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“The Psychopath Code” by Pieter Hientjens; Almost-Pacifist Land; “The Bullet-Hole Misconception” by Daniel G. Siegel; Blood in the water

0.1 Pride

Remember when I first talked to Friend 3373, I said sthg. like your church is special. He didn't even look pleased as he replied, “I know.”

What a cocksucker :)

0.2 Sick

FYI I'm still blowing my nose. Thick, clear stuff comes out. But the good thing is I don't feel miserable, my nose doesn't hurt etc. So I stand by my previous declaration of non-sickness.

0.3 “The Psychopath Code” by Pieter Hientjens

Started and finished the Psychopath Code today. Most people I've dated, including myself, matched a few of the patterns of

psychopaths. He calls seeing psychopaths everywhere, “van Helsing Syndrome.”

I'd hate to actually work with a real-life psychopath.

My go-to quote from the chapter on how not to be Psycho prey

And then you can ask yourself the question, “will feeling and displaying this emotion make things better?” The answer is often, “no.” As you accept that answer, the root emotion goes away.

1.1 Free Writing

Like, alcohol is a stupid idea. And yet here I am alone in my room, chewing on dry party-meat and drinking palmwine. Alone. Like I vowed not to.



Another new framing. After reading the Psychopath Code yesterday, I now think of myself saying, “I hate myself” as expressing the intensity of my will to improve myself.



Let's work on the character of the Captain a bit more. I think he's gender fluid in

a literal sense. That is, when attending a gala, for instance, he'll change form to get bigger hips and bust, get taller, and wear feminine (but androgynous) clothes.

When he wants to use a lot of force, he'll change form to have a broader chest and wiry muscles, and he'll present as male.



Yeah, about that video game I keep feeling like I should make even though I don't know what it will be about. I think it is called Life.

It is like a role-playing game in that it has a number of sub-games, and sub-quests. I'm not sure what the objective of the game overall is.

You can choose how to spend your time among the sub-games and sub-quests, fun parts and not-so-fun parts.



You play the Captain, who had a rather soft crash-landing on the planet Earth. Now he explores the planet interacting with the locals while building a spacecraft that will take him onward to his final destination.



...I just don't know what to write any more.

Guess I could write about my dreams; like actual night-dream dreams.

So there was that one where I was in a rural-ish area that felt familiar. It was grassy, and we were standing by some bungalows, with a large, grassy field in front of us with a large tree in the middle.

Friend 342 was there and I was telling him that I had to go since I would be late for something. Now I decided to go to the back to say goodbye to a few more people before I left. I went there and said goodbye, and there was some guy who was following me wanting to ask me questions. And I didn't have much time but I had to pee so I said he could follow me as I went into the toilet building to pee and he followed me. There he told me some stuff and I came out again.

By this time I had moved to almost the other side of the field and the tree since, I guess the buildings curved around the field. As I came out of the toilet building and looked back, I realised that my car had gone. I felt particularly disappointed even though I didn't know exactly why I had to be on time.



Then there's that other one where I was in an elevator and it apparently suffered a failure because I went into free-fall and my dream-nose started bleeding because of that.

I must have woken up before the elevator hit the ground.



Just now I was sitting in the upstairs parlour, trying to write. I was fighting a full belly and an alcohol-addled mind. I'd already dozed off when I heard a loud noise from the stair well. I thought it might be some kids who were indoors running around and playing, but the noise continued. When I went to look, a crow was trying to fly in through the closed stairwell window.



Didja hear about that Bosnian war criminal being tried in the Hague who, after hearing his sentence, drank cyanide right there in the court? “I have taken poison” were his last words.

I was so excited when I read about this on The Guardian; history was being made right before me.



I probably will lose the sleepiness once the play session is over.

2.1 Designing databases for my memories

I’m designing databases for my Music, Pictures, and Contacts, and I have a feeling that one design can work for them all.

I might have to create a new ur-format that encapsulates binaries or files only edited by machines. That way I can keep references to binaries along with descriptions of their contents forever, but delete the binaries as the need arises e.g. space limitations.

Seems like these textified binaries (textbins) will only be necessary where I reference them in other files. In what memories do I reference files? In diary entries (PDFs, pictures).

