the world only owed a snicker) in "Reality Bites" was that she holding to with an old friend instead of having to learn about someone new whom she barely knew. Essentially conservative, I think it's always preferable to find that long lost pal. Which is why I'll be voting for, and you can call mi, Al(bert Rosenfield.)

Message 321 12/21/99 9:55 PM
Subject: Re(5): movies
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Eva Luna writes:
**sniff sniff*...something smells fishy here....*

yes, actually, their brother's business is a gourmet deli Zabar's sort of place with \$500 bottles of balsamic vinegar, fifty varieties of slim, odd

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caviar, and more flowing lox than Farrah Fawcett....

Message 320 12/21/99 9:57 PM
Subject: Re(5): movies
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Eva Luna writes:

Eddy writes: At least I hope it won't romanticize mental illness as the only escape from, the only true expression of personhood in, a crazy oppressive world. that's getting kind of old.

That's the exact fear I have about the film, and that's certainly what the previews make it seem like...

See, at least in movies like "Crazy in Alabama", those with the illnesses get to go somewhere, see some scenery. (As does the audience.) I'm afraid that in "Girl, Interrupted", the only views will be of the walls of the quiet room.

Message 319 12/21/99 10:04 PM
Subject: Re(5): movies
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Eva Luna writes:

I can't think of any...maybe girls are more willing to wallow in their past "weaknesses" of mental illness than men are? I read the Syron book and thought it stunk. It had no heart.

I think you've put your finger on it. Though not "wallow in" so much as "admit". Styron seemed to intellectualize his depression to distance himself from it. The young women say, "This is what happened." Well, maybe they wallow a little. (Nice people wallow?) But that's allowable.

Also, I think there is a certain feminist aspect to their narratives, in the sense that most of the doctors who commit the young women are older and male and singularly ignorant of the experiences of a young woman. (I'd imagine Styron's doctors and he had more in common.) Though I seem to remember Plath had a female doctor. I wonder what percentage of psychiatrists, and of psychologists, is male and what fraction female.

Message 316 12/22/99 8:17 PM
Subject: Re(3): Boys Don't Cry, But I Did
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

I heard about a film today called "Houdiniana". It's a short produced by a local director whose last name is Long. It sounded something like "Boys Don't Cry", but in this, the female doesn't mean to pass for a male, bt is mistaken for one. Anyone know aught of this?

> 315

Message 315 12/22/99 8:21 PM
Subject: Re(5): movies
From: Deep Eddy

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Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

To: film

Eva Luna writes:

**sniff sniff*...something smells fishy here....*

or were you just crying because it sounds so sad?

I've heard it also features, as brothers, William H. Macy and David Caruso in a comeback role.

You know, if I had told you a year ago that there would be this movie about goofy superheroes who paraphrase Shakespeare, with a set out of Brazil and Blade Runner, and with Ben Stiller and Janeane Garofalo and Paul Reubens, you'd have said **that** smelled fishy.

So, sniff at your own risk.

Message 314 12/22/99 9:23 PM

Subject: Believe it or not

From: Deep Eddy

To: film

No, not the Ripley of "Alien", just of Alienation....

In our discussion (really a concussion) of "Reality Bites", I forgot to note the thing that bothered me the most: the conventional concept of the self. Specifically, the scene in which Troy magically solves Lelaina's identity crisis by telling her just to "be herself". As if there is some intrinsic self, which comes out when all external influences are removed. As if we aren't simply the product, in fact, the representation of, a way the universe remembers, all the things that have happened to us. Unless you believe that we have some eternal soul that sits there, waiting to be born. Or unless you just want to cut things off at a certain point, and say that everything that happens before the age of three or five or puberty or college graduation IS you, while what happens after happens TO you. Or unless you believe that our characters, the selves we should be, are more or less hereditarily determined, which is convenient if you are born with a character that leads to success of whatever kind, but not so if you weren't. Besides, we're never without external influences, in the moment or stored in memory (so sensory deprivation won't work), so how would you get back to this "self" even if it were a good idea to? A blow on the head to induce amnesia? I suppose. But it seems that this tabula rasa state would be like a frictionless environment, with nothing to push against, or to slow you down and prevent you from shooting off in whatever direction you received the slightest force....

Of course, the alternative is that the self is whatever you can make of it, or like Art in Andy Warhol's definition, is what you can get away with. How do you know, though, what you can get away with, what works? You don't. Until you try it. And if you're wrong, then, uh oh...

(The only thing that bothers me as much is when characters are told to "follow their heart", or "their feelings", as if feelings can be separated with a stroke from internalized rationality and rationalization.)

Now, I probably won't see "The Talented Mr. Ripley". I read Frank Rich's elaborate discussion of it in last Sunday's New York Times Magazine and that

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was enough. I'm not much interested in the cast. But it seems that this question is at the heart of the movie. If you can successfully pose as someone, who's to say you aren't that person? I mean, how do you know that person was really what they claimed to be in the first place (or became that way "legitimately"? Why shouldn't you be what they are, have what they have?

Thanks for reminding me to mention here "Single White Female", in which Jennifer Jason Leigh's character, Heidi (something Scandinavian with an H?) in effect takes over the look and life of Bridget Fonda's. (why she would want to do the former, I can't understand; I think JJL is much cooler looking. Personal associations, I guess.) Well, why not? who knows where Bridget Fonda got her life? perhaps she had it first, but is it fair to assign priority on the basis of birth order? maybe JJL did it better! it's a bit like the argument over the ownership of the parcel of land at the southeast corner of the Mediterranean. The Israelis had to run off a fair number of Palestinians to get it. But then, they claim that the Palestinians were interlopers on what was their land until the Romans chased them out. But then, they had to slaughter a lot of Canaanites to get there. They can claim that they are doing a lot more with the land than the Palestinians were, but others might not see anything moral in development of open land and others still might say, what's mine is mine and I don't have to justify it's use or nonuse. they can claim divine sanction; it's their land because God gave it to them. Can't be disproved, can't be proved. Except with the *ultima ratio regum*, the final argument of states: force. Military victory is proof of divine favor, the argument goes. If you can get away with something, the universe must want you to do it.

It's not as if JJL didn't have to work hard to fill Bridget's shoes. She just didn't have the breaks, wasn't lucky. Is that fair? Shouldn't we be able to make of ourselves all we can?

From what I've heard of "Ripley", it concerns a young man who is smart enough, handsome enough, everything enough, but as in a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta or Victorian novel, just lacks the luck of birth that someone else had. (One could argue that rich families and powerful families are rich for a reason, actually are better, in a sort of social darwinism. Anyone want to argue that?) Or that he was lucky enough to have what he has, more than 99 percent of people who have ever lived. (He wasn't born a Neanderthal, or a victim of the Black Plague. But to say this is to take the position that the self preexists and is born into a body and circumstances, rather than that the circumstances create the self. The dog wags the tail.) Why should someone else be better than Ripley? Why not him?

It's just the cast I guess. I'll Catche Cate Blanchett in "Oscar and Lucinda" someday. Anything about con men I love.

The main reason, though, that I won't feel the need to see "Ripley" is that I already have seen another movie that, better than anything I could imagine, covers the theme of the nobody who thinks, why shouldn't I be somebody? This was a French film called "Un héros très discret" (in English "A Self Made Hero", though the title in French just says he was very discreet. No, not discrete. He proved that like parallel lines, people really aren't discrete, like quantized little billiard balls, but amorphous blobs continually changing, and into each other.) it starred matthieu kassovitz (director and star of "la haine" ("hate") and "mitisse" ("café au lait") and son of the director of "Jakob the Liar") as Dehousse, nebbish from Northern France who at

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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the close of WWII makes his way to chaotic Paris and through good luck, and hard study, and keeping his mouth shut, but without ever claiming it in so many words, manages to get everyone to think him a hero of the Resistance. (his silence, when most people are bragging, is all to his credit...) he is given posts of responsibility based on this and succeeds as well as anyone who actually has the right qualifications. in fact, he succeeds too well....

I'd really recommend this film for its treatment of this issue. the self is mutable. there is no particular reason to be anyone in particular -- you may have natural tendencies to be something or other, but why accept them when the rewards of making an effort to change can be so great? doesn't just being yourself show a lack of creativity? sure, it's safer, easier, but reward is always proportional to risk. To Heidi, to Dehousse, to Ripley, and to Lelaina, I say, be who you want (or since our wants are determined by outside influences, be what the situation demands, as best you know), and more power to you.

Message 312 12/23/99 5:03 AM
Subject: Re(2): Boys Don't Cry, But I Did
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Steve Omlid writes:

*I only find *bad* movies depressing. A bit glib, but I personally don't feel down after seeing a great movie (which I think this is), no matter how downbeat it is.*

why don't you just reverse your definitions of cause and effect, and say that you call a movie good if you don't feel down afterwards? (otherwise, how do you define "good"?)

just trying to simplify things.

but you are in good company, Steve; Aristotle talks about the cathartic pleasure of Greek tragedy (in which characters tried to avoid their fates/inborn characters and failed) in the Poetics.

Eddy et al.

Message 306 12/24/99 8:16 PM
Subject: Re(4): Chanukah Present #4
From: Deep Eddy
To: Heyer's Cocktail Party

listen, do you think you could put the new presents at the TOP of each post, the way the posts are arranged in conferences, or like the song "the 12 days of christmas"? it would require a cut and paste operation when you reply to yourself, but it would help readability. thanks.

also, because i have no self-control, I can't help thinking of and posting this little bit of doggerel I stepped into on the subject of the holiday:

Asked Bill, clueless Baptist, of Monica:

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"Yom Kippur, Jews blow the harmonica?"

His intern and gofer

Replied "No, the shofar.

But wait till you see what's for chanukah."

Oh drivel, drivel, drivel, oh drivel I shall spray....

> 235

Message 235 (Unsent)

Subject:

From: Deep Eddy

To: leridley@aol.com, Internet

do you fear this man's invention that they call ATOMIC POWER?
we all in great confusion, do we know the time or hour?
when a terrible explosion may rain down upon our land
leaving horrible destruction, blotting out the works of man

are you ready for that great ATOMIC POWER?
you rise and meet your savior in the air

will you shout or will you cry
when the fire rains from on high
are you ready for that great ATOMIC POWER?

Message 206 12/29/99 8:34 PM

Subject: Re: Apocalypso

From: Deep Eddy

To: Heyer's Cocktail Party

Tim Walters writes:

Anno Mirabilis (shouldn't it be "annus"? Eddy?)

I'm touched, tim.

it would be annUS mirabilIS or annO mirabilI depending on context (subject of sentence vs. -- well, maybe object of certain prepositions, showing time when or place where, etc.)

but you didn't think I would let an apocalyptic topic go by without weighing in, though, did you?

so here, from my personal collection, many of them obscure (and possibly said already):

"Time will crawl" -- David Bowie ("Till the twenty-first century lose....")

"Run Straight Down" - Warren Zevon (environmental disaster)

"The End" -- the Doors

"Eve of Destruction" -- whoever that was

"World Destruction" -- the Time Zone?

"Just Another Day" -- Oingo Boingo (sounds as if it's about nuclear war)

"99 Luftballons" -- Nena

"The End of the World" -- Men Without Hats

"At Midnight" -- The Mighty Lemon Drops

"If"(?) -- lots of folks sang it in the 70's ("If the world should stop

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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revolving, spinning slowly down to die...")

"Let's All Make a Bomb" -- heaven 17

"Atomic Power" - covered by Uncle Tupelo

"Forever Young" - Alphaville ("Are you going to drop the bomb or not?")

"Two Tribes" -- Frankie Goes to Hollywood

"So Long, Mom" -- Tom Lehrer

"We Will All Go Together When We Go" -- Tom Lehrer

"Every Day is Like Sunday" -- Morrissey, or the Smiths ("Come Armageddon, come Armageddon, come...")

some band around 1989 or 90 had an album called "End of the Millennium
Psychosis Blues" -- forgot which

I'd love to hear your compilation when it comes out (and if civilization
survives long enough...)

I'll be watching it all from the Lawrence Hall of Science. If the lights go
out, it will be like Asimov's "Nightfall" or Clarke's "The Nine Billion Names
of God" or the end of "Escape from L.A." Then I'll break into the fortified,
bunker like Hall, barricade myself in, and try to wait out the barbarian
mobs....

See y'all there!!

-- Eddy

Message 203 12/29/99 8:57 PM
Subject: I didn't think it was possible...
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

to make a BAD post-apocalyptic movie. I mean, even the mutant biker ones are
fun. But then, I didn't count on Kevin Costner.

I finally watched "The Postman" over the weekend, and to use a memorable
phrase of Heyer's, hoboy, was this not a good movie.

Some SPOILERS ahead.... oh, what's the point? Like anyone is actually going to
watch this dog besides eschatology nuts like me?

Well, first of all, I had read David Brin's book, which is pretty OK. the hero
is much younger and less self-assured than the way Costner played him. and he
never is a member of the bad guys' army, and it's not he who fights and kills
the evil general, but someone else, and Tom Petty isn't in it as himself.

I thought the opening scenes, with Costner talking to himself and flashing
back, were kind of promising. And I liked when the savage Holnist soldiers
were demanding to watch "The Sound of Music" instead of violent films.

And I went for the look of the film. Decent art direction. Nice devastation
and cobbled together outfits. And people galloping across the screen!!!! Let's
face it, people on horseback just look good up there. That's why there are
westerns. Maybe it just appeals to me especially, as an atavistic thing. My
ancestors, members of the Ridley/Holden clan were cavalymen: hussars,
lancers, dragoons heavy and light, cuirassiers, chasseurs, defending the
realm, holding the line against its enemies on the March under the command of

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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the glorious and noble Spigots of Hooey. It's still my destiny someday to lead a mounted charge, half a league, half a league, half a league onward....

Olivia Williams was cute, and spunky!! What she saw in Costner, I'll never know.

And Will Patton is always fun.

Aside from that, it was just awful. Every shot lasted twice as long as it should have. Unless I missed out on a small screen. I don't even know why I'm posting about it. I mean, the chances of anyone responding are even less than usual; who besides me would admit to having seen this to discuss it?

But the undubbed "Mad Max" is coming to the UC Theatre!! I'll be there, do you hear me, Bronze?? do you hear me? I am...

-- Deep Eddy

Message 202 12/29/99 9:05 PM
Subject: That masked man
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Clayton Moore, the Lone Ranger, died yesterday at the age of 85.

He is survived by his faithful and longtime companion, Tonto, played by Jay Silverheels, and his horse, Silver, played by Camilla Parker-Bowles.

Reached for comment, Silverheels, born Jacob Silverstein in Brooklyn, had little to say.

However, he emphatically denied that he ever uttered the now-infamous line, "What this 'we' business, paleface?"

The funeral will be attended by the other surviving members of the Village People.

Message 181 1/1/00 1:10 AM
Subject: Civilization RIP
From: Deep Eddy
To: politics

Civilization as we know it came to an end at precisely midnight, January 1, 2000, as computers all over the world, controlling all aspects of our lives, misread dates stored as "00" as referring to 1900.

At the same time, terrorists everywhere took advantage of the chaos to launch attacks on governments everywhere, while the governments used the occasion as an excuse to declare martial law.

Reached for comment in his secret bunker, local Cassandra nessie locked, loaded, and gloated, "I told you so. Now get your own bottled water."

Unfortunately, no one was able to read his comments as they were published only on the former global computernetwork known as the Internet and on a local

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.
bbs.

