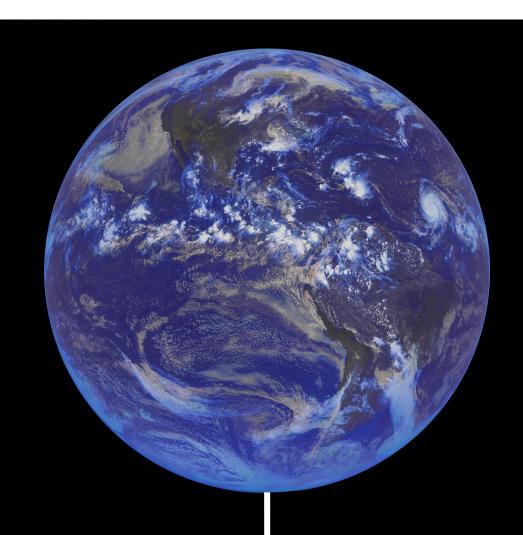


Sampling Text Threads Tied Together in Seattle (How Much Are People Ideas?)

by joseph f. keppler

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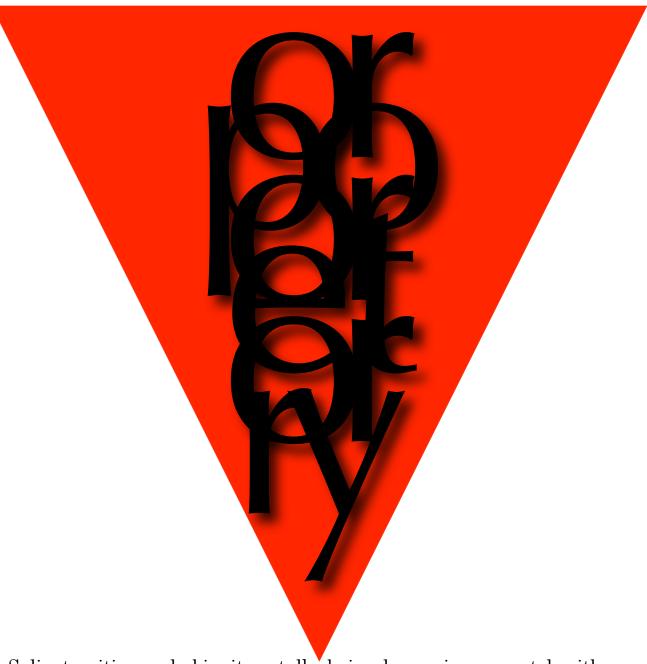


Preface

Writing and speech are somehow both same and different. Language read or heard resembles the same and different dilemma in visual recognition—such as the Rubin's Face-Vase representation, which reads as side silhouettes or central vase; the rabbit-duck image, which reads as rabbit or duck; or my own double-graphic cover for the *Fall Collection from Seattle* (http://eratiopostmodernpoetry.com/pdfs/FALL COLLECTION SEATTLE.pdf), which reads top-down or bottom-up or each part in opposite perspectives. Similarly, words can be read as written or heard as spoken and usually not both at once.

Much thinking swivels on oral, print, and electronic media, as Marshall McLuhan wonderfully observed; and within our hybrid culture, each communicative act seems constituted not just by the media expressing it but also by the ideas or emptiness in its expression. To tie together electronically both writing and speech, this short essay surveys written and spoken communications which are radically different. Extracted from their original contexts, they vary according to what they refer while serving as their own immediate context in how they refer. Perhaps as Socrates says to *Phaedrus*, writing is as strange as painting for neither writing nor painting is capable of dialogue and neither knows its audience or interlocutor personally (275d). As Plato writes the Socratic dialogues, Socrates speaks famously about speech imbued especially with justice, beauty, and the good. Plato obviously knew what he was doing with writing speech. In contrast, our culture sedated and polarized over power, wealth, and diction cares little for Platonic poetic virtue. Today language as talk expresses something like an image scan into a peculiar and virulent social pathology.

When we're reading provocative referents, are our contemporary neural synapses comparable to patterns when hearing signifiers cut loose from profuse, confused referents? Do neurons light up with the former and dim with the latter or vice versa? Can some chronic speech habits form something like an epigenetic hazard and damage consciousness as cigarette smoking damages lungs? Can speech-smoke constantly reproducing sales and elections metastasize throughout a society?



Salient writing and ubiquitous talk obviously require separately either reading or listening, but text-and-dialogue so often working discordantly in modernity escapes critical attention. Their difference, however nuanced, contextual and experienced, is something accepted without much poetic concern. This indulgence leads one to experience written and spoken expression as a half-full, half-empty glass and implies that each half is as linguistic as the other. They are equal.