Or maybe create symlinks based on the binary metadata in the referencing file.

5.1 Free Writing

The Call

So, the gist of it was, I might be wasting my time going to get a Bachelor’s in math since I can just go straight for a math PhD. (but I don’t wanna do research)

That’s interesting! I’d rather learn what is known and teach it in the most efficient ways possible. Expanding the frontiers of mathematical knowledge, however, doesn’t sound like my cup of tea.

I wonder if I could create a toolbox that will deterministically solve every example and end-of-chapter problem in chapter 1 of my probability book. That would be a priceless gem.

There’s some light in the tunnel. I might need some brush-up courses in math to get into grad school, and for that it might make sense to brush-up at college. But getting a degree, probably nah.



FYI try not solving problems that Friend 9960 talks about anymore because she doesn’t seem to appreciate the help. Instead, make comforting noises but in the end do nothing. Don’t threaten to do this, just do it. Don’t point out that you’re not actually solving the problem at all, just make them comforting noises.



They say the best way to learn is to teach. I’m going to teach so well, it’ll look like magic.

What other things do I want to learn?
Speaking Hausa

(Oh yeah, “want” is a bad word)
 What other things will I learn?
 How to lead 100 people.
 How to build a city.
 How to fix joint pain.



Some parts of our culture are nice. As we were leaving, Friend 1318 was sitting under a tree with about 10 women around her, I guess commiserating with her on the loss of her relative. Even Friend 2231 remarked on how nice it was that the women gathered around her (and gather around her whenever she needs them).



My arm fixing is still going on. Now, I can take off my shirt without feeling pain (but still a slight popping sound) in my left shoulder. I still get pain, though, when putting fist to mouth as if drinking from a water bottle and then raising my elbow to eye level.

I’ve been doing one day on one day off for shoulder exercises. I’ve found that the second day after exercise, my shoulder still hurts but by the third day the hurt reduces a bit.

3.1 Human Language to Programming Language

Watching “Programming Languages - Lecture 1”¹ since it was linked to in the PLAI

¹https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3N_tvmZrzc

book which I’m reading so I’ll know how to design the grammar for my dictionary input language

Krishnamurthi sez, “Get your core language right, then build all kinds of sugared interfaces on top of it”

Krishnamurthi also said, “Either your language dies or it becomes a full-blown programming language”

Notes

Why does creating GUI apps on Emacs feel more intimidating than in Racket?

3.2 Almost-Pacifist Land

So I took a journey to almost-pacifist land. Right at the border the guard told me the rules: you physically harm anyone, you die.

OK... I walked right in and noticed that people kinna kept to themselves. Makes sense not to risk stepping on someone’s foot and getting the axe. By the time I got to the city centre, people started coming nearer to each other but there never was quite as much jostling as you’d expect from a major city centre.

Right in the middle I saw a great big, wall. Totally black that stretched about 10 stories high and went on for blocks and blocks, farther than I could see. I went on closer until I came to a large clearing. Near the wall, were armed guards and the clearing, which ran parallel with the wall was a kind of no man’s land. On one side crowds of shoppers, on the other, men with death machines.

A few feet away, on the non-death side, I saw a plaque which held a description of the wall. Apparently, Almost-pacifist Land was made up of about 9 clans who kinna decided that armed conflict was not cool and wanted to abolish it. They also knew that humans would get into fights, as part of being humans. And humans would lose control of their emotions, as part of being human. And humans would eventually kill others when they got angry enough.

So like any sensible civilisation, they thought about it for some years and then decided on a plan. They'd outlaw death-dealing and all assault. Of course, people need an outlet for their violent tendencies or the system might fail catastrophically with a big killing orgy.

So they created an outlet of sorts. A kind of game/reality TV show where ordinary people, who aren't allowed to even slap their spouses, could still get satisfaction.

Behind the wall was the grounds of a school which had only 100 students. The students were all 12 to 16 year-olds. And they were allowed to kill each other. And assault each other.

3.3 Soundtrack

“What a Friend” by Mary Mary

4.1 Thunderbird hidden options

FYI in Thunderbird 52.2.1 on Ubuntu 16.10, the preferences page has tabs right below the graphical toolbar. But these tabs look like plain text, not like tabs. You have

to click on them to know that there are other “hidden” options.