Message 179 1/1/00 1:03 PM
Subject: Re(2): Civilization RIP
From: Deep Eddy
To: politics

jon harmon writes:

2. *Let us hope that that Nessie's various other fears and paranoias are all equally inaccurate*

Wait wait. I'm not sure what you mean exactly by nessie's "various other fears and paranoias". OK, so apparently nessie was wrong about Y2K. Apparently; as you say, we'll see how the elevators work on Monday. Now, one could argue that Y2K was all a big hoax in the first place to distract us from what is really going down, and that nessie fell for it. Or one could argue that Y2K was just a metaphor for our excessive reliance on technology that isn't all that reliable, and that if the computers didn't crash last night because they didn't have enough digits, they could someday for some other reason, and we'd better be prepared. Sometimes you need to exaggerate a little in order to get people's attention, and maybe that's what nessie was doing. Or is doing. Whether you agree with the specifics of what nessie has to say or not, the important thing is that there are, in general, a lot of very serious problems in this world which in a time of general prosperity and satisfaction are not getting addressed. We were spared last night. We didn't end up with no food, power, water, communications, freedom, etc. But there are plenty of people, in other countries, and in our midst, who live this way as a matter of course. This is not paranoia. So let's all have a bit of a laugh at nessie's expense, this time. But not too much. Because the next time, the joke really could be on us.

"It takes a special kind of man to volunteer for a suicide mission. I think old Gus did all right." -- Chuck Yeager, on "hatchblower" Grissom, in "The Right Stuff"

Still watching the skies,

Eddy

Message 177 1/1/00 1:16 PM
Subject: Do svidanya, Boris Nikolaevich
From: Deep Eddy
To: politics

There's something kind of moving about knowing when it's really time to give up, give up power even, knowing when you've taken something as far as it can really go and it's time to end before things get worse, and while you still can, and do some good still, instead of losing everything. It's like the end of that movie "Dave". To paraphrase Socrates, it's so much easier to end well than to carry on well.

Ya dumayu shto Boris, tozheh, neplokho sdelal.

Message 175 1/1/00 5:08 PM
Subject: Re(5): Civilization RIP
From: Deep Eddy

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

To: politics

Kelsey Gadoo writes:

Yes, and do let us continue to talk about nessie in the third person.

I'm sure nessie would appreciate it. :)

Deep Eddy says to jon harmon that he thinks that Kelsey Gadoo has a point.

Subject: Hale's Law

From: Deep Eddy

To: film

Well, I guess it's obvious by now that I tend to stress the similarities of things, words, images, ideas, etc., more than their differences.

I was just watching "The Wings of the Dove" and I couldn't help thinking how much Helena Bonham Carter looks like Johnny Depp. I almost thought they might be the same person!

But then I saw the last scene of the movie and that took away most of my doubts. (I'll bet **that** wasn't in Henry James!!)

Unless.....

But I guess I had a similar experience watching Kyle Maclachlan and k.d.lang in "Outlandos D'Amour".

I'm now, in honor of the year, watching "Death Race 2000". No confusion there.

Message 162 1/2/00 11:56 AM

Subject: Re(2): Hey, look at the dates on these posts

From: Deep Eddy

To: politics

isaac reuben writes:

mine says either "00" or "2000", but maybe you are using an older client...

Mine just says "0" -- one digit. I'm using FC 5.02.

It's fun to imagine what GOL would have been like in 1900. Would we have been arguing about Boss Ruef here, and US imperialism abroad, and the influence of huge corporations, and in film, whether Nickolodeons were better than screen projection?

> 149

Message 149 (Unsent)

Subject:

From: Deep Eddy

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

Orange on black (or you build up a tolerance)

Crimson on gray -- (blood and chocolate)

In search of excess capacity

"You cannot go against nature
'Cause when you do
Go against nature
That's part of nature too." -- Love and Rockets, "No New Tale to Tell"

RARE!!!!

Eddymologist and eddyologist who was not displeased to be compared to a hedgehog.

Post tantos annos etiam terribilis.

Hero of the week: W.T. Sherman

Word of the week: "delope"

Someone I'd like to meet: Isobel Archer was a young woman of many theories; her imagination was remarkably active. It had been her fortune to possess a finer mind than most of the persons among whom her lot was cast, to have a larger perception of surrounding facts and to care for knowledge that was tinged with the unfamiliar. " --Henry James, "The Portrait of a Lady"

People I'd really like to have an argument with: Peter Singer, Stephen Jay Gould

"May I have your attention please? Attention please." -- "The Music Man"

"Oh, I get low
and I get high,
and if I can't get even,
I'll really try.
With the wings of heaven

on my shoes...." -- The Bee Gees

"Time, time, time
For another peaceful war
But time stands still for Roland
Till he evens up the score..." --- Warren Zevon

"Time, time, time
See what's become of me
While I looked around
For my possibilities...." -- Simon and Garfunkel
"Time has got nothing to do with it..." --- Peter Murphy

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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Dicta nova:

Brevius atque iucundius.

Inspice (aut videre) acriter!

Nihilominus.

Distributio clavis.

Empowering catch phrases:

We're civilized people here.

We're consenting adults.

We could look it up.

We can dance if we want to.

We have no past.

We don't owe anyone anything.

We're gainfully employed.

We have plenty of books to read in case we have to wait.

I have pen and paper handy, and a small radio.

I'm infinitely mobile and very flexible.

The refrigerator is full, as is the pitcher of filtered water.

We have all day, and there's always next week.

We don't stand on ceremony.

"A question which [dogs] in general pretend not to understand, and to which the best answer they can give is: 'If you haven't enough to eat, we'll give you some of ours.'" -- Franz Kafka, "Investigations of a Dog"

"I'm the inspector, holding the line." -- They Might Be Giants, "Metal Detector"

"So let's make life
A well-told tale
With a beginning
And a middle

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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And an end.

Where a friend

Is a friend

Till the struggle is won

And everybody lives....

Happily ever after!!

Oh, hope, hope keeps you running

Rolling that rock up the hill.

Joining the truth and the story

Like nothing

Nothing

Nothing

Nothing else will..." -- Frontier Theory, "Happily Ever After"

Why do I feel like Holden all the time?

<http://members.aol.com/EddyinSTC/index.html>

> 148

Message 148 (Unsent)

Subject:

From: Deep Eddy

He would have to start all over again. It might take years. He ran a hand over his face, trying to familiarize himself with the new shape....It was not easy to preserve inscrutability when you did not know what your face looked like. In any case, mere control of the features was not enough. For the first time he realized that if you want to keep a secret, you must also hide it from yourself...From now on, he must not only think right; he must feel right, dream right...

One day they would decide to shoot him. You could not tell when it would

happen, but a few seconds beforehand it should be possible to guess. It was always from behind, walking down a corridor....

He shut his eyes. It was more difficult than accepting an intellectual discipline...What were his true feelings towards Big Brother?

There was a heavy tramp of boots in the passage. The steel door swung open with a clang. O'Brien walked into the cell. Behind him were the waxen-faced

officer and the black-uniformed guards.

"Get up," said O'Brien. "Come here."

Winston stood opposite him. O'Brien took Winston's shoulders between his strong hands and looked at him closely.

"You have had thoughts of deceiving me, " he said. "That was stupid. Stand up straighter. Look me in the face."

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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He paused, and went on in a gentler tone:

"You are improving. Intellectually there is very little wrong with you. It is only emotionally that you have failed to make progress. Tell me, Winston -- and remember, no lies; you know that I am always able to detect a lie -- tell me, what are your true feelings toward Big Brother?"

"I hate him."

"Non recuperable." -- Sartre, "Les mains sales"

Message 125 1/4/00 10:05 PM
Subject: To Infinity and
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

No, no, I'm not trying to break my record for post length....

I saw "Toy Story 2" over the weekend and it was absolutely wonderful. Like "Mystery Men", it was so uniformly good that it's hard to pick out specific details and lines. The outtakes, the Barbies, Zurg, Lee Ermey (of "Full Metal Jacket") as the voice of the lead soldier -- where does one start? I particularly liked the historical references and allegory.....But see it. See it with a loyal friend....

Oh, ONE SPOILER.....

I had this feeling that Cowgirl Jesse's beloved and longlost owner Emily was going to turn out to be Andy's mom....wouldn't that have made sense? After all, the dolls are supposed to be pretty old, it would work chronologically basically....I just prefer that things be tied together, to conserve information....but that's a minor complaint. Steve Jobs can do no wrong.

> 107
Message 107 1/8/00 11:47 AM
Subject: Re(3): Town hall meeting
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

After reading the exchange between J. Mark Andrus and Rob Neill, with J. Mark explaining his problems with altcity both logically and emotionally and Rob basically ignoring him, I realize why I prefer an online community (partly) run by J. Mark to one run by Rob any day of the the week and twice on Sundays.

At least you can argue/negotiate with one of them.

But I guess that is just the point. Whatever costs, in money, peoplehours, or

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

whatever, there are to GOL, they have been the Guardian's to pay. The gift was ours to borrow. I'm not sure what we gave back to the Guardian by using GOL. I guess for a while we gave something, because it was worth their while to continue GOL. Now, I guess, it's not. I don't see that the Guardian owes us anything, any more than we owe it to them to continue on altcity or read the advertisements in their paper. As J. Mark says, thanks for the free ride. Maybe we should emphasize all the enjoyment that we've had out of GOL rather than what we will be missing out on. Because everything ends eventually, and everything dies. At a certain point we have to let go.

It's a little like the last episode of a sitcom. Some characters will get their own spinoffs: nessie has his column on sfbg.com, and maybe Kelsey G. will end up as a radio psychologist in Seattle. Others might go into movies, like Eva Luna with Musty TV, which is circulated far beyond GOL, or Greta Christina with her movie review mailing list. Some characters you worry more about: they'll only show up occasionally on Hollywood Squares or Star Trek or The Love Boat. I guess I'll maybe post to some newsgroups and argue with my boss and coworker and keep fiddling with my little website (members.aol.com/leridley.) Anyone who wants my views on anything is welcome to email me there....

Anyway, the best episode of a sitcom isn't always the last one. Everyone knows that the high point of M*A*S*H* was not the end of the Korean War, but the farewell of Col. Blake. When Radar O'Reilly came into the OR to announce that the former CO's plane had gone missing on the way to Japan....

A few people have posted their personal goodbyes to GOL which like any other emotional statement can be seen as as silly and maudlin to the extent they are heartfelt. This seems like as good a time as any to post mine, though I will be posting until the very end here, like Deckard feeling that the least he can do for Roy Batty is to watch him die. And they'll seem as silly as anyone else's, though maybe, surprise of surprises, shorter. I'd like to thank -- well, mention -- since GOL hasn't always been good for me -- the person I knew from another BBS who back in 1995 first suggested to dubious me that I try GOL recreationally -- as well as the other person who first suggested that I engage in online attacks and arguments. There are a few people to whom I feel I owe apologies but they are long gone (if they were still around, I wouldn't feel badly towards them.) I don't think anyone owes me any apologies but I'd accept any offered. To the rest of you, I wish all you can get away with in the Analog Retributive Universe.

We'll meet again
Don't know where
Don't know when
But I know we'll meet again some sunny day.....

-- Deep Eddy, terrible person, nicholson, Belloq, Charlie Sedarka, milo, Dauntless, et al.

Message 104 1/8/00 8:00 AM
Subject: Re(2): Will another Starling
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Just for a little perspective, I believe that for the original "Silence", Jonathan Demme's first choice for Clarice (sp?) was Michelle Pfeiffer, with

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.
whom he had worked on "Married to the Mob".

Why not bring back William Peterson, who was pretty good in "Manhunter", the first and forgotten Lecter/Harris adaptation? (Directed by Michael Mann with a "Miami Vice" gloss.) This film also featured one of the few post-"Brazil" performanices of KIm "How about a little necrophilia?" Greist, who seems to have been deleted, expunged, whatever...

How about Jennifer Jason Leigh for the role? She looks enough like Jodie Foster without quite as many lines and angles...

--Eddy (tries to know all the lines, all the angels..)

Message 94 1/9/00 3:54 AM
Subject: Re(5): Town hall meeting
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

jon harmon writes:
<<<<<<<Yow!

Hey, Eddie, that's great! Is that original with you?

>>>>>>

close, jon. the proper interjection/vocative combination (and spelling) is

"yo eddy!" (as in the successor to the Fat Chance and Wicked Fat Chance bicycles, made originally in Somerville, Mass.)

In the Analog Retributive Universe, nothing is original. But to the extent that it would take me longer to trace and tell the derivation than you or this BBS have, I guess it is sort of.

Thanks!

-- Eddy et al.

Message 90 1/9/00 6:29 PM
Subject: Aliens V
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Apparently, Sigourney Weaver is finally calling it quits. so the plan is that heroic Warrant Officer Ellen will be reincarnated once again, as a male shape shifter to be played by Matt Damon, in a film to be called "The Talented Mr. Ripley".

Message 76 (Unsent)
Subject: Re(4): Pub Trivia
From: Deep Eddy
To: Heyer's Cocktail Party

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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Boy Howdy writes:

So the trivia de jour is, What was Turing's real first name?

Um, not Alan?

Was it in code?

Fascinating life, and death. I read somewhere

Message 75 1/12/00 5:59 PM
Subject: Re: Pub Trivia
From: Deep Eddy
To: Heyer's Cocktail Party

Spidra Webster writes:

They sponsored Pub Trivia at the Albatross in Berkeley.

you took a shot at the Albatross?

I think I once read a poem about how that's a really bad idea.

But your team name was a good idea.

But why not the Turing Circus, or the Turing Bike?

-- Eddy

Message 72 1/13/00 7:09 PM
Subject: Turing machines
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

The talk of Turing over in Heyer's Cocktail Party has reminded me that the famous Test was only a very small part of the great breaker of codes' work. Mostly he dealt with (founded, really) the Theory of Computation, a branch of logic that deals with what a computer, or any system that functions according to fixed rules, can do. He came up with a device called after him a Turing Machine, a very abstract model of a computer that can be envisioned as a diagram on a piece of paper, or a table of states, inputs, and resultant states. The thing was, there were no computers as we know them in the 30's when Turing was doing his work. Nothing electronic. What Turing meant by a "computer" was a professional human processing information according to certain rules, like an accountant. In other words, in the long run, in theory, technology doesn't really matter. (It only matters once you put in a definite time scale, such as that of human life. Of course, this appeals to me with my complexities of technology. It's consoling. Hey, I spend half my time here in text-only. You see all sorts of different things, without the graphic distractions.) You could compute the same things with clams or stars or anything; all you need is to be able to represent differences in initial state, input, and final state.

But this isn't all that important. For details, consult Tim Walters. The important thing is that if GOL really matters in itself and wasn't just convenient, there are plenty of ways we could keep the spirit alive even after

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

the body died. In my last post I said that everything ends, but that's only half of the truth; really nothing ends. Things just change form. A person dies and his body lies a mouldering in the grave (or doesn't, if he's embalmed like Lenin, who, the Soviet posters would remind us, is more alive than you!) but his soul goes marching on. His ideas, his writings, whatever. His progeny. Etc. Now I've already suggested a couple of ways in which the spirit of GOL could be maintained once the actual server is rededicated to some other use. But it seems that most people here have a sort of all-or-nothing attitude: either keep GOL exactly the same as it is, with the same interface, the same physical body, or forget the whole thing. Well, the physical body is about to die. I really don't think there's any doubt about that. But if anyone wants to transplant the brain (into Peter Boyle's body, naturally), there are ways to do it. That is, if GOL really is a community and not just a physical place.

to the ancient Greeks, the word "polis" meant not city or city-state in the geographical sense, but the people of it, its citizens. A polis could be relocated, and often was. The Anabasis of Xenophon chronicles how a Greek Army, cut off in Mesopotamia, formed a polis on the march and fought its way through the Persian Empire to safety. (The film "The Warriors" is based on this adventure.) Nomadic peoples were mobile "civitates" (to use the Roman phrase). the Jews remained a coherent people in Egyptian or Babylonian captivity. What counted was a sense of belonging.