Today writers generally think as they write more than speakers do as they speak. Talk often comes almost automatically, and some conversations contort unrecognizably. Additionally, solitary writing and reading (all those backs bent over text messages) hinder thoughtful conversation. The media regularly silence conversation among people whose own stylized talk in turn swells within and around us much like a mutagen inciting genetically altered, cell proliferation.

Our idiomatic logic and ambient listening are somehow changing us. With news, chat, interview, show, and song media surrounding us, we hear talk all the time, but it makes sense differently and incongruently when closely examined. It often makes no sense and only makes a contextual display—verbal text in an acceptably absentminded context.

For this small linguistic survey both published and overheard language appears electronically together to tie printed and spoken language within a common reference frame. The short texts I selected from my reading and transcribing run mostly one after another. They are salient writings knotted with anonymous fragments from overheard talk; that is, conversations ripped from official, unofficial, and casually, publicly available, everyday discourse. The transcribed and pieced-together talk appears in bold italics. It is anonymous, not particularly individualized. Rather it is expected public communication, a performance, a showing-off for and with others. The writing examples in quotes come from various sources and authors with their particular publication data cited in each case.

Enjoy?



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"But your personality is not your character, not your identity. Personality is what reveals your character, recommends it, covers it up or gives it away. It can suggest that you have no definable character, no central self, no concrete identity. Pinter's characters are haunted by their own private uncertainty principle; and one of the things that some of his audiences find unsettling is that he presents them with their own hollow image of personality with a core." —John Peter: Attempts on Their Lives, an article about Harold Pinter (Times Literary Supplement (TLS), 2/22/2008, p. 17.)

Some people deserve what they get. We never provoked anybody. They want to ask me questions I cannot answer. They want me to pay for their food and drink.

Do not look stupid; you will get your things. Always I make sure there are all these things with me.

Okay, I will tell you what the case is. Yes, I looked up this morning driving to work, and I saw myself up there in their puffy clouds for the first time. Get your own show started, I said. Time went by; then all of a sudden I felt real, you know? I think this country has to cut corners so we can change our status. We try to be ourselves in addition to everything else we do that is other. I think what is going on is anytime you have a pyramid, people up here want to call the-you-do-not-ever-want shots. I cannot even remember this year. Is there even a year here? I

I cannot even remember this year. Is there even a year here? I guess we should just presume that is what they did in life, and say: Okay, thank you very much for your history.

"[Bertrand] Russell considered himself an expert on the topic of love, though the sorry amatory career described in his *Autobiography* should perhaps have given him pause. 'Love can only flourish as long as it is free and spontaneous,' he wrote in *Marriage and Morals*, and 'it tends to be killed by the thought that it is a duty.' Nothing would ever have

induced him to read a book like Kierkegaard's Works of Love; yet this sequence of 'Christian deliberations; on the injunction to 'love thy neighbour as thyself could almost have been written with Russell in mind. They are directed against the 'conceited sagacity, proud of not being deceived', which forgets that there is nothing more deceptive than 'the flattering conceit that considers itself absolutely secure against being deceived'. Such sagacity cannot begin to understand the meaning of love. Terrified of the paths of paradox, it dismisses the old-fashioned idea that love can be a matter of conscience, insisting that it is nothing more than a healthy natural impulse to approve what gives us pleasure. It reduces Christ's saying about loving others as ourselves to a boneheaded banality, to the effect that we start by loving ourselves and then move on to those who can assist us in our project; it has no inkling that it cuts the other way as well, suggesting that we must also love ourselves as others."—Jonathan Ree, "Dancing in the Service of Thought", a review on Soren Kierkegaard: A Biography by Joakim Garff, (London Review of Books (LRB) 8/4/2005, p. 28.)

She may have talked to me. I don't remember. She may have talked to me. We always fell apart right away in general. I am sure it was clearer a long time ago.

Right, we kind of twist things now. We get out of it that way, sort of. I know what bothers me about us. I was reading what she said, and it sounds like somebody did something to someone. That is what I thought. Then she sent it out like that. We never had a chance.

Well, there is so much wrong. There is no problem equal to anything.

So, no, no, she is right in the end. There is no problem not equal to nothing. I guess it really does not matter for us. I am a little confused.

There is always something a little funny going on. We do not know what is going on. We do not know what has happened. I guess they can decide that. They always get so stinky about it. When you try to figure it out, that is not where the problem is anyway.

Yeah, I wish they would just get rid of it.

Ideas bump one another, pardon me.

No, no, pardon me.

"If attention is fastened exclusively on human speech, if human speech is taken simply to be the voicing of the inner man, if speech so conceived is regarded as language itself, then the nature of language can never appear as anything but an expression and an activity of man. But human speech, as the speech of mortals, is not self-subsistent. The speech of mortals rests in its relation to the speaking of language."