4.2 Does the Experience Machine exist?

I've begun to realise that most people around me don't believe in anything. By that, I mean that they don't believe any story in which self-sacrifice now will bring great glory to them after they're dead.

4.3 Quick Read through the Probability book

I realised that it'd take a long time to work through even half of the Probability book so I'm just reading it through without doing any exercises. Perhaps when I find some useful insights or results it can motivate me to put in the work to learning the material cold.

(Yeah, I know, learning it is supposed to help me get a job, but there must be a short-cut that'll let me read 20% of the book so I can pass 80% of interview problems)

Just read through half of chapter 4 and it doesn't look like I'll run into much more exciting results; it's just boring-looking math with few personal applications for me. Which is a shame cuz I can't reduce my risk of failure (by studying probability) to 0 before applying to any quant jobs: I'll have to jump into the fray and see where I fail to know where to improve.

So, to get a quant job, begin with the end in mind.

4.4 Quant jobs I could enjoy for the next 10 years

Must be some kind of job I've never heard about, because all the jobs I have heard of sound like programming jobs to me. And we know how that goes.

Some things I've consistently enjoyed doing over the past 10 years are:

1. Learning how complex systems work
2. Designing complex systems using few components
3. Creating automation tools

Went back to skimming the probability book. Maybe because my other options don't look too good :)

4.5 Free Writing

O boy, watching the original Evangelion series seems to be way more interesting than writing with my full brain power. I keep thinking that that's the best way to write. I mean, ol' Stephen King must write with only half his brain at a time what with his output.

Speaking of which, NGE has so much balls. Even though it is not fully consistent, it is still quite an achievement. Hideaki Anno designed a whole city and a whole organisation and a bunch of characters who each had their own history, *and* those histories actually affect how they behave today.

(FYI I'm on episode 2)

Man, there's so much detail that got elided in the Rebuilds e.g. Shinji noticed

Pen Pen's fridge and asked about it and Misato gave a somewhat ambiguous answer.

I think if I can find a suitable MacGuffin, we can push this story through. In what situations, would I put a child in danger instead of myself? Only if both our lives were in danger and the child was the only one who could save us.

So size isn't enough, the job has to require a kiddish disposition. So another story option would be to have some global reality show where kids dance and sign and be cute for adults like only kids can be. well, is it necessary for the kids to have lethal interactions with each other? It adds to the drama.

If individual kids dying is dramatic, then we can't have the fate of the world hanging in the balance because 1 kid's life means nothing vs. 1 billion.

(Back to NGE, even Toji, the boy with glasses, doesn't have a mother)

I feel like I'm watching NGE afresh. I didn't know that Shinji actually quit NERV in episode 4.



Maybe this would help: in what situation would you put a friend's kids into a lethal situation?

I guess, also, if they were chess/shogi/go/league of legends experts and computers hadn't yet solved it and success in those games was of existential importance. Oh wait! Orson Scott Card already covered this in Ender's Game.

Ah, here's another thing kids are good at: learning languages. But there it's sub-10 year olds we want, not teenagers. Well,

Friend 4611 (I love that guy) says that after about 10 years, kids gain abstract reasoning skills so we can have complex stories with juveniles and expect them to make rational decisions. In actual fact, I think this is balls but it is close enough to true that my sense of consistency won't be offended.

Now what kinds of systems would affect the lives of thousands or millions and depend on language abilities in order to run correctly. Well, the power grid, at least in industrialised nations.

Let's have a force of nature (e.g. prisoners dilemma aka Moloch) as the enemy, not an "other" like aliens. That way we can get a glimpse of how we're ruining our kids' future.

What kind of enemy has all the good guys as its agents even though they're also trying to destroy it.

One option: a werewolf/vampire kind of deal where while people are awake they're good, but in their dreams they control demons who attack the Earth. And destroying the demons kills the corresponding humans.

Or how about kids playing a videogame realise that monsters they destroy will kill people in the real world, but winning prizes in it causes good things to happen? We could then have a group of adults who fund a bunch of gifted kids to play the game well enough to bring about World Peace. And of course, a subset of those adults will have a selfish reason for funding the kids.