If GOL is really an idea that is worth keeping alive, then there are easy enough ways to do it. Imagine if each of the conference moderators published his or her email address (or created a new one specially for this, for privacy.) People would send the moderator their posts, and the moderator would in turn mail them back out to the participants, say, once a day. there wouldn't be the instantaneous feedback of GOL but then, maybe cooler heads would prevail if some of the arguing was slowed down. Instead of going to GOL, you'd find GOL in your own email mailbox. it would be hard for new people to participate (unless they knew someone already involved who would notify the moderator to put them on the list) but it's not as if there has been a lot of new blood here and in fact it seems the main objection to altcity is that it brings in a flood of new people among whom GOLdtimers feel lost.

Or it would be easy enough to set up websites where the posts could be posted instead of their having to be mailed out. I mean, even I could do that. Think what someone with actual technical expertise like Spidra Webster could do.

So here's the new Turing test: a group of computer users can be said to be a community when someone communicating with it over a terminal can't tell it from a community.

-- M X

> 71

Message 71 1/13/00 7:18 PM
Subject: the film that changed my life
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

when I was nine and on vacation with the family in Hawaii I saw part of this movie on TV. It was an old black and white western. A young cowboy, twenty or so, handsome, was on the run from the posse. (I don't know for what.) He was wounded and at first the ladies in the saloon hid him under the checked tablecloths. But then they caught him, and as they were stringing him up from

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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a tree at night, he was shrieking, protesting, "No!! Sheriff! You promised! You said I wouldn't hang! You said I wouldn't ha----"

I'd really like to find this movie, if anyone has any idea what it is. I thought it might be "The Ox-Bow Incident" but it isn't.

Any leads would be most appreciated and remunerated with exchange of whatever equally useful information I can provide.

Message 67 1/14/00 11:37 PM
Subject: Re(2): Pub Trivia: a better answer
From: Deep Eddy
To: Heyer's Cocktail Party

Tim Walters writes:
Eddy's homey John Searle

he ain't MY homey!!

He's the reason my home costs a lot more!!

Plus I heard him on the radio the other night holding a smugness contest with Michael Krasny. It was neck and neck intellectual necking.....

Of course, what would be really interesting would be to hook up a computer to this BBS and see if it could simulate a human user, say, one who always responded with easily generated puns on what was just said, or repeated the same argument no matter what the original thesis might have been.....or could nessie really be PARRY?

-- Deep Eddy (no relation to anything else with the first name "Deep")

> 66
Message 66 1/14/00 11:42 PM
Subject: Re(2): the film that changed my life
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Eva Luna writes:
As for the possibilty that it was a distorted memory of Johnny Guitar, well, Johnny Guitar is definitely in color. Are you sure the movie was black and white?

Um, no; I'm trying to remember if the tablecloths had red in them. But I saw it on TV, and maybe the TV was black and white.

I'll check out Johnny Guitar -- is that the one with Sterling Hayden and Joan Crawford and ...that other actress?

Sterling Hayden.

What a guy.

"How's the Italian food here?"

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

> 65

Message 65 1/14/00 11:57 PM
Subject: Re(2): Turing machines
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

J.Mark Andrus writes:

I haven't seen even ONE such objection, and (aside from a very short time around both recent San Francisco elections) there's been if anything less posting activity on Altcity than here.

Well, this seemed to be Sharon Everett's objection, that she didn't want her conference open to total strangers from across the galaxy, and I guess it just hit my resonant frequency. Maybe not feeling oneself lost so much as feeling one's privacy lost. But that issue would still be solved by my mailing proposal.

Or, OK, if you really want, I'd be glad to withdraw that point, if you'll consider the rest of the post and its proposal.

-- Deep Eddy

Message 61 1/15/00 11:55 AM
Subject: Re(4): the film that changed my life
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Steve Omlid writes:

"How's the Italian food here?"

"Good. Try the veal. It's the best in New York."

This line always drives me nuts. Why does he ask how the *Italian* food is when it's obviously an *Italian* restaurant? What does he think they serve, Chinese food? Nigerian food?

He deserved to be shot by Michael for the crime of redundancy and waste of information channel capacity.

-- M X (has "neither the time, nor the inclination, nor the capacity for strategic thought.")

> 60

Message 60 1/15/00 11:55 AM
Subject: Re(4): Pub Trivia: a better answer
From: Deep Eddy
To: Heyer's Cocktail Party

Tim Walters writes:

Apologies. I thought I remembered you mentioning some collegial link.

I just had to read him long ago. I think I need to find a place to be surly...

dismissive

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

that's what made me want to unlatch the safety of my Browning. How could he be so sure? I've had the same reaction lately to Stephen Jay Gould and Peter Singer.

Hmmm... how's your chess?

Not so good. I have neither the time, nor the inclination, nor the capacity for strategic thought.

Message 58 1/15/00 11:55 AM
Subject: Re: Nature vs. Nurture vs. The Empire Brain Building
From: Deep Eddy
To: Heyer's Cocktail Party

Tim Walters writes:

What's needed is not just-so stories but science; like other theoretical scientists, they should be able to make predictions that can be verified by experiment, rather than simply postdictions that explain debatable observations. There are a couple of examples of successful prediction in the book, but not nearly enough to justify the whole text.

Well, when you're dealing with evolution, isn't it a little hard to make experiments? I mean, they'd take rather a long time....

(3) As is common when someone doesn't have a compelling argument, Pinker resorts to bluster,

Hey, don't put down bluster, buster! It may have lost some of its luster since Custer riding in his duster, but it can still pass muster in the hands of a good adjuster (or hustler.) When your foes are in cluster and you can't trust or rely on them to argue fairly so you have to fluster. It's an art in itself.

To be fair, he's not one of those who say that our genetic destiny will always drive us to heinous acts; his position is more that we need to know what our biological programming is so that we can work more effectively against it.

but isn't the tendency to work against our biological programming part of our biological programming? I mean, where else would it come from?

Pinker's is not a cool, reasoned assessment but a manifesto.

no way, dude! it's like totally cool!!

it's the naturists

isn't this the preferred term for "nudists"?

who are the wishful thinkers; instead of having to work to overcome our bad habits, soon we'll just find the gene that makes us all naughty and turn it off.

again, isn't this just another way of overcoming our bad habits?

(Again, to be fair, Pinker doesn't say anything of the kind.)

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

I saw Pinker speaking a few months ago about his new book, "Words and Rules", which is pretty straight linguistics. I liked that he tries to take a middle ground between the extreme Chomskyans ("it's all rules") and the extreme behaviorists/neural networkers ("it's all memorized".) But as with any middle ground, there is so much room on either side to slip, and it's hard to make a convincing case for any particular stopping place; you can always go further down or back up and you tend to go around in circles and spirals and wheels within wheels. Not unlike...

Deep Eddy

Message 56 1/15/00 7:38 PM
Subject: Re(4): Turing machines
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

Sharon E. Everett writes:

*And, I outlined my very specific reasons for that ... *and* stated that if someone else wanted to be the "host" of a Witchcraft conference they were more than welcome. Resonate all you want ... you haven't been a public Witch subject to some people's apparent need to teach the error of your ways.*

I'm sorry, Sharon; I know that given my behavior in the past it was more than reasonable for you to assume that I was criticizing you but this time I wasn't. I think your wanting to keep the Witchcraft conference limited to a small number of people whom you know and trust is quite reasonable as well. It's true that as GOL became smaller this led to a lot of inbred injoking which sometimes annoyed me, but it also allowed the creation of personal niches of which I took full advantage, and I have no problem with others doing the same. So when I said that your complaint resonates with me, I meant that this is really the main reason I won't be on altcity. It's hard for me to get too excited about the opinions of people in Wisconsin or Peru, or even the facts they provide. It's awfully impersonal. And with GOL at its current size, I had a niche. Like Tigger. I was the most terrible or most pedantic or whatever but people knew who I was. In the large world, terrible people are a dime a dozen. And guess what? It's fine when you are the only or most terrible person around but even I would have no desire to deal with too many of them. So when I said that people would feel lost, I meant that **I** would.

But do be a little careful on your high horse -- your high broom? -- I'm sorry, couldn't resist -- that I have been a public freak at least as long as you've been a public witch and I know plenty about being "taught the error of my ways".

*And, in case you didn't notice, I was also among the first to set up exactly the kind of non-GOL conferencing idea you mentioned --- *before* you did so.*

I didn't. I haven't read every message in this conference. But I think it's great that you are doing that, that you realized a while ago that GOL is not going to continue in its current form and took measures, while other people are still trying to reverse a done deal. I mean, it would be great if at the last moment, Bruce and Rob and co. decided to let GOL continue, but I've been operating on the assumption that things are going to end and I've been using up my reserves accordingly and I wouldn't know what to do now if GOL

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continued.

I mean, I admire people who keep fighting to the end. You never know when the end will come and there is always the chance your luck will change. Think of Robert the Bruce, who lost six battles to the English and was ready to throw in the tartan towel until he watched a spider building a (not World Wide) web in the corner of his hut, saw it fail six times but succeed the seventh. Bruce went out with the Scots wha' hae with Wallace bled and kicked English butt at Bannockburn and freed his country for a couple of centuries.

On the other hand, there is something to be said for realizing something isn't going to work and knowing when to try something else. Determination can become stupidity. Unfortunately, your expectations of what will happen will help make it happen and the quality of these decisions can only be determined by the outcome, when it's too late to do anything but hope for another shot.

So maybe J. Mark should keep trying altcity. Maybe it's about to get better, especially if he makes it so. Maybe I should try it, and seize the chance to occupy the niche of the number one terrible person before some other clown from New Jersey does and scare him away and reign supreme as Spigot of an even Greater Hooey.

Advice, anyone?

-- M X

Message 52 1/16/00 1:05 PM
Subject: I don't believe in an interventionist God
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

so I'm watching "Zero Effect" (Jake Kasdan, 1998, with the very sheepish Bill Pullman, the angular Ben Stiller, the tough lovely Kim Dickens), one of my very favorite films of the past, say, seven and a half years. (Up there with "One False Move" and "Romeo is Bleeding".)

Well, I doubt too many other people saw this movie so you might as well skip on to the next point, but on the off chance that anyone did ...oh, wait, this is a STOILER,

in the scene at the diner where Zero tells Gloria about his father killing his mother in Minnesota, did anyone get the impression that he was telling the truth?

THE NEXT POINT:

I started reading Neal Gabler's "Life: The Movie" the other day, and in passing, it offered a definition of art which I'd never seen before, perhaps because I've never done much reading about art, except for the debates in this conference, and then only cursorily and shallowly. Now, since if you have a hammer, everything looks like a nail, I tend to think of art as communication, as an extension of language, as what brings people together. But Gabler, quoting no one in particular, suggests that art is that which individuates,

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which gives each person a unique experience. Now, I have a lot of problems with this definition -- didn't most Athenians have the same experience of a tragedy? Or did it remind each one of something in their own lives? But isn't that the idea, that we all have the experience of Orestes or Electra or whomever? (I mean, if we're all unique, we all have that in common and are similar in that way...) Or does a really great movie, say, "The shawshank redemption", confirm our individuality and our connectedness at the same time?

I suppose though that there are sort of two ways to have a unique experience of a work of art: to be unique oneself and have that brought out by the work, or to be the only person (or one of the few) to experience it. One of the reasons I like "Zero Effect" (and the other two movies mentioned above) so much, along with "Pi", and "A Self-Made Hero", the credits of "Spanking the Monkey", and "The Advocate", and a few others, is that I seem to be the only one to have seen them. To the extent though that they are special to me, though, i cannot use them to communicate (in the sense of saying, "hey, this situation is just like the one in 'Pi'"), any more than I can use films, or words, that I've made up. (Except to the extent that their meaning can be understood from similarity of context, or similarity to known words and films. But information content is difference, so to the extent that things are similar, they don't say as much.)

These things always seem to multiply out to one or add up to zero. Which means they have no real effect.

Off to watch "Legends of the Fall" (people on horseback!!)...

-- M X

Message 51 1/16/00 5:53 PM
Subject: Re(3): the Natural Searcher vs. the Imperious Brain
Deconstructor
From: Deep Eddy
To: Heyer's Cocktail Party

Tim Walters writes:

What I mean is that you should be able to predict human behavior by analysis of genetic benefit, and then go out and study human behavior to see if it matches.

OK, I have to be careful here (I mean, I'm arguing with Tim Walters, and not...oh, forget it. you know who you are.) It would appear, Tim, that since you do not subscribe entirely to the "genetic benefit" theory, you are holding up the lack of proof as an indicator that it's not true. This is fair enough if evolutionary psychobiologists are claiming to explain everything; the burden of proof is on them, and as in mathematics, a single counterexample invalidates the theorem.

Is this approximately a correct representation of your position?

If it is, well, I basically agree. The universe is a pretty complicated place, and attempts to describe it with a simple theory or theories usually lose in correctness what they gain in simplicity. (And to hearken back to our Ockham's

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Razor argument of last year, when we call something simple, we generally mean that it does not depart too far from what we already know and take as a given.) So to attribute everything to one cause is generally going to require a lot of twisting and probably some semantic games. It's like what you read in the mysteries, how the cause of death can always be given as "heart failure"; if someone's head was bludgeoned in or cancer spread through his body, eventually his heart failed. (If someone kills herself, do you give the cause of death as "gunshot wound to the head" or "depression"?) I would still be glad to defend the position that all human actions are motivated by selfishness, because they are at some level, if you dig deeply enough and don't dig any further.

You can also see the phenomena as being produced by the interaction, a dialectic of two (or more) forces. Sure those genes are trying to reproduce themselves, but they are not as powerful as we might think them; they are fighting the other physical laws, like the second of thermodynamics. (any more than every semicolon of James Joyce is really pregnant with deliberate authorial meaning when it was set in type by half-blind Frenchmen from a scrawled manuscript, or every word typed by some other cryptic writer under time pressure, on antiquated equipment, with limited proofreading, really means what it appears to. or as Will Munny says in "Unforgiven" when the writer character is attributing the order of his shots in the final gunfight to coolheaded strategizing about who was the most dangerous adversary, "I got lucky. I've always been lucky when it comes to killing folks.") This was what I liked about Pinker's thesis in "Words and Rules", that it wasn't all or nothing. the thing is, all or nothing is nice and simple, and something and something is awfully complex. how much something, and how much of the other thing(s)? you have to start negotiating....

I'd also say that in this case, it would still be awfully hard to set up a controlled experiment of the "strategic genes" theory. I mean, you'd have to control for so many things (as if we really can control human interactions!) I'm thinking of how to do this: you could clone a bunch of people, set up a bunch of closed off villages for them, all at the same latitude, with no communication among them or with the outside world, and then see what happened. You could do it, in theory, and I'm not one to disparage theory or ideal. It would still take a while though. And then there are the issues of what Jon Polito's character in "Miller's Crossing" called "et'ics". Of course, ethics has never been my strong point -- I don't have the aspiration even -- any more than strategy, so I'll leave off there.