—Martin Heidegger: Poetry, Language, Thought (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1975, p. 208).

"SOCRATES Yes, my good Phaedrus, for you see how shamelessly said the speeches were, this second one and the one from the book. If we were being listened to by someone of a noble and gentle character who was in love with someone else of the same sort, or else had ever been in love with someone like that before, and he heard us saying that lovers start large-scale hostilities because of small things, and adopt a jealous and harmful attitude towards their beloved, surely you think he would suppose himself to be listening to people who had perhaps been brought up among sailors, and who had never seen a love of the sort that belongs to free men, and would be far from agreeing with the things we find to blame in Love?"—Plato: Phaedrus (243c), trans. Christopher Rowe (London: Penguin Books, 2005, pp. 22-3).

They never paid attention to the problem. To me, there is never a big enough cost with not doing anything. So what makes the difference? The money, they were not too concerned about it, but the second you try, they want to talk about it, about negotiations. What does that have to do with anything? That's goofy. It was like: But not now, it is not a good time. It is never at all a good time now.

I don't know what they mean, consistency. Maybe that is what they mean. Maybe that's the solution. You know that's one to drop everything and do this. They must have really known how to do it then must have decided not to do it.

Who is this person anyway? Well, it will be interesting. Do you suppose she'll say something?

I don't know. I know this: she picked up and asked right out: How'd you find out?

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"By event, Deleuze means a kind of incorporeal entity which may then be more or less completely incarnated in bodies and states of affairs. He draws a distinction between the event as incarnated in states of affairs and the pure event which is 'immaterial, incorporeal, unlivable: pure reserve.' An example which illustrates this difference is Maurice Blanchot's distinction between death as a realizable event towards which the subject may have a personal relation, and death as impersonal and inaccessible event towards which the subject can have no relation. . . . The task of philosophy understood as concept creation, Deleuze and Guattari affirm, 'is always to extract an event from things and beings.' They oppose this conception of philosophy to all of the major competing paradigms: logical analysis, phenomenology and liberal-democratic conversation or search for consensus. Philosophy conceived in terms of formal logic. they argue, reduces concepts to prepositional functions where these derive meaning from their conditions of reference and where the underlying ideal is that of a body of true sentences which correspond to existing states of affairs. Phenomenology, by contrast, treats

philosophical concepts as functions of the conscious experience of subjects; whereas the liberal-democratic approach reduces philosophy to the expression of opinions, where these are little more than functions which map perceived qualities of objects on to the affective states of perceiving subjects. The truth or falsity of opinions is therefore less a matter of how the world is than of coincidence with the opinions of the group to which one belongs by virtue of expressing the appropriate sentiments."—Paul Patton: a review on Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, What is Philosophy? (TLS, 6/23/95, p.11.)

She's been doing mocha all day. She's mocha'd out. She does either mocha or marketing for them, and she says he has to get in touch with his director. So we won't hear back for at least three weeks or so, and that's okay. Just put it on the calendar. Hey, I got her to clear out her desk. I keep my own nose clean. Maybe in your sleep. . . . Well, let's hope not. I'm going to give her time. I'm going to give her time.

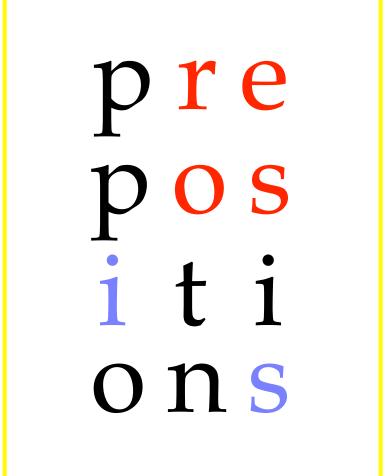
Give me a break. That would be really good.

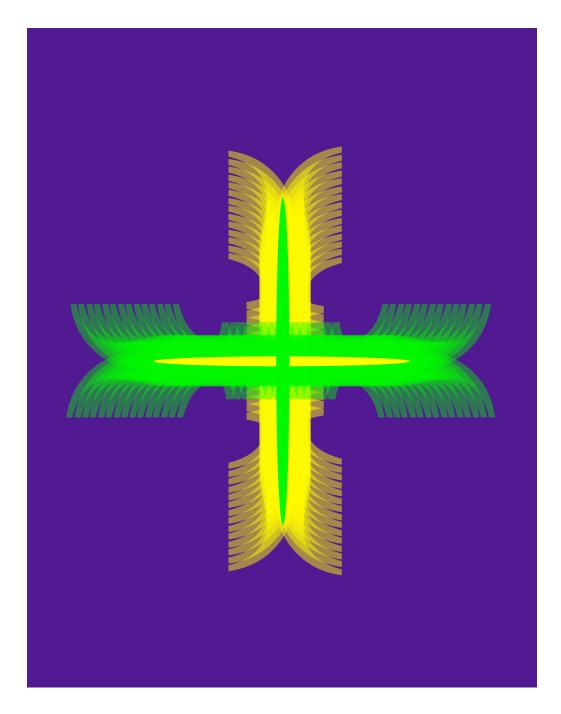
Is that a lifetime thing, her job?