Our enemy is human nature and we have to find ways to stop it from destroying us while not destroying too much of the things which we value. We'll have to deal with trade-offs between nature which we value and nature which destroys us. We'll prob-

ably destroy something of value at some point and try to reinstate it. Then we'll realise that we can choose which values to keep and which to do away with. And on the outskirts of our city we'll have heroes holding off different forces of nature, and they'll have to tag in and out as the need arises.

That is how what begins as kids being the only ones who can fight the forces of Nature becomes rationalised as kids being the obviously best ones to decide what of human nature is good and what is bad.

This suggests that eventually we'll have an area set aside for a few decision-maker kids in which they're provided with everything they need, can see what problems exist in the real world, and have the authority to make binding decisions on behalf of their home societies.

This isn't necessarily a solution that will always work to produce World Peace, this having a group of omnipotent leaders negotiate among themselves. However, through the happenstance of there being a means by which kids bear a lot of responsibility (via being the ones with sufficient language facility to adapt the defence systems to the attacks of the demons), it becomes easier to get to the better of equilibrium of having relatively innocent kids make decisions.

So what happens when the kids are groomed from birth to support their own clans? We put all the kids in hibernation after their "tenures." They only get released if certain global flourishing metrics are met. Basically, they'll arise on the last day and be judged by all of humanity.

Now, won't that incentivise selfishness since if your clan survives, it can then influence the Final Day judgements to be in

your favour?

5.1 “The Bullet Hole Misconception” by Daniel G. Siegel

We are automating more and more of our work, becoming wealthier and more connected... Why then do we feel more short of time, overwhelmed and overworked?

I tried the life of leisure and it got boring. Now I'm as busy as I am by choice. I automate things reflexively. The article suggests optimising for fun instead.

5.2 Animal Cruelty

Remember that time in secondary school when that music teacher came into the class and handed me a cane and told me to chase all the junior boys in the field back to their classes. I ran out there yelling at them to get back but when I got to them, I couldn't whip them. I ended up yelling at them out of breath rather impotently. Some ran.

When I got back to class, my classmates laughed at me for not flogging anyone. I felt a bit stupid.

5.3 Sapiens

Why do I need to tell myself fantastic stories to motivate myself to work hard e.g. that I'm the Captain of a spaceship trying to get to the centre of the Milky Way?

5.4 This time it'll work

I've been drinking a lot lately. I blame it on the lack of readily-available weed. Booze never satisfies in the way weed does (I guess weed just lasts longer without me getting sick) but I keep taking it, I guess in the hope that *this time* it'll make me feel good.

5.5 Sit straight

FYI I can't just sit straight, I must also sit stretched up. Otherwise in a few decades my back will shorten like old folks'.

6.1 Blood in the water

Friend 9960 sent me a link on WhatsApp this morning about why humans can't live for hundreds of years.

I was pissed at first then got happy. Not happy that I'll get my friend back. Happy that my model of her was validated. And happy that if she was intimating an apology, that I'd be able to win more concessions in the relationship.

It's like I tasted blood in the water.

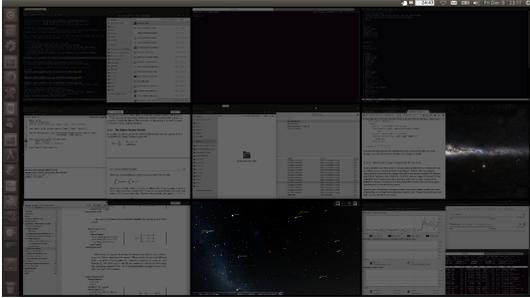
6.2 Age of Em

It is clear that with good institutions to encourage innovation, it could be reasonable to spend one-quarter, one-half, or even more of world income on pursuing possible innovations. Innovations are just that important, if ways to encourage them effectively can be found.

Chapter 22: Rules

6.3 MC

Here's my desktop. I'm pretty proud of how close I'm approximating the ideal of MC.



7.1 Emacs and L^AT_EX

Use the Emacs package, AucTeX, to edit L^AT_EX files since it supports features like in-line previews.

7.2 Danger: overload

I received a formal warning from my internal systems that I worked too hard today.

Since this is a warning, I'm not obliged to make any behaviour change. If I let this happen too often, however, I may get a binding intervention foisted on me.