-- Eddy

Message 50 1/16/00 6:01 PM
Subject: Re: What I'm Going to Buy
From: Deep Eddy
To: What I Bought

Eva Luna writes:
A '67, '68' or '69 Firebird.

if I'm thinking correctly, this is what the General Lee was on "the Dukes of Hazzard" -- the more sedan style of Firebird before it adopted the "Smokey and the Bandit" fastback design of the 70's. (Pontiac Firebird = Chevy Camaro, yes?)

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I'm just a little surprised because I can't think of any movie in which one of these figured prominently and I would expect such a connection from you, Eva.

I mean, if you said "'67[?] Ford Mustang" I'd think, oh, of course, "Bullitt", and imagine you bombing around SF turning from one street onto another unconnected one on the other side of town.

Or is there a film tie-in here I'm just missing?

-- Eddy (misses a lot of things)

> 49

Message 49 1/16/00 9:33 PM
Subject: Re(6): the Natural Searcher vs. the Imperious Brain
Deconstructor
From: Deep Eddy
To: Heyer's Cocktail Party

Steve Omlid writes:

Whenever Tim and Eddy get to chatting, I just feel dumb as a fucking post.

I'm not going to speak for Tim, and I can't make any guarantees for you, but I think that if *I* ever *sound* smart it's mostly because I can get through a sentence without using the word "fucking".

A peeve, Steve. Thanks though.

Message 48 (Unsent)
Subject: Re(3): Supernova
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Eva Luna writes:

That would have been alot better if there were just explosions. Same with "Independence Day." Just aliens blowing up stuff. No insufferable Judd Hirsch and Jeff Goldblum father son bonding moments--not dying First Lady, no Will Smith "humor." Just a lot of exploding cities. Awesome.

I guess that is what a lot of these video-compilation TV shows are. Tired of "When Animals Attack"? Try "When Cities Get Blown Up"! Now available on video! I once knew a guy (well, I met him once or twice -- the boyfriend of a roommate of a girlfriend) who loved to watch hockey but only taped the fights. A whole video of nothing but fights...now I'm sure these things can be bought. They'll probably have their own cable channel soon. "Watch EXP! All explosions, all the time!"

I suppose films like ID4 are not all that different from porn movies, explosion after explosion with just the barest attempt at plot to tie them together (and give a reason to stop at some point.) But then, the traditional/popular theatre of many countries consists mainly of set pieces, tableaux even, which are more important than the story.

> 47

Message 47 1/16/00 10:03 PM

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Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

Subject: Re(5): the Empiricist Urger vs. the Rational Constrictor?
From: Deep Eddy
To: Heyer's Cocktail Party

Tim Walters writes:

the questions are how much, and which behaviors, and to what extent can learning oppose or compensate for undesired genetic programming.

well, as I said, now you're getting complicated. Do you really want to open this can of worms, and start looking for some magic dividing line between nature and nurture, how much is each? (I'm just remembering the one time I really felt I had stopped you cold -- obviously I remember it because it was the **one** time -- in our argument over information content last year when you asserted something had "some information content, just not very much", and I asked, "how much?")

It's a little like the religions that say God has seven thousand, four hundred and twenty three attributes and will burn you at the stake if you suggest it might be twenty-two or twenty-four.

I mean, yes, it's certain that the answer is somewhere in the middle but the chances of it being at any specific point are infinitely small....

I actually think that learning can oppose or compensate for **any** genetic programming. Again, maybe I'm imposing linguistic ideas of the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign and the role of context in determining meaning (total), but my experience, too, has led me to conclude anyone will do pretty much anything under the right circumstances, if you offer them enough or threaten enough.

But that's just me.

Me being...

-- Eddy

Message 43 1/17/00 7:03 PM
Subject: Re(6): the Natural Searcher vs. the Imperious Brain
Deconstructor
From: Deep Eddy
To: Heyer's Cocktail Party

Steve Omlid writes:

Whenever Tim and Eddy get to chatting, I just feel dumb as a fucking post.

But Steve, not **all** of your posts are dumb!!

Besides, what's wrong with being a post, fixed firmly, holding the line? Sure the dogs piss on you and then run away, but then they just go chasing their tails (and eating all sorts of nasty stuff) and don't really get anywhere anyway (and get hit by a lot of cars.)

I'm thinking of Lewis Carroll's paradox: which keeps better time, a clock that is broken and never moves, or one that is always five minutes ahead? The former of course: it will be right twice a day, while the other fast one never will be....

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-- Eddy (trying to stay at my post, be it -modern or -apocalyptic, without going postal)

Message 42 1/17/00 7:10 PM
Subject: Re(7): the Empiricist Urger vs. the Rational Constrictor?
From: Deep Eddy
To: Heyer's Cocktail Party

Tim Walters writes:

But I still think it would be interesting to know, to whatever extent possible, what our genetic programming is.

Well, I think how much you can find out depends on how hard you try. I don't think that the frontiers of knowledge are marked with the pillars of Hercules that say, ok, far enough, go home now, you're off the hook. I think that knowledge is more a limit, something we approach asymptotically; we can get arbitrarily close (as we can get arbitrarily close to the speed of light, which, being the speed at which the Universe processes information, the clock speed of the universe, as it were, set the limit to knowledge) but with constantly diminishing returns.

But then, to the extent it's changeable and overcomeable by learning, it's not really programming, is it?

Message 40 1/18/00 8:03 PM
Subject: Re(9): Teacher vs. Torture?
From: Deep Eddy
To: Heyer's Cocktail Party

Tim Walters writes:

I would say it is, to the extent that metaphor holds in the first place. Programming needn't be a synonym for inflexibility. Many computer programs change their responses to adapt to their environment, even permanently changing their code.

Well then, if programming adapts to the environment, what is the difference between it and environment/learning/nurture? I thought you were looking for something basic and unchangeable, a constant which when multiplied by the variable environment produced a product of human behavior. What's the point of saying, "This is how we'd be if there were no environmental influences" when there are always environmental influences of some sort?

Deep Eddy (a scaring nurturer, and rememberer of twelve steppe pogroms, but not a licensed therapist)

> 39

Message 39 (Unsent)
Subject: Re: (grin)
From: Deep Eddy
To: It's a le fou World

Elizabeth A. Nolan writes:

(what I jokingly refer to as the Berkeley March, or "left! Left! Left left left!")

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

Not everyone in Berkeley marches that way. Some of us prefer the minuet from the musical "1776", "Cool Cool Conservative Men":

"To the right
Ever to right
Never to the left
Forever to the right
Where there's gold
A market that will hold
Tradition that is old
A reluctance to be bold..."

Message 37 1/18/00 8:54 PM
Subject: Re(6): What I'm Going to Buy
From: Deep Eddy
To: What I Bought

Karin Shaw writes:
I always love it when people communicate though movies.

But as with any other form of communication, this assumes people give the same meaning to the "words", in this case the things in movies (or the movies as a whole.) And they don't always: they tend to remember very different things about movies, and attach very different meanings to them (and different interpretations to the films.)

Eva, I don't know if you are the sort who gives cars names, but if so, you should definitely call your sweet Firebird "Stravinsky".

Eddy (calls his 1959 Dodge Dauntless "Dzerzhinsky")

> 36
Message 36 (Unsent)
Subject:
From: Deep Eddy
To: The Flirt Zone

You know that scene in "Raiders of the Lost Ark", the one where Belloq says to Indiana Jones,

"How odd that it should end this way for us after so many stimulating encounters. I almost regret it. Where shall I find a new adversary so close to my own level?"

And Indy says,

"Try the local sewer."

And then Belloq says:

"It would take only a nudge to make you like me. To push you out of the light."

Message 31 1/19/00 10:03 PM
Subject: Re(11): Mature vs. Mortar?
From: Deep Eddy

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Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

To: Heyer's Cocktail Party

Tim Walters writes:

[I've changed the order]

Ignoring the distinction between genes and culture (rather than respectfully taking the fuzziness of the boundary into account) doesn't strike me as the most likely path to insight in this matter. But I've been wrong before.

And I wish I were this time. I'd love for there to be absolutes and absolute distinctions (at the bottom of the fuzziness) and most of all, heroes.

DE: I thought you were looking for something basic and unchangeable, a constant which when multiplied by the variable environment produced a product of human behavior.

No.

Sure seemed that way!

Just because genetic programming is not completely inflexible doesn't mean it's as easy to change as culture (which, of course, isn't that easy to change either).

i thought the idea was that the reason people are so interested in this whole topic now is that genetic engineering promises to allow genetic programming to be changed as easily, or more easily, than culture.

The question at hand is whether any useful, albeit incomplete, knowledge of the mechanisms (I won't say causes) of human behavior can be gained through simplifying models.

I don't think that's quite the question. I think it's obvious that some knowledge can be gained but that total knowledge is impossible. In between these extremes, knowledge will be proportional to time and energy expended. But in order for knowledge to be useful (applicable within a certain time), you have to simplify. (Or else you are like the people in Lewis Carroll's "Sylvie and Bruno" who made a map so detailed it was exactly the same as the land they were mapping and they just used that instead.)But the more you simplify, the more incomplete and thus the less useful. Oops.

Also, we can't really have direct knowledge of the causes/mechanisms; the scientific method is all about observing the phenomena under "controlled" conditions and drawing conclusions. To the extent the phenomena are indistinguishable, meaning that the same results are produced by both nature and nurture (which you have said they can be), how can we distinguish the causes?

Any more than the Turing Test (the original stimulus for this thread) can actually distinguish a genetically created "intelligence" from a human engineered one. If it walks like a duck....

Ducking, bobbing, weaving....

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Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

M X

Message 27 (Unsent)
Subject: This really ain't the place nor time...
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

To reel off rhyming diction
And yet we'll write a final rhyme
While awaiting crucifixion.

Whatever end they may decide
"Quicklime, or 'biling ile, sir?"
We'll do our best, when crucified
To finish off in style, sir?

But we'll bequeath a parting quip
For sound advice of smug men
Who enter into partnership
With Rob Neill, and Bruce Brugmann [ok, I altered the last stanza a bit, but
the rest is....] Lt. Harry Harbord Morant, Bushveldt Carabiniers, 1901

I might soon be heading towards the Antipodes (and then off to the Pole, where
you folks die of cold, then Arizona, and Mars, and beyond the Infinite --
"What do you like about the desert?" "It's clean") so I'm treating myself to a
double feature of "The Road Warrior" and "Breaker Morant". Which has lots of
other great lines appropriate to the current situation:

"Live every day as if it were your last. Someday, you're sure to be right."

"I've had a pretty good run of it."

"Shoot straight, you bastards"

Bart the Bear in Legends Of the Fall

Message 25 1/20/00 10:52 PM
Subject: Re(2): Town Hall March 1/24/00
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

Kelsey Gadoo writes:
Will this be a Take Back the Byte March?

shouldn't that be a "Take Back the *Site* March"?

(Not to be confused with a "Take Back the *Cite* March". Not this time, at
least.)

-- Eddy

Message 19 (Unsent)
Subject:
From: Deep Eddy

gilbert never smiles except once

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what was social station of actors?

accents, scotch and irish

sullivan always smiles

long scenes just for sheer enjoyment, no need to advance plot

even say "fucking", "asshole"

selfdoubting author, like jefferson in 1776

Message 13 1/25/00 7:10 PM
Subject: Demagogues and demigods
From: Deep Eddy
To: politics

Auntie Em writes:

And a lot of scary things have been done by charismatic leaders.

wait wait. couldn't you just as well say that the scary things were done by the followers?

one person can't do very much, if the other people want to stop him or her.

just because a charismatic person says to do something doesn't mean you have to do it. or does it?

charismatic leaders succeed because they provide what people are looking for: simple answers, and a sense of meaning in life.

without the charismatic leaders, when people have to face reality, they find it's awfully complicated and at bottom meaningless.

As Nobel Prize-winning physicist Steven Weinberg puts it, "The more the Universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems meaningless."

whether the actions attributed to a charismatic leader are scary or heroic will tend to depend on who you are and what the time frame is.

For example, a lot of people liked Joe McCarthy in 1952. A lot of people still like him now.

A lot of people hated Martin Luther King in 1956. And there are those who aren't crazy about him today.

Is this another case of history favoring the winners?

Who's going to judge what's scary?

> 12

Message 12 1/25/00 7:52 PM
Subject: Re(13): Catcher vs. Culture?
From: Deep Eddy
To: Heyer's Cocktail Party

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Tim Walters writes:

The first part is correct, but the loopback isn't. Incomplete knowledge--if embodied in a good model--really is more useful than perfect knowledge, not less. If you want to put a satellite in orbit, knowing the position and momentum of every particle in the universe, even if allowed by Heisenberg, would do you no good at all. You need Newton's (and possibly Einstein's) equations.

(Using restrained Victorian language after seeing "Topsy-turvy"):

Mr. Walters, sir, you need to stop throwing around terms like "good model" as if they were merit badges which once given always apply. A model is as good, and only as good, as how well it describes the data which it confronts. You won't know how good it is until you try to use it to predict something and fail. In 1947, the models said that the sound barrier could not be broken, until Chuck Yeager did it with some help from Jack Ridley. Right now, the model says you can't go faster than light. And when we figure out a way of doing so, we'll realize the model was incomplete. In the first scene of "Blade Runner", Leon is passing the Turing Test, passing as a human, PARRYing the detective's questions, until Holden gets a little too deep. A person jumps out of a hundredth-story window and as he passes each floor says, "So far, so good." You may not need to know the position and momentum of every particle in the universe to launch a satellite. Obviously, we have launched quite a few without knowing that. But then, a number haven't quite made it, in fact a lot haven't. ("You can't fly in space on a fraction," says Dennis Hopper in "Apocalypse Now".) For reasons unknown. Obviously, some particle whose position and momentum we did not take into account did something to get in the way. The more we know, the more successful our satellite launches will be. But there will always be some lost. No model can be perfect, and you'll never know when it's going to fail. You can't process information faster than the universe does.

It's understanding that makes knowledge useful--the completeness or incompleteness of the knowledge is secondary. And a reasonable first cut at a definition of understanding would be the creation of a simplified model that captures the essence of the situation.

Again, how can you know in advance what the "essence of the situation" is? Your satellite-launching model may not consider the shrinkage of o-rings very essential. No one expected that Alan Shepard would have to relieve his bladder on a fifteen minute suborbital flight. It's only in hindsight that you can say, oops, we should have thought of that....

Paleontology and astronomy are examples of fields where experimentation of this kind isn't really possible; they're based instead on observation of the messy real world. This makes them more difficult but not impossible.

But "new" observations can be made, new data generated. You sight new stars or measure new characteristics of them; you find more fossils. They either confirm your theory or force you to adjust it (or confirm certain aspects of it and force you to adjust certain others.)

The key phrase here is "can be." We have three variables--genes, culture, and behavior--and, once our map of the human genome is more detailed, we'll have

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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means of establishing correlations between them. If a certain behavior is correlated with a certain gene but not with any cultural phenomenon, it will be reasonable to say that that behavior is more strongly determined by genetics than culture. Or vice versa. If every behavior we study is weakly correlated to both, we will have to conclude that genetics and culture are inextricably tangled--but we'll have a much firmer basis for believing that than we do now.

Huh? What is culture if not behavior?

Do you mean "environment"?

Given time and menu enough, creation equals selection and vice versa. Given enough different rocks to choose from, you can send any message, as if you were composing it. What if we are genetically equipped for far more behaviors than our environment ever calls forth, or has called forth so far? If certain people are genetically capable of certain behaviors in certain environments, which do you blame, genes or environment?

But that's why the Turing test is so hard, nicht wahr?

But that's why being sure of anything is so hard, nonne verum est?

Message 11 (Unsent)
Subject:
From: Deep Eddy

ordinarily I would attribute these things to typos and not comment on them, but you've misspelled "ideologies" three times in the last few days. No a's.

Otherwise, though, you're fighting the good fight and doing a fine job of it.

Message 10 1/25/00 10:18 PM
Subject: Re(3): The silence is broken
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

Auntie Em writes:

I'm afraid that when GOL closes, people will scatter, and by the time altcity is usable for everybody (either because of improvements to altcity itself or because people will eventually upgrade their computers), it will be too late. By that time, I think many people will have picked up new habits and won't be returning to Guardian-sponsored online stuff at all, and the community will never be regrouped.

But the regrouping sequence would be so cool! Think of all those movies in which the "team" from the old days has scattered and has to be reassembled to meet some new (or reincarnation of the old) threat. "The Muppets Take Manhattan", for instance. Or "Armageddon". Or "The Wild Geese". "The Three Musketeers" or "The Four Musketeers" or "The Man in the Iron Mask." Usually one guy is still in the business; he's the leader. Someone else has retired in great wealth and has no reason to risk everything but does. Another is a drunk on the street and has nothing to lose but no particular reason to do anything.

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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But everyone still has their gear stowed away in their attics and the knowledge of how to use it stowed away in their heads....

I think that if and when altcity gets going in some decent way it would/will be neat to see the old folks start reappearing, with tales of their post-GOL adventures. Who knows, maybe some of the long lost GOL figures will decide to give it a try....

Always wishing life were more like the movies, and not seeing why it shouldn't be,

-- M X

Message 7 1/26/00 7:03 PM
Subject: Re(2): Demagogues and demigods
From: Deep Eddy
To: politics

Auntie Em writes:

Seems to. People do listen.

Well, not everyone does. Do we have some sort of choice in the matter, or are we just mindless automata controlled by heredity and environment? (and if so, aren't the demagogues equally controlled, so that they do the things they do, and thus equally blameless?)

And if they listen, it's because the demagogue's message does something for them. See, I don't think people are stupid. Who am I to say?

Which is why charisma can be dangerous.

fluffy pink plush bunnies can be dangerous. anything can be dangerous. you aren't saying anything. (which I don't have any problem with in general; I'm the last person to ration words, and in general I'd rather read you saying nothing than most people saying a lot of stuff. but if you are going to pick on charismatic leaders, a group I happen to admire, then I will ask you "why them, and no one else?")

Well sure, you can say scariness is in the eye of the beholder, but I was thinking of Hitler, Mussolini, etc.

is everyone holding their breath now to see if I'm going to take the bait and defend Hitler and Mussolini? sorry to disappoint. I mean, all Marge Schott could come up with in the Fuhrer's favor was the Autobahns and as a cyclist I'm not too impressed....I think it was Steve Omlid who wrote of a rule observed in other online communities that once someone invokes Hitler, the argument is over ...how can you argue for Hitler in response? (Except that a lot of people, even educated ones, liked him at one point and some still do today.) OK, so for argument's sake, Hitler was bad. I can say that easily for personal, purely selfish reasons: he would have wanted me, probably had me, dead. We've got an extreme nailed down. And I'll grant you that Gandhi was pretty good, although the Indian independence he brought about resulted in the

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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deaths of millions. But what about all the folks in the middle? What about McCarthy? Or Catiline, or Clodius Pulcher, or Caesar? Or Savonarola? (personal fave) Or FDR or JFK or WJC?

And more particularly, I'm looking at how this thread started, the actual context in which charisma came to be condemned. It was a discussion of the way the Guardian Pooh-Bahs turned on the charm at the meeting the other night. Were you comparing these people to Hitler? Be careful, or people will jump on you the way they did on me when I opposed the celebration of the demolition of the building at SFSU last year. Or maybe they won't. Maybe they like you. Maybe because you present your views a little more pleasantly than I do, with a little more charm, with a little more, say, charisma?

If you are going to condemn charisma, then all I need to do is find one charismatic leader you endorse. So you probably are not blanketly condemning charisma. It "can" be dangerous. OK, when? But again, be careful, or you risk coming down to, coming down with, Eva Luna's Syndrome. (Note: Like other syndromes or diseases -- Addison's, Asperger's, Alzheimer's, Crohn's, Hodgkin's, Huntington's -- and not Lou Gehrig's or Elephant Man's -- this is named for the person who first described it succinctly, not the first person in whom he or she observed it or who suffered from it.) The august moderator of film once pithily characterized another user's tautological views on film as "Good movies are good! Bad movies are bad!" Can you detail your position on charismatic leaders in any greater detail?

I mean, I am sure that you will claim that your opinions on issues are arrived at solely through rational evaluation of the relevant factors, and not emotional or charismatic appeal of the people involved, but that's the beauty of, well, beauty; it works on you without you knowing it....

Thinking of Athens, where no one had agoraphobia,

M X

Message 46 1/29/00 7:11 PM
Subject: The (Other) End of the World
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

It really ain't the place nor time
To reel off rhyming diction;
But yet we'll write a final rhyme
While waiting crucifixion.

No matter what "end" they decide
Quick-lime?, or "b'iling ile?" sir
We'll do our best when crucified
To finish off in style, sir?

But we bequeath [some verses yet
For modest girl, and smug man
Who put their eggs all in one Net
With Rob Neill, and Bruce Brugmann]...

[ok, I altered the last stanza a bit, but the rest is....]

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

--- Lt. Harry Harbord Morant, Bushveldt Carabiniers, 26 February 1902

I've been thinking a lot about Australia lately. I've always wanted to go there, and wander through the deserts.) I've had the feeling lately that I might be headed for the Antipodes, sailing away on a Wave of Mutilation [the Pixies], then the Pole (where you folks die of cold) [Elvis Costello], then Central Asia, Arizona, Mars ["Watchmen"] and beyond the infinite ["2001"]. All deserts. I like the desert. It's clean. ["Lawrence of Arabia"]

("What desert? but why would I be there?" Yes, I've been thinking a lot about "Blade Runner" lately, too. GOL is like a replicant with a four-year lifespan. "All these moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain. Time to die." Speaking of dying nonhuman [and superhuman] intelligences which we cannot but watch in fascination and obligation as they shut down, wouldn't it be cool if as they pull the plug on the GOL server [or the modems, I guess] it would send out to as a last message to every user the song "Daisy, Daisy"?)

But anyway.

I'm thinking right now of the movie "On the Beach", based on Neville Shute's novel, in which, after a US/USSR nuclear war that has wiped out the Northern Hemisphere, the remnants of humanity are waiting in Australia for the radioactive clouds to drift south and take them out too. Sort of what is happening here at GOL, at least for me; I'm holding my breath for the week's warning. (If we'll even get that. I've got my mailbox mostly saved and cleaned out. I wish they'd just get it over with. I'm ready *now*.) Scientists and scholars are assembling an Archive of human knowledge to store in case anyone ever arrives to see what happened to us. An American submarine, [maybe the one that was missing tonight?] the last ship of the US Navy, arrives and is placed at the disposal of the Australians, and they send it on a recon mission back North, to trace a mysterious radio signal and see if there is any chance anything has survived. Nope, I guess not, it turns out. Just a jammed transmitter. And the meeting with the GOL high command only restated old positions. So much for hope.

There is another Australia-related movie on my mind: "Breaker Morant". It's Bruce Beresford's searing examination of the case of three Australian officers serving with the British during the Boer War, which prefigured so many conflicts of the 20th century (and 21st) as big imperial powers got bogged down against irregular insurgents who could not be distinguished from the civilian population (much to the latter's suffering.) The Australian cavalrymen (!) are accused of war crimes, of killing prisoners (and witnesses to the killing) while operating deep in enemy territory, far from friendly faces and bases. They see themselves as scapegoats of a failed British policy, who must be sacrificed for an end to the war to be negotiated. The film details their trial, as a lawyer whose main experience is with New South Wales ranch boundary disputes tries desperately to defend them before judges who have long since made their decision. In the end, of course, two of the three are condemned and executed, facing the firing squad with no blindfolds or complaints, only a shouted reminder to "Shoot straight, you bastards! Don't make a mess of it!"

Well, actually, they do speak a few other memorable quotes. (Australians tend to do that before they die, I think; ask anyone from Down Under about the last words of outlaw Ned Kelly [played by Mick Jagger in a movie I haven't seen] on

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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the gallows, and he or she will know them: "Such is life.") "Live every day as if it were going to be your last," says the title character, when it looks as if he is to be reprieved, "because someday you're sure to be right." And when the cruelly disappointing reality becomes apparent, he is stoical: "Cheer up! You look as if you're going to a funeral. It's all right, Major. I've had a good run." Declining the last rites, he explains, "I'm a pagan... It's somebody who doesn't believe there is a divine being dispensing justice to mankind." And then, "This is what comes of empire building." Finally, there are his posthumous words. Morant, called "Breaker" for his horsetraining skills, was a sort of cowboy poet, whose Robert Service-style verses were published in local magazines. As he is marched off to his execution, he hands to the lawyer a last effort containing the stanzas that open this post, with the request that they be published, since "we poets do crave immortality."

Oh, and here's one more, though, the end of the poem:

Let's toss a bumper down our throat
Before we pass to heaven
And toast the trim-set petticoat
We leave behind in Devon.

(O kay, as above, a minor modification will make this contextually appropriate: changing "in Devon" to "on GOL" will basically scan, and suggests an obvious and a propos change to the end of the second line.)

Speaking of executions, I of course saw "Topsy-turvy" at the first show at the AMC 1000 last Friday. It was completely wonderful. It centers on "The Mikado", which in turn centers on the Lord High Executioner, who, incapable of actually executing anyone, is obliged to make up an elaborate description of a fictional execution for the satisfaction of the Emperor of Japan, with the connivance of two other characters and the whole chorus, which attests:

"This haughty youth
He speaks the truth
Whenever he finds it pays.
And in this case
It all took place
Exactly as he says.
Exactly, exactly, exactly, as he says."

"The time of my departure is at hand. I have kept the faith, I have run the full course, I have fought the good fight." Paul, Second Epistolary Effort to Timothy, Chapter 4, Verse 6-7

I should wind this up. Or down. Before I get stuck saying the same thing over and over. Well, any more than already.

"Everything sticks like a broken record.
Everything sticks until it goes away.
And the truth is we don't know anything." -- They Might Be Giants, "Ana Ng"

"Such was the funeral of Hector, breaker of horses." -- Homer, Iliad, Book

XXIIII, line 815 (last line)

-- M X, the Rude Worrier

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

Fade to black.

This film is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

Please deposit your trash in the receptacles as you leave the theater.

Message 42 1/30/00 11:33 AM
Subject: Re(15): Creature vs. Creator?
From: Deep Eddy
To: Heyer's Cocktail Party

I think that what you are not taking into account here is the cost of information, in mass/energy (which includes money), time (and space), and in information itself.

There is a wonderful Ian Shoales monologue in which Merle Kessler points out that the amount of time people who exercise lengthen their lives is exactly equal to the time they spend exercising. (I would add that exercise also has many risks that can shorten your life, but I won't go into that right now.) I call this a Kessler Paradox: the advantage to be gained from doing something is exactly equal to the disadvantages. (This is even assuming we can see all the advantages and disadvantages and know which ones are which. but as Edwin Land pointed out, "The bottom line is in heaven.") This is a sort of law of the conservation of problems akin to the first law of thermodynamics.

You are getting to this point when you say:

perhaps a new model that accounts for the error would be so difficult to work with that satellite launches would slow to a crawl, and losing one in a thousand would be cheaper.

[There is also a parallel to the second law. Just as whenever you change the form of energy (say, from electrical to mechanical), you lose some, whenever you change the form of information, you lose some, because some information is required as addressing, as linking, to tell you where to go next. I was going through my clipping files yesterday, to which I add things as I find them. I was thinking of organizing them by topics, but then I would lose the temporal organization scheme; I'd no longer be able to see what I was interested in at any particular time without extensive cross-referencing (more information.)]

The point is, it's all very easy for us to take satellite launching and the theory behind it as a given and say, isn't it great that we have this triumph of science and its technological benefits? but forget all the hard work and sacrifice that went into it, and that even more hard work and sacrifice would be required to make it better. (And then there is always the downside -- satellite launching technology is inextricably linked to ballistic missile technology.) Today we act as if information is free (the way nuclear power advocates predicted energy would be back in the 50's. Too cheap to meter, just take all you want for a flat fee! See Peter Stoler, "Decline and Fail: The Ailing Nuclear Power Industry", 1985, New York, Dodd, Mead, Chapter 2. Also, an excellent example of the personal costs of information gathering.) Just log on and get all you want. Not quite. it takes people's time and energy to put all that information there. That's why they want you to read the ads. And of

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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course, it's so easy to put information up that very little of it is true. I hope Matt Drudge, and I, have taught you how useless online information is when you have to verify it yourself.

Of course, all information is that way -- you always have to consider the source, as nessie would say. People could be lying, or theories could be describing situations that for subtle but crucial reasons don't apply to yours. But you'll never know until you check it out for yourself. So that it eventually becomes tautological. Every case describes itself, very well -- but nothing else, since each case is ultimately unique. Things constantly change. Or at least, for all we know they do. Science goes on the assumption that trends which began in the past won't suddenly change just as we examine them, that the experiment we did yesterday is still valid today. As Gershwin said about another matter of faith, "It ain't necessarily so." As if by the time we've mapped the human genome new mutations won't have been introduced. Do we just write those off as freaks, as not normal, not worth looking at? I imagine the Australopithecenes doing their genome project -- "bigger brains? just an aberration. not worth noting. won't lead anywhere..." In science, there are always some bad data which you have to write off; they don't fit the curve. but how do you know what are data and what are experimental error? where does it say the smoothest curve on conventional graph paper is the right answer? (if you say Ockham's razor, I'll scream...)

I'm not sure exactly what you would see as the applications of further research into the nature/nurture issue. I guess, better psychology? better manipulation of individuals and groups? careful. not all psychologists are therapists; a lot of them are in advertising, PR, politics. But don't we have pretty good psychology already? I mean, a lot of people can be helped with our limited understanding (not that our understanding would ever not be limited; we'd just change the location, or the shape, of the limit, which derives from a latin word with a really interesting definition but unfortunately exiguity of huius marginis non contineret.) Not everyone. But then, not all our satellites make it. And when you think of how much effort would have to be expended for that information, and how it would still have to be verified each time, and how there would still be people falling through the cracks between categories, to whom we'd have to say, sorry, we can't help you....is it really worth it?