8.1 Dat Carbon Tax

Peter Watts wrote a column about climate change and as an aside, pooh-poohed the idea of a carbon tax. Previously, I'd thought a carbon tax was just a sensible idea: there's going to be so and so amount of carbon emissions already, might as well let people trade their allocations. And all the while, the limits are being steadily reduced. Sensible, right?

Here's a possible rebuttal.

I think a carbon tax is bad for the same reason that a civilian-casualty-of-war tax is bad.

Just as a civilian-casualty tax would incentivise gaming the death statistics by doing things that almost-but-not-quite count as killing civilians (and you wouldn't want to live near any of those regions while the gaming was going on), a carbon tax would incentivise gaming the emissions statistics by doing things that almost-but-not-quite count as emitting carbon (and you wouldn't want to live near any of those regions while the gaming was going on).

Carbon over-emitters can buy offsets by e.g. planting carbon absorbing forests, but these forests are sometimes unwanted by the local populations. Similarly, if you killed more civilians than you were supposed to in a war, you might want to encourage the production of new ones, but occasionally, no local population might want those new civilians.

As a carbon emitter, if you reduce emissions one year, you can over-emit the next; this might strike observers as gratuitous. Similarly, as a civilian killer, you could keep deaths to a minimum early in the war then use up all your savings when you're pretty sure you're about to win the war; this might strike observers as gratuitous.

(I hope anyone better-informed here will correct my analogy if it is way off the mark)

◇

Remember that story about Almost-Pacifist land? I think they implement a cap-and-trade programme for violence.

8.2 Art Lottery

Per Cory Doctorow², civilised peoples should have endowments to encourage the arts, and not just from professional artists.

8.3 Chill day

I'm so much chiller today than I usually am. During a work session³, when I lie on the bed tired, I remember someone saying that you should exercise when tired, and then I'll get up and push on. Today I just continued typing from the bed.

On a regular day, I sit straight throughout. Today, I brought in a seat and leaned back as much as I wanted.

Usually I'd strain to see the screen (gotta train those eye muscles, ya know). Today I moved the seat closer.

Usually, I don't brook distracting thoughts, or random browsing during a work session. Today, I let myself engage with distracting thoughts until they stopped distracting me, then I went back to work.

Usually, I only have classical or jazz on when working. Today I listened to vocal-heavy Soulection.

8.4 Free Writing

Earlier today while working I thought, "I hate myself" but then I replied something like, "Yeah OK" so I could get back to what I was doing. I didn't have the instinctive feeling of remorse as usual.

²<https://boingboing.net/2017/12/08/measuring-the-right-thing.html>

³giving up on the play framing so soon? ;)



... Some folk feel an urge to add a footnote to a sectioning title, which should be resisted. If their flesh is weak, then the optional argument must be used and the...

Peter Wilson, *The Memoir Class for Configurable Typesetting User Guide* (2016)

8.5 Soulection #335

36:20 – Me and You cover

46:33

53:00 – Kelis, get along with you

8.6 Notes from 1000, 100, and 10 days ago

Consider getting a nice tablet I can connect to my computer and draw with. I enjoyed doing it with my iPad.



How about regularly asking friends in other cities what it feels like to be living where they are at that moment, just to get a feel for the rest of the world?



And buy another phone specifically for language fieldwork.



How can I teach folks how to build a city?



Imagine NGE in which the angels are actually good, and are being controlled by NERV employees but in their off-hours.

8.7 Dat Carbon Tax (2)

Again, don't see the issue here. As long as the carbon emitters are hitting their goals, why should the observer's opinions matter? I'm seriously lost. The emitters presumably took some costs to cover the reduced emissions on the first year, because it was more efficient for them. If you don't allow this sort of switching from year to year, they're just going to hit the maximum every year; and you end up with no less emissions, but needlessly higher costs for the emitters.

You're right and I agree: carbon taxes will likely reduce global emissions. I only reached my opinions about carbon taxes recently so they're not well-formed.

I'd like to convey an intuition: from a God's eye view, any net reduction in carbon emissions is a plus. However, from a local's point of view, letting people from far away pay to destroy my home (either by polluting it or forcibly planting carbon sinks) seems unfair, especially if I don't get a say in how that destruction is carried out.