See, I think it's kind of funny that in other arguments, where I have advocated delving deeper into issues and found my debating partners unwilling to (such as my recent exchange in politics with Auntie Em), here I am saying, what's the point in delving deeper? You say,

You can't know for sure, of course. But you have absolutely no choice but to make your best guess.

well, of course, I don't think "we" as individuals have any choice in anything since I don't how you can believe that without postulating a soul that exists independently of both nature and nurture. But I've found throughout the years that no matter what I do, there will be no shortage of people criticizing me for not wanting to delve far enough or in some particular way, and frittering away my time on short-term pointlessness, and just as many criticizing me just as vociferously for thinking too much or about the wrong things, for being too interested in how we use our imperfect knowledge when they see no point to it, for going too far, not enjoying the present. You've got to stop somewhere. But

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

it's a continuum open on both sides, actually, in all directions, a huge and featureless desert. (Well, in the sense that the Great Plains were once called the Great American Desert. It's an empty wilderness, but even in a wasteland you can live, even fairly well.) You can go as far as you like in any direction and not get any closer to an end. So any place you stop is pretty much as good as any other. Or as bad. You need to stop somewhere but there is no particular reason to stop at any particular point. You stop where you like. But don't tell me where I need to stop. One could go on, and swim another lap -- don't stop just because you are tired; you were tired after the first two or three and weren't about to give up then. There is always more to say, repeating in more detail to have a greater chance of being understood. You say we successfully send messages but you have no way of knowing that. Obviously, a lot of our points are lost on each other as they don't fit into the thought patterns we are trying to establish. (They get written off, as in science, as experimental error, not data.) I speak analogically, you speak digitally. When I say "if..." or "when..." or "given..." I mean, "to the extent that"....The more time and menu you have, the more selection equals creation. Etc. etc. etc. You seem to separate "quality" of a model from "utility" :

In any case, we weren't talking about the quality of models, but about their utility

and I have no idea how you can judge one in except in terms of the other. we could go deeper into this but would it be worth it in terms of time and energy?

As I said, you can stop anywhere.

> 41

Message 41 1/30/00 11:35 AM
Subject: Re: Fwd: Save the DNA
From: Deep Eddy
To: Heyer's Cocktail Party

context is everything!!!

(well, actually, it's about half.)

-- Eddy (loves being confused by initial appearances)

Message 38 1/31/00 8:35 PM
Subject: Re: Thoughts
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

alex kuethe writes:

Furthermore as you know we have offered to give you a computer that would enable you to get on altcity.

I'm thinking now of the part in "The Muppet Movie" in which the Kermit the Frog has just refused Doc Hopper's lucrative offer to be national spokesman for his chain of frog-leg restaurants and Fozzie Bear asks, "Would you consider a bear in a frog suit?"

I mean, if Sharon doesn't want the computer, *I* for one would be glad to take

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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it so that I could continue to annoy/baffle/bore the old crowd and move up to annoying/baffling/boring an even larger audience (and plot World Domination on the side.) Heck, I'd even try to learn about witchcraft!

Willing, even eager to be Sharon part-time,

Eddy

Message 37 1/31/00 8:49 PM
Subject: Re(3): the film that changed my life
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

And the prize (an autographed copy of my autobiography, "Blood and Chocolate") to Eva Luna and Spidra Webster. I watched "Johnny Guitar" at the library the other night (actually since the library was about to close I fast-forwarded through most of it so that I could see that Mercedes Mccambridge was awful pissed about something but not what) and that was indeed the film that changed my life.

"George!" he began. "All your life! Fantastic!" -- John Le Carri, "Smiley's People"

Now what?

Oh, there are still all those 80's songs to find, and the book about Alfie in the attic drawing his cartoons...

-- Eddy

Message 35 2/5/00 2:31 PM
Subject: Re: altcity= linda blair?
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

ummmm, I won't claim your expertise in this area, but don't you mean, or wouldn't the better parallel have been, Linda Lovelace (of "Deep Throat") rather than Linda Blair (of "The Exorcist")?

I'm not calling the Metropolitan Analogy Force (MetAFor) on this one, but I was just a little confused.

-- Eddy

Message 33 2/5/00 4:14 PM
Subject: Re(3): altcity= linda blair?
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

Steve Omlid writes:

Which, given all of the distractions down there, indicates to me a real dedication to performing fellatio.

not necessarily. maybe she doesn't like doing it, but is condemned to, as part of her punishment? or is this clear from the tone and context in which the

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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line is uttered in the movie?

--Eddy (rolls a rock up a hill, and chases a flag)

Message 32 2/5/00 4:18 PM
Subject: Point of order, Mr. Chairman
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

It has been troubling me for a while that I have no idea how Alex Kuethe pronounces his last name.

Queue-eeth?
Queue-ee-thee?
Kooth (to rhyme with "tooth"?)
Some other way?

Could we have some clarification, please?

Thanks!

Message 29 2/6/00 1:12 PM
Subject: Re(6): altcity= linda blair?
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL
Copies: film

Eva Luna writes:

As for giving your perspective about the functunality of Alcity. Whatever. Your being able to get on the few times you've tried does not mean it hasn't had its major problems at other times.

But to the extent users, any users, can get on when they want to, it's not as major a problem.

Truth is inductive, and democratic. Every measurement is data. You can't disregard Steve's experiences because they do not fit your conclusion; you have to average them in and modify your conclusion appropriately.

(Of course, this is roughly the same thing I've been saying about movies. How can you define a movie as "good" except by whether it touches people or not?

oh, wait, wasn't there that famous self-made mogul/producer -- was it Louis Mayer? -- who said, "If my ass wiggles while I'm watching a film, then I know it's good?" He's also the one who berated the writers of a medieval script for having characters answer the king "yes, sire" and "no, sire", since, as he put it, he knew damn well they didn't say "yes, sirree" in the middle ages.)

Can't Steve be glad that they system worked when he tried it?

-- Eddy (hopes Tim Walters doesn't read this conference)

Message 28 2/6/00 1:18 PM
Subject: Re(3): Catch 22 Redux

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

T Bear writes:

there are free iMacs at the coffee shop at 17th & Sanchez. buy a cup and browse as you wish.

there's another place on Polk, same deal....

but access is even cheaper -- free -- at CompUSA on Market at Grant (and you don't have to buy coffee!!), and the UC Berkeley and UCSF libraries (you don't have to show a library card to get in.) of course, the lower the price, in general, the longer the wait. bring a book to read. it all depends whether you have time or money to spare and spend.

Message 27 2/6/00 1:39 PM
Subject: Re(8): altcity= linda blair?
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

Eva Luna writes:

If one of the points of this conference is to give the people at the Guardian feedback about the functionality of AltCity, and suggest ways that it can be improved, than comments about being able to get on just fine, and not thinking it's all that bad, are not that useful after the first few times they are said. You can't fix something that does have problems by just admiring the things about it that work fine.

Well, to the extent it works fine, it has fewer problems. Nothing works perfectly. And why not give positive feedback when it's merited? Why not encourage, tell what the operators need to do more of because it works? Also, whenever you change something, to improve it one way, there is the chance of some unintended consequence, some connected change that will make things worse. If the engineers don't know what people like, they will not try to retain it as they change things. The engineers have finite time and energy. They need to know what works fine, so that they can concentrate on what doesn't work.

Is it any more useful to repeat the same criticisms after the first few times they have been said?

He can be pleased as punch. But, once again, what's constructive about it?

I'd say it's pretty positive! Constructive criticism, constructive engagement, as they call it!

(I thought I was the one with a found "End Construction" highway sign decorating his apartment.)

Shall we just be happy that it works some of the time and be done with it? Or should AltCity be fine-tuned so that users can get on more often than once or twice a week?

it depends on the cost of the fine tuning. I mean, even GOL goes down sometimes.

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

It's such a nice day today! They had predicted rain! I think I'll go take that bike ride....sure, there was rain yesterday, and I didn't want to ride. So I went running. I didn't sit around all day and curse the rain. It's good for the crops!

-- M X

Message 26 2/6/00 1:55 PM
Subject: Re(8): altcity= linda blair?
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Eva Luna writes:

Let's not unload this pile of horsecrap again, OK?

Why not? I'm wicked scared now! What are you going to do, send me to the Cutting Room Floor? I opened the place!!

Would you rather I not post at all and you can just read Steve's stuff?

(I'm reminded of the scene in "Breaker Morant" in which Lt. Handcock [Bryan Brown], whose job as unit horse trainer involved just such unloading, gets into a shouting match/fightpicking with one of the witnesses against him and when he's admonished by the judge that he'd better restrain himself or he'd be in trouble, starts laughing. Considering he's on his way to execution, how much more trouble could he be in?)

(Or, there's another scene in the movie in which the Boers attack the British base during the trial, and the accused prisoners are let out and handed guns and they fight heroically -- and when the battle is over they are sent right back to their cells and put back before the court with no consideration given to the fact that they didn't, for example, take the chance to flee....but then, where would they have gone?)

I think that instead of trying to squelch my opinions on aesthetic theory you should use your really amazing knowledge and resources to answer my film history trivia questions. Now, that would be useful!!

-- Eddy (already going to Hell for saying the secret name of God, but looking forward to meeting the Exorcist demon's mother there)

Message 24 2/6/00 11:03 PM
Subject: Re(14): altcity= linda blair?
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

I'm reminded of the scene in "This is Spinal Tap" after the "Stonehenge" debacle in which the managere is saying something like, "One thing goes wrong. A million things go right, and all you talk about is the one thing that goes wrong..."

I found it encouraging when a few people discovered on Altcity a way to display a whole thread at a time or something and seemed pleased with that.

One thing I can say about most of the discussion in this conference is that

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

I'm going to save the posts for the next time anyone accuses ME of worrying too much about small things.

Well, if there is a next time.

-- Eddy

> 23

Message 23 (Unsent)
Subject: Re(14): altcity= linda blair?
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

Eva Luna writes:

Forgive my attempts at trying to move this thread away from a personal exchange into something that might be useful for all people attempting to make the change from GOL to AltCity a succesful one.

Is there actually a difference here between "personal exchange" (which no one seems to want) and discussion of relevant issues (which everyone claims to want)? one thing seems to lead straight into another. People's reactions to the changeover will depend on their personalities. Some people are more accepting, or less expecting. This angers the people who are less accepting and more expecting. The personal becomes political.

I think it's funny that I, who am probably more addicted to GOL than just about anyone, should be saying this, but there are things to do beyond GOL, and how to learn to live without something is, in general, just as relevant as how to learn to live with it. Many interesting alternatives to recreating GOL on Altcity have been suggested here. Imagine if some of the time spent arguing here were instead spent seeking alternatives. Unless y'all just like arguing.

> 22

Message 22 2/6/00 11:42 PM
Subject: Re(10): altcity= linda blair?
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Eva Luna writes:

Would never do any such thing. But let it be known that I have no desire to participate in any argument, debate or discussion about it.

Then I'm glad that you've now made it clear that you were speaking as a user and not as moderator. It gets confusing sometimes.

Have tread (trod? walked? been drug [dragged?] down?) that road before, and the scenery was awfully dull.

Trod is correct. ("he trod a path that few have trod/did Sweeney Todd/the demon barber of Fleet Street." oops, not a movie.)

Now you really owe it to me to ID my movie mogul quote!

I guess I'm just bummed that I was away while the argument raged and missed

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.
out.

I think though that since this is really the ultimate, life or death argument, if you could bear to haul out and restate your old positions (I mean, unless they've changed, in which case, to formulate new ones) it would be most appropriate to have it now, in GOL's final days. I love it in the movies when the final showdown from which only one party will walk away takes place in a situation from which neither seems very likely to walk away, such as when the boat is sinking (and the captain lied), the Death Star or other space station is blowing up, the building is burning, etc. (Sometimes one character is trying to buy time for his allies to escape, and they look back and beckon and call to him to join them, save himself, but he is too locked in battle.) I mean, either the combatants are so intent on doing each other in personally (rather than impersonally, by forcing them to stay in and perish with the ship/station/building) or they just want to be really sure they don't get out.

I finally saw "Shakespeare in Love" this weekend, with its miraculous ("It's a mystery!" ending) and just got back from "The Third Miracle". The latter made me realize I prefer to find spiritual meaning in not-ostensibly-spiritual material. Still, Tenafly, NJ, native Ed Harris was great (and is starting to look like Clint Eastwood with those deep lines on his cheeks) and Anne Heche was luminous (though she looked a little like Rosanna Arquette). The sacrifices of the priesthood were well illustrated, but its rewards as well, as was the principle that belief in something (such as miracles) in general does not mean you have to believe in any one particular instance of it.

As I've said before, I don't believe in mysteries and miracles as separate from "everyday" occurrences, only in expanding our researches and theories. "Mystery", "miracle" -- and "art" and "the self" as well -- are simply the names we give to what we don't understand. Yet. If ever.

Still waiting to take my final bows/vows (bow-wow-vow!),

M X

> 21

Message 21 2/7/00 10:39 PM
Subject: Re(11): altcity= linda blair?
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Steve Omlid writes:

But in deference to Mr. Eddy's indefatigable high spirits

Well, don't defer too much. If there's one thing that can fatigue my spirits (and elicit my whines) it's waiting for the axe to fall. (Or the sword. As Gilbert wrote, Defer, defer, to the Indefatigable High Executioner.) If GOL doesn't end soon, I might come off of off, or flunk out of or graduate from, Indefatigable High.

Oh, by the way, Ed Harris, for his portrayal of a turbulent priest ("It's priest/ have a little priest" -- "Sweeney Todd") a doubting Thomas ` la Beckett, worrying "publish or parish?", is definitely Ed of the Week.

-- Ed (of the weak)

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

> 20

Message 20 2/7/00 7:45 PM
Subject: Re(6): Thoughts
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

Auntie Em writes:

Seems to me that too many people, troll and non-troll alike, are trumpeting complacency is if it were some kind of virtue.

would those be people here?

if so, would you care to name names, or work by subtle innuendo?

if not, shouldn't you at least have cross-posted to politics?

were you being vague, or ambiguous?

-- Eddy (calls a spade a spade when he's shoveling horsecrap)

> 19

Message 19 2/7/00 7:46 PM
Subject: Re(10): altcity= linda blair?
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

Meg Cotner writes:

mmmmmm....
:::::::::envy:::::::::
:)

don't sit home and envy me....fix your flat and saddle up!!

Message 17 2/8/00 6:46 PM
Subject: Re: Vacation
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

alex kuethe writes:

Just wanted to let people know that I'm on vacation until the 23rd

so does that mean GOL won't cease to be before then? (I mean, do you have to throw the lever on the guillotine yourself, or can someone else do it?) we have another two weeks guaranteed?

It is a far, far better thing I do....

-- Eddy

> 16

Message 16 2/8/00 6:53 PM
Subject: Re(2): When does it End?
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

Eva Luna writes:

The official shut down date hasn't been announced yet. When it is announced it should be via a pop-up message viewable by all who log on.

Oh, Eva, you blew a once in a lifetime (or deathtime) opportunity!! You could have said, "Umm, tomorrow!! Yes, that's the ticket! They're shutting down tomorrow! So there is no point in logging on anymore, John Barrymore! And..um...they're shutting down Altcity too! Lack of interest! yeah! no point in posting there either! honest!"

(You know, like "Poor Judd is Dead" -- not another Ashley sibling -- from "Oklahoma!"?)

(Or at the climax of "Little Big Man", when Dustin Hoffman replies, "Oh, no, Colonel Custer, there aren't any Indians down there!")

Indefatigably opportunistic,

Eddy

> 15

Message 15 2/8/00 8:05 PM
Subject: Re(8): Thoughts
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

Auntie Em writes:

Subtle innuendo. ;-)

well, I can't see what you mean then. there are people here who would seem to have the serenity to accept the things they cannot change (as for the wisdom to know, well, that's an epistemological question, and I only debate epistemology with Tim Walters.)

Yes. <-- (an ambiguous, not to mention vague answer)

it's nouvelle vague!

I think I'll have to check out that dot com place and see for myself.

Patrolling,

Eddy

Message 11 2/9/00 6:36 PM
Subject: Re(10): Thoughts
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

Auntie Em writes:

Though time will tell on the wisdom to know part.

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

Exactly. Time -- and not you -- will tell what we should have worried about, who was complacent and who serene.

If we have time.

Message 8 2/10/00 7:41 PM
Subject: Re(4): When does it End?
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

John Barrymore writes:
Yawwwn, J. Mark

I would love to have J. Mark Andrus' technical expertise. But I'm not the same person as J. Mark! As everyone knows -- and I thought *you* did -- I'm the same person as Kelsey Gadoo!

-- Deep Terry

> 7
Message 7 2/11/00 6:32 PM
Subject: Re(6): When does it End?
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Kelsey Gadoo writes:
But I am deeply terrified.

Fie on you!

Now you are.

But if anyone wants proof, consider the similarities: Kelsey Gadoo's a psychologist and a bisexual; Deep Eddy's a psycho logician on a bicycle. And most people's first thoughts on meeting both of us are the same: "What an ass!"

And no one's ever seen us together.

Message 43 (Unsent)
Subject: Terrible nominations
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

some of you may remember last year when I, having seen almost none of the movies nominated, made my Oscar choices solely on the basis of the information available to me, mainly titles and casting.

this year I actually have seen some of the movies nominated. and so has Kelsey Gadoo. so we've agreed on the following choices:

Original song: I saw "Toy Story 2" and that was an OK song. But I'll go with Aimee Mann, though I haven't heard the work for which she was nominated; I like her from her 'Til Tuesday days with her big hair, and she's married to Michael Penn.

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

Sound. Sound Effects Editing: What's the difference between these two again?

Cinematography: I guess "American Beauty". Hey, why not "Topsy-Turvy"?

Art Direction: "Topsy-Turvy"

Message 42 2/15/00 8:15 PM
Subject: Re(5): the slammer
From: Deep Eddy
To: my current crush

Kelsey Gadoo writes:
And are you going to tell us the reason for his arrest?

a guess: he hacked Yahoo?

what I am not understanding here is whether the problem was that he was the sort of person who does things that get him arrested (which are conventionally considered bad things), or that though you had no problem with what he did (if indeed he actually did it) you would not be seeing him for three to five years. (Hey, great chance to paraphrase Humphrey Bogart to Mary Astor in "The Maltese Falcon".)

And you could help him escape!! You could be waiting for him in your new car! Like in "The Getaway"! Or "Take the Money and Run"!

Look on the bright side: if he went to jail, at least he probably wouldn't be meeting too many other women for a while!

Always helpful, just like the police,

Eddy

Message 41 (Unsent)
Subject: Re(8): the slammer
From: Deep Eddy
To: my current crush

or you should have used some of your stock option money to bail him out. Like in "Jackie Brown". Then you're legally responsible for him. If he jumps bail, you can use basically any means you like to track him down and recapture him.

Message 38 2/18/00 10:11 PM
Subject: Re(8): GOL Shutdown Notice
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

Tovarishch Kollontai has given the best sort of start for this, but I would like to suggest a few lyrics myself -- show tunes, mainly, since I know how well everyone loves show tunes:

"And now, the end is near, and so [we] face, the final curtain...

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

Regrets, we've had a few, but then again, too few to mention
[We] did what we had to do, and saw it through, without exemption...."

"Kiss today goodbye
The gift was ours to borrow
We did what we had to do...
Won't forget, can't regret
What we did for love...."

"Soon we will be strangers in a strange new place
Searching for an old familiar face

From Anatevka..."

"Don't let it be forgot
That once there was a spot
For one brief shining moment
That was known as..."

"They were singing 'Farewell
Good old GOL
Not a Compaq not an IMac, no not even a Dell
(With a Motorola chip, or highspeed Intel)

Can get me back there, and altcity won't gel.
Gee, that BBS it really was swell..
But cookies give them data to sell...."

(sources: Paul "look back in" Anka, "A Chorus Line", "Fiddler on the Roof",
"Camelot", apologies to Don Maclean)

Leerickly,

Eddy

Message 32 2/19/00 11:52 AM
Subject: Re(10): GOL Shutdown Notice
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

Steve Omlid writes:

"How Can I Miss You If You Won't Go Away?"

There's a Warren Zevon song that goes "If You Won't Leave Me, I'll Find
Someone Who Will".

Just so y'all know how lucky you are, I was going to rewrite *ALL* the lyrics
of "American Pie" as a history of GOL. With me as the Jester. And then I was
going to list all the late lamented gone GOLers to the tune of Jim Carroll's
"People Who Died", something like:

"Little Anna Moyles went to Berkeley High
Dove out her Window to Minnesot'
Greta Christina did film reviews
Signed "Queen of Norway" to all she wrote

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

Heyer made her Party start when she sang

Now she's been gone a spell, rang the knell
Of dear old GOL...."

Or would this work better to the Nails' "Eighty-eight Lines about Forty-four Women"?

Lerikly,

Eddy

Message 28 2/19/00 6:44 PM
Subject: Re(10): GOL Shutdown Notice
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

Auntie Em writes:

Hey, those were great.

Hey, thanks.

There's another one I have somewhere...oh, here it is. it's from "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas" so Steve Omlid *MUST* know it....it's the one all the former employees of the closed Chicken Ranch sing at the end as they face the future and try to figure out what to do with their lives now:

Hey, maybe I'll dye my hair
Maybe I'll move somewhere
Maybe I'll get a car
Maybe I'll drive so far
They'll all lose track
Me, I'll bounce right back

Maybe I'll sleep real late
Maybe I'll lose some weight
Maybe I'll clear my junk
Maybe I'll just get drunk on apple wine
Me, I'll be just

Fine and Dandy
Lord it's like a hard candy christmas
I'm barely getting through tomorrow
But still I won't let
Sorrow bring me way down

I'll be fine and dandy
Lord it's like a hard candy christmas
I'm barely getting through tomorrow
But still I won't let
Sorrow get me way down

Hey, maybe I'll learn to sew
Maybe I'll just lie low
Maybe I'll hit the bars
Maybe I'll count the stars until dawn

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

Me, I will go on

Maybe I'll settle down
Maybe I'll just leave town
Maybe I'll have some fun
Maybe I'll meet someone
And make him mine
Me, I'll be just

Fine and dandy
Lord it's like a hard candy christmas
I'm barely getting through tomorrow
But still I won't let
Sorrow bring me way down

I'll be fine and dandy
Lord it's like a hard candy christmas
I'm barely getting through tomorrow
But still I won't let
Sorrow bring me way down

I'll be fine and dandy

Lord it's like a hard candy christmas
I'm barely getting through tomorrow
But still I won't let
Sorrow bring me way down

'Cause I'll be fine
(I'll be fine)
Oh, I'll be fine

Luridly,

M X

Message 26 (Unsent)
Subject:
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

Man, I just *LOVE* any movie whose title starts with "last", though at this point that's become one of those formulae that in general I can't stand (like the "two names" pattern, "Thelma and Louise", or "Hilary and Jackie", with denotation posing as connotation, or the "The Something" pattern, when the something is what the film is literally, not at all figuratively, descriptive: "The Negotiator", or the "single-word as if no other film has ever been made on that subject" : "Cop", "Thief"). I mean, "The Last Seduction" by no means depicted the Linda Fiorentino character's *last* seduction - you can bet she seduced *plenty* of guys after that.....And this movie isn't about the last man standing in the world, just in this particular town.....But the eschatologist in me willing to give any of them a try.....Especially now....

Especially this. After all, it's my favorite plot: from Dashiell Hammett's

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

"Red Harvest" through Kurosawa's "Yojimbo" to Leone's "A Fistful of Dollars", a lone, amoral wanderer comes into a town divided between two feuding gangs, and by siding with first one, then the other side, manages to get one to

destroy the other, and then finishes off the remaining, with the help of the one or two honest folks around, and then rides off just as he came....

so many shots, but then just one...

david patrick kelly, william sanderson....

amazing ry cooder music

nice red dust

sheriff as character, lawman...

doesn't seem very hurt...

Message 25 2/19/00 11:01 PM
Subject: Re(10): the slammer
From: Deep Eddy
To: my current crush

He sounds like the dentist in "Little Shop of Horrors"!!

"He's a rebel, but he makes good money!"

Message 24 2/20/00 9:54 AM
Subject: Re(12): GOL Shutdown Notice
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

Steve Omlid writes:

Nope. I'm a lot more familiar with prostitution-related issues than I am with Broadway musicals.

which is why I thought...well, anyway.

Although I am still waiting for your GOL-ization of a song from Sweeney Todd.

what, something like:

"It's Eddy
Careful, it's unsteady.
Good if you are watching your waist
But such terrible taste
Is it ready?
No, it seems he thinks that it's clever
To go on forever
Trying to deceive.
And is this one Steve?
Yes, and grab it quick, 'cause he's going to leave.

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

Soft and tender as lamb, he!

A bit namby-pamby

No, very!

Stick with terry..."

I'd go on, but I really don't feel like starting a whole round of jokes about who's eating whom. Besides, this isn't really the song from ST I'd like to parodize, and moreover, I hate to even refer to serial murderers when I could instead invoke the sort of criminal I much prefer, the con man, with a takeoff on "The Music Man":

"We've surely got trouble

Right here in Altcity

With a capital T

And that rhymes with C

And that stands for Cookies!

We've surely got trouble

Right here in Altcity

How we gonna tell the old GOLers from the brand new online rookies?"

Leridly,

M X

Message 23 2/20/00 6:48 PM
Subject: Re(15): GOL Shutdown Notice
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

The Larch writes:

And there's always "Those Were the Days My Friend"

you don't mean "Those Were the Days" (the "All in the Family" theme), do you?

"Back in Autumn 'Ninety-Five

GOL was so alive

Buzzing like a big beehive

Those were the days

Remember when the rules were lax?

Instant handles, flame attacks?

Desirie and Muffie Max

Those were the days...

Everything so smoothly ran

Under Andrew Sullivan

Helped by folks like Bayo Omolulu and pelikan

Now this place is gone, almost.

Full of ghosts, itself a ghost.

Raise your glass and drink a toast

Those were the days...."

Leridley,

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M X

Jeez, why didn't anyone say they liked these things before?

"I only fasted because I could never find the right kind of food. If I had, I would have gorged myself like anyone else." -- Franz Kafka, "The Hunger Artist"

Message 22 2/21/00 6:15 PM
Subject: Re: I'm gonna miss...
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

Boy Howdy writes:

terrible person managing to annoy just about everyone even when they should have realized he was just playing with them...

um, I hate to question a compliment (I mean, being missed **is** a compliment, right?) but as far as I was concerned I was never "playing" with anyone.

-- M X

Message 20 2/21/00 7:47 PM
Subject: Re(2): I'm gonna miss...
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

based on Jill Clayburgh's song in "Pippin":

I guess I'll miss this board
The fact can't be ignored.
A place for metaphoricryme.
I'd leave for months, but then
Come back, renamed again
But not this time.

Some folks would drive me nuts
With all their talk of butts.
(I'd rather talk of ifs, or ends.)
But I could count on them
To say things I'd condemn
And that sort of made them friends.

Some places, certain eras
Old Athens, Ancient Rome
I'd have preferred but couldn't
Log into
From home....

And so the GOLden Age
Is over. Turn the page.
And even as it went to pot --
I'll say it with a shrug

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

It surely beat BMUG

By a long, long shot.

Message 19 2/22/00 9:42 PM
Subject: Re(3): I'm gonna miss...
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

Boy Howdy writes:
(*It was a compliment BTW*)

see, you (or at least *I*) have to be careful about accepting people's compliments. because if I do, I have to accept their criticism as well, don't I?

and they might just be playing with me.

but thanks.

Message 18 2/22/00 9:46 PM
Subject: Re(3): I'm gonna miss...
From: Deep Eddy
To: death of GOL

Kelsey Gadoo writes:
Oh, you!

Careful. Don't start with me, pal.

And anyway, don't you mean, "oh, me!" or "oh, us!"?

Message 16 2/23/00 11:28 PM
Subject: Re(5): Who's Gonna Save Your Soul?
From: Deep Eddy
To: Altcity Content Ideas

Kelsey Gadoo writes:
Relying upon hard facts does not involve faith at all.

But what makes these facts so hard? (No obvious jokes, please.)

Is it that studies have shown that they are facts?

oops.

Me and my big mouth.

Well, now that it's out there....

I mean, this is what I've been arguing with Tim about for a year. "Facts" are facts because we assume certain things as a matter of faith, such as that we can trust our senses and their extensions (e.g., scientific instruments, mathematics, logic.) To religious people, the existence of God is a fact, and truth comes through revelation, not observation and deduction. It's simply another way of organizing the information. It may not be the most useful for

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

Roman is mine; in *Italics*, theirs.

dealing with life as we know it. (Or it may give a very good model for dealing with life as we know it. Jesus said some neat things. "Consider the lilies....". Nice analogies, dude.) On the other hand, life as we know it may be only a very small part of life as it is and science -- hard facts -- doesn't offer us anything to deal with that. To use your terms, science is a leap of faith based on a desire/wish/dream for a mathematico-logical order and a predictability that may not be there at all. The problem with the scientific viewpoint is that when you take it to its logical end, you're staring into an abyss of meaninglessness that spirals down and down, going on forever. (As I think I've pointed out before, kind of like a post by Deep Eddy.) Only faith gives meaning to life. That's your choice.

Not playing,

M X

Message 15 2/23/00 11:27 PM
Subject: Re(3): Who Shall Save Godlessness??
From: Deep Eddy
To: Altcity Content Ideas

Kelsey Gadoo writes:

but I think it's up to the atheists to define themselves and it's my inclination to let the atheists decide upon the "correct" classification of their belief system.

I think you have to be careful about letting people define themselves too much. The Nazis, the Communists, called their doctrines "scientific", as if that gave them some edge of inevitability over the mere "ideologies" of everyone else. Conservatives call their positions "commonsense" as if no sane individual could think otherwise. (And psychologists define "sanity" in somewhat limited ways sometimes....) Auntie Em presented her views on the religious right's gay bashing as if they were just the obvious views any thinking person would have. But obviously there are lots of thinking people who believe otherwise. As they say in "Buckaroo Banzai", if it were so obvious, everyone would be doing it.

Remember, most religions define themselves as the true faith and what everyone else believes as heresy, false gods, etc., as if there is some qualitative difference among them. "Two men say they're Jesus, one of them must be wrong." (Not necessarily. Anyway, the Romans didn't do this. They accepted pretty much everyone's gods, but on an equal footing with their own. The Jews and Christians naturally had problems with this.)

Definitions, like anything else intended to communicate meaning, is negotiated by the speakers and hearers. If we just let people call themselves whatever they like the terms they use have no meaning. I could start calling myself wonderful person and say, well, by my definition, I am. That would be fine, I guess, by you, but it obviously would kind of destroy the meaning of the terms. We have to ask, does atheism exhibit characteristics we commonly assign to religions? And I would agree with Steve Omlid that it does.

I'm agreeing with Steve a lot lately. I think maybe I'll claim to be him instead of Kelsey Gadoo for a while. I'm sure that will make his day.

Really, really sorry towards Steve,

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M X

> 14

Message 14 (Unsent)
Subject: Re(2): Who Shall Save Godlessness??

From: Deep Eddy
To: Altcity Content Ideas

Steve Omlid writes:

I'm an agnostic; I simply am not sure if there is a superior intelligence to the universe (or many different superior intelligences) or not.

I don't believe you. Well, I mean, we're all agnostic, just like we're all bisexual; no one is absolutely sure there is or isn't a God (even the most confirmed atheist or theist will have moments of doubt under certain circumstances.) So now what we're arguing about is where we fall in the middle.

*If someone wants to *believe* there is a God, or *believe* that there isn't, I think that's just fine.*

I don't think people choose faith any more (or less) than they choose sexual orientation. There is a

However, it seems to me that there is a leap of faith involved on both counts. And it also seems to me that sanctimony is sanctimony, whether based in belief or disbelief. True, right-wing Christians have much more power to do damage than smug atheists, but that doesn't make the latter any better than the former, in the philosophical sense. Just less dangerous.

> 13

Message 13 2/23/00 11:54 PM
Subject: Re(4): Who Shall Save Godlessness??
From: Deep Eddy
To: Altcity Content Ideas

kollontai writes:

ENCROACHING THEOCRACY

which I don't think you really have to worry about here on GOL (though the condemned to die often suddenly become religious -- think Karla Faye Tucker.)

now in the larger world, ok. context matters.

balance matters too. don't forget, "godless" political systems have done some things just as nasty, if not nastier, than godful ones. (see, godful folks tend not to embrace science and technology as much which can limit their efficiency at killing and enslaving. can.)

The Terrible Papers, Part IV: Stoler ("Deep Eddy")'s Posts on the Guardian Online BBS, November 1999 to the system's shutdown in March 2000. Hard to follow sometimes, I know; remember, the stuff in

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whew. I feel like the Man With No Name on coming into San Miguel: "You mean the Rojos on one side, and the Baxters on the other, and me right in the middle? Sounds dangerous."

notate bene, omnes: the issue here is not so much religion as THEOCRACY, the extension of organized religion to the political sphere. I think that there is a natural human tendency (built in, evolutionary) towards a sort of faith. (I mean, what is human intelligence but the ability to believe in things without directly experiencing them, like that there is a saber-tooth tiger in that cave before you actually go in there and have your leg bitten off? I think this tends to lead to belief in gods that we cannot experience directly....) what gets scary is when a few people start manipulating the natural need for faith to give them power over others, usually in the form, "god wants you to do what I say and give me your money." since there is almost always someone who will start doing this (it's just too tempting), faith tends to lead to theocracy.

Goodwill is like money in the bank. You don't build it up just to have it; the point is to spend it. So now that, like a dying mercenary mercurial Mercutio (call for me tomorrow and you'll find me a grave man), I've called down a plague on both your houses, I'd better go write some more song parodies.

Message 12 2/24/00 12:01 AM
Subject: Re: Who Wants to Talk About Marrying a MM?
From: Deep Eddy
To: Women<-->Men

I didn't see the show, but I've heard a bit about the controversy. My question -- and maybe lots of people's -- is, what if the multimillionaire had been a WOMAN, choosing from a bunch of beefcake guys? would that have been considered indecent? would they have shown it?

what's that play by Durenmatt, "The Visit"?

Message 9 2/24/00 4:42 PM
Subject: Re(7): If I only had a soul
From: Deep Eddy
To: Altcity Content Ideas

Auntie Em writes:

Or one could simply accept that whatever meaning there is is unknowable.

That sounds sort of -- complacent!

No need to spend all one's time hanging out at the edge of the abyss, staring down into it --

but what if I'm wrong (and complacent -- giving up on something because you feel you're powerless to affect it isn't all that different from not worrying about it because you think it doesn't matter), and the abyss isn't bottomless -- we just need to go a little deeper and then everything will make sense?

not when there are more interesting things going on elsewhere. I dunno. That's how I stumble through life, at any rate.

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If you haven't realized by now, you've stumbled (or I've tripped you) into the same argument we had a few weeks ago. (There is really only one argument. So said Albert.) Everyone has particular scales of time (and space, and of mass/energy, and of information) that he or she will be most comfortable dealing with. (For instance, studies have shown [well, one famous one] that we tend to process about three bits at a time. Tend to - there is variation. Unfortunately, we have ten fingers [between three and four bits.] But I digress.) Some people live minute to minute, others day to day, others plan years at a time or centuries, the way runners specialize in certain distances. (not that everyone has just one scale; each person has a pattern like the spectral lines that distinguish an element. And circumstances will affect this.) Now, given the apparently natural human lifespan of threescore and ten, the speed at which electrical impulses travel along neurons, the length of the day and the seasons, certain timescales seem "natural". But then, computers allow us to think faster and medical advances allow us to extend our lives and the planet's rotation is slowing down and anyway there is always posterity, or an afterlife, to think of. So you stumble at your pace and others stumble at theirs.

Message 8 2/24/00 5:11 PM
Subject: Re(7): Who's Gonna Save Your Soul?
From: Deep Eddy
To: Altcity Content Ideas

Auntie Em writes:

*I think what science is doing is saying that *within the limits* of what we can measure with our senses and their extensions, certain predictable patterns emerge.*

Which is fine, if these limits have some meaning. A Roman priest would take the auspices (literally, "looking at the birds") before an important undertaking by drawing out a square in the sky and saying, ok, any birds that fly into this square are signs from the gods, and any that go anywhere else, aren't. You're walking along a street late at night and you see a man on his hands and knees inspecting the ground beneath a streetlamp. He's looking for his keys. Did he lose them here, under the streetlamp? No, but the light's better here. As soon as science can explain something, we tend not to worry about it as much, and move on to worrying about about what science can't explain. At least, I do. I'd really like to know what will happen to me when I die. If anything. I think this is a fairly important question, and will have a lot of influence on how I will live.

Again, context is key. things, words, can mean whatever we want them to mean if we agree on it. Steve and Kelsey can define religion however they like. Others may not have any idea what they are talking about, but then they'd know how I feel most of the time. Within a carefully defined context, the rules of science apply. But in the end, we spend as much time defining the context as defining the rules. We're reduced to tautology -- things are what they are, no more, no less -- and Eva Luna's Syndrome. We can assume a certain context -- room temperature, a frictionless environment, all other things being equal -- but then we are limited to those contexts, to antiquated models, if things change, if our assumptions were wrong.

We can assume that there is not an interventionist God (or one who plants fossils to test our faith, and who obeys our ideas of what is reasonable

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rather than some other set befitting his or her or its divine status) and that the rules which seem to have operated in the past will continue to operate in the future. If we're right, we're psyched. If not, see you all in hell! It should be quite a party!

> 7

Message 7 2/26/00 2:26 AM
Subject: Re(9): If I only had a soul
From: Deep Eddy
To: Altcity Content Ideas

Auntie Em writes:

Well ... there's a difference, in my view, about being complacent about the misguided decisions a few individuals are making about an online conferencing system, where expressing one's thoughts about it might have an effect -- and being complacent about the limits of human understanding, which is not something anyone can do anything about, at least not quickly enough that I will see it during my lifetime.

but aren't you asserting that the whole glory of science is the way it has expanded the limits of human understanding?

Go ahead. Let me know what you find. What's your first step?

Well, if you'd like to see me walk on water, come to the Laney College pool Tuesdays and Thursdays around 6 PM. But actually, my first step is the same as yours. Deny the divine as you will, you still act as if it's there, by acting "morally" and giving "moral" justifications for your actions. Unless you would assert that morality is based only on consensus or practicality?

I'm not following this.

To paraphrase Charles Francis Adams, I guess that's because I've got Auntie Em to deal with and not Tim Walters.

> 6

Message 6 2/26/00 2:26 AM
Subject: Re(9): Who's Gonna Save Your Soul?
From: Deep Eddy
To: Altcity Content Ideas

Auntie Em writes:

or so Humpty Dumpty said.

No, he didn't. Read the book. He said a word meant whatever *he* (alone) meant it to mean. In that case, there would be no communication (unless you count our individual memories as forms of communication among our past, present, and future selves.)

Two people do not a language make.

Says who?

How many then?

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How do you define a language other than as a system for communication?

> 5

Message 5 2/26/00 2:51 AM
Subject: Re(9): Who's Gonna Save Your Soul?
From: Deep Eddy
To: Altcity Content Ideas

Auntie Em writes:

But that's not really about the limits of the senses -- that's about inaccurate interpretations of sensory information.

A scientist would want to take a statistically significant sampling of times that birds were in the square and compare it to times when birds were not in the square and see how well those two events correlate with signs/no signs from the gods. Or make a statistically significant number of observations of men on their hands and knees beneath streetlamps ...

Now, it might happen that there are other creatures -- say we call them "anti-birds" -- who are undetectable by any of our senses or instruments, whose location in the square does, in fact, correlate exactly with signs from the gods. Or the men beneath the streetlamps might not exist -- they might be illusions created by some previously unknown and undetectable radiation from space.

*But that would be beyond the scope of science. Meanwhile, scientists, dealing with the things that they *can* deal with, would be able to demonstrate that the (observable) birds are not signs from the gods and that the men observed beneath the streetlamps -- even though neither they nor the streetlamps exist anywhere outside the mind of the observers -- consistently claim that they are where they are because the light is better.*

It's not perfect knowledge, but it's an advance over what was known before. And you don't have to reject the possibility of "anti-birds" in order to count the birds. You don't have to "believe" or not believe in anything.

I'm not following this. (I'm pretty careful about whom and what I'll follow.)

OK, let's say science does have some value in describing things (which assumes we can trust our senses, which you must admit we can't always -- there are optical illusions, for instance, and there are limitations to our abilities to sense difference, and hence even to calibrate instruments that would sense them more accurately) and in explaining things (which assumes that the rules of logic, which deal with abstract notions of perfect truth and perfect falsity with nothing in between, actually apply to the real world any more than the rules of geometry, with its perfect circles which are never found in reality, and assumes also that we are completely rational, with no emotion whatsoever, which, if you want to assert that, means you can add the crown of terribleness wrested from me to that of paranoia won from nessie) and even in predicting things (if we assume that things in the future will be like things in the past, which is not necessarily so: cosmology suggests the physical laws at the beginning of the universe were very different than those in effect today, and economists suggest that the new economy is fundamentally different

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from the old one, no longer obeying the rules of the business cycle) -- so let's say I grant, for argument's sake, that science can answer some questions.....

What if those don't happen to be the questions I am asking?

I mean, I can conjugate verbs in Latin and decline nouns in Russian; I can tell you the causes of the Peloponnesian War, or all the lines spoken by Indiana Jones in "Raiders of the Lost Ark"; I can tell you how Warren Zevon sounds in concert -- but no one's asking! So it's kind of silly for me to trumpet my capacity to answer questions except to the extent that people are actually asking those questions, and not other ones that I can't answer.

So what if I really am not interested in how many kinds of subatomic particles there are or which diet will extend my life a few years when I am worried about eternity (which is a lot longer than a few years)? And if so, I would not be the only one. Lots of people are worried about eternity. And for them, science has no answers. So I'm afraid you'll have to pardon them if they look somewhere else for those answers, to religion.

Message 3 2/26/00 10:47 AM
Subject: Re(7): Who Shall Save Godlessness??
From: Deep Eddy
To: Altcity Content Ideas

Steve Omlid writes:

I believe that it's a profound kindness to raise a child to make his or her *own mind up about religion, and to respect the choices of other people along those lines.*

How would you know if the child had made a free choice?

If the concept of free will is difficult to reconcile with that of an all-knowing, all-powerful god, it's equally hard to reconcile with the lack of any god. If there's no god, we're just molecules interacting. Where's the freedom in that?

> 2

Message 2 2/26/00 11:00 AM
Subject: Re: Ernest Goes to Heaven
From: Deep Eddy
To: film

mars writes:

Who can forget his signature performance in Ernest Goes to Camp. Let us not forget the heart warming Ernest Saves Christmas or the powerful, Ernest Goes to Jail. I for one will always remember his stellar performance opposite Eartha Kitt in Ernest Scared Stupid.

Well, Mr. or Ms. Mars, I get to gloat a little now, as those of us who lived in New England in the late 80's got to experience Jim Varney as Ernest long before the national and West Coast audience did. The character, with his signature line "Know what I mean, Vern?" began in a series of ads for Christy's, a local convenience chain.

I hear that when he died, he was filming a new production of the Oscar Wilde

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play.

Varney was also the voice of Slinky the Dog in the "Toy Story" movies, yes?

Message 17 2/26/00 11:35 AM
Subject: Re(10): If I only had a soul
From: Deep Eddy
To: Altcity Content Ideas

Of some slight relevance and amusement at this point might be the case of the atheist who put his soul up for auction on eBay.

The online auctioneer pulled the item, on the grounds that if the soul doesn't exist, he couldn't auction it, and if the soul does exist, eBay doesn't allow the selling of body (?) parts.

My father liked to tell the story of how when he was teaching graduate journalism at NYU in the mid-80's he would ask the class if anyone believed in the soul, and no one would raise a hand. He would then pull out a five dollar bill and offer it to anyone who would sign a paper deeding to him (my father) his or her soul. And no one would...five dollars, ready spendable money, for something that doesn't exist.....

Eddy (who's gonna go listen to Otis Redding to save his soul!!)

Message 12 (Unsent)
Subject:
From: Deep Eddy
To: Altcity Content Ideas

Deep Eddy writes:

Lots of people are worried about eternity. And for them, science has no answers.

I agree with that. But (to get back to where this argument started), that doesn't mean that science is useless or that it has anything to do, one way or the other, with faith.

If you want to know what's on tv tonight, you don't open up the newspaper to the food section. Doesn't mean that the recipes in the food section are bad or worthless -- they're just not tv listings.

And science may, eventually, have something to say about eternity. It will certainly have something to say about the nature of consciousness, and that's a first step.

Subject: Re(3): *confused*

From: Deep Eddy

To: death of GOL

Cc:

Tanis Half-Elven writes:

For those who weren't on... Mark and I (and probably everyone else on at that time) received a message "System shutdown in 1 minute. Please quit your FirstClass server."

And it did shutdown. Even the website- bbs.sfbg.com.

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We thought it was over... for sure.

Then it went back up again.

They used to shut the system down at about 9:15 every morning for maintenance. this was back in 95-6 or so....it gave a foretaste...

What I am not understanding is exactly what is the mechanism of the shutdown. Someone like J. Mark who understands should explain. (A sort of cyber "How We Die".) I mean, I imagined someone would just throw a switch like the EPA guy turning off the containment system in "Ghostbusters". But I guess it's more complicated than that, possibly since GOL is also the BG internal email system? They have to delete all the accounts and conferences individually, so as not touch the staff users?

At least I'd have figured they'd turn off themodemms, but I'm still modeming in....

Or maybe they just expected that if they announced that it was over, everyone would figure there was no point in logging on anymore, and that was what would end it? A self-fulfilling prophecy? And we've called the bluff? We've refused to die?

I'm just annoyed because I put a certain amount of effort into all my "final" posts and now they're not so final.

You know, maybe there really isn't a bruce brugmann ruling this world and dispensing justice any more than there is a god ruling the universe. I mean, am I really supposed to believe in a big bearded guy I've only seen in pictures who damns things?

I feel like a follower of William Miller circa 1844.

Questioning my faith,

Eddy

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(footnote continued)

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