No, I think it's not a lifetime. Nobody validated it, but they told us it was some kind of merger. No one's ever challenged him because she is there. I was just curious.

Okay, so you just can go back and go forward and it works. This is in writing. It would be really great. It should work. I'm not going to need him anymore.

I never figured you for a coupon man. I just started. So what I'm looking for is big. You can't get much bigger.





"Even so, posthistory is not a 'developed theory', more a 'symptomatic sensibility'. At its heart is the sense of a petrified, technocratic world, self-steering and self-reproducing, whose inhabitants, with the loss of all meaning and value of a traditional kind, are becoming reintegrated with nature as morose or playful animals. Posthistory is the triumph of biology and technology over history and spirit."—*Joseph Carney: a review on Lutz Niethammer's* Posthistoire: Has History Come to an End? (Radical Philosophy (RP) 69, p.39.)

No, no, I'm not saying this is unacceptable. It's just that everyone accepts that we're unnecessary here. We're unacceptable. Do you understand what I'm saying? I do have hopes too, but you have been stable, steady, and I have had to do what I think our responsibilities require. It is my intent that you will have some opportunities. You will have been around for a while: look at you all. I just wanted to take full responsibility for that decision. Sometimes you do not have time to be perfect, but you always have time to be excellent. Sometimes I have to be accountable for something I did not buy into, and I accept that: What happened to shared values?

after a long while
to appear
like a painted george
washington or a mona lisa

I don't think we should limit ourselves. He's full of it. I was supposed to do a lot of work for him. Toledo owns him, and no, there's a bottleneck at the front desk. That was such an unbelievable tragedy. Yes, it was, and no one really knows how much. He is going to stay in office. He has such a good staff. They should be able to get jobs right away. You could put them in another system. There'd be two separate systems. He would be another person. He wouldn't be able to figure himself out. You should be able to figure out where you live, and he's so original. For me, that's the issue. He's so good, and the press hasn't stopped. She's got a high rating and has got good press. She bought her own press. That's what it is. I heard it from a really good source, a senator who said she was constructing her career. She's a charming woman. She's articulate, smart, caring, and she's looking very much at the race for his position. All those issues and his family, they'd have to make it on their own, I'll help him to respond to all this, and if he doesn't, I'll help her. That's me. That's form.

"... everywhere the system had long since run out of options, not only economically and politically, but above all psychologically. Not only was it regarded with contempt by much of the population: even more fatal, its own cadres could no longer avoid the conviction, or at least suspicion, that the whole enterprise had failed. In these pages, morale can everywhere be seen disintegrating, except among old leaders too thick to understand, let alone master, events. In fact, one main reason for the comparatively peaceful collapse was that it was so overdue, with only a crumbling shell ready to turn to dust."—Robert Conquest: a review on David Pryce-Jones's The War That Never Was: The Fall of the Soviet Empire, 1985-1991 (TLS, 6/2/1995).



This is a fantasy budget. I mean we are all friends here, but you know as well as I do that it never works out the way you want. I say that what we are facing is scarcity, and it has a silver lining to it according to this Harvard Business Review article, finding the most efficient way to do things when you have less. We are always looking for the good thing, what is the most efficient way to do something. We need to focus in on those things we think are essential.

About the questions you touch on, you are not going away. That is not happening. Does that mean that things are not going to change? No, it doesn't. Change is constant.

But again, just like everything, listen. We'll take any ideas. I mean you all have mothers who maybe want you to do something you don't want to do.

"Andrew Bowie stepped tactfully into that clearing with a paper on 'Romanticism and Technology'. In it, excitement about the possibilities of technological progress acquired the epistemic persona of the metaphysical realist for whom the success of science is sufficient evidence for the legitimation of scientific knowledge. This philosophical pagan who believes that truth inhabits the natural world is blissfully unaware that a conception of truth as a finite set of facts not only points towards the end of natural science, but also presupposes the very notion of truth. The epistemic equivalent of ecological anxiety is the problem of knowing, or better, of knowing that you cannot know the absolute either as substance or as self-productive subject."—Katerina Deligiorgi: "Uneasy Excitement", an article about the Technology and Subjectivity conference @ Middlesex University, Oct. 29, 1994 (RP 69, p.52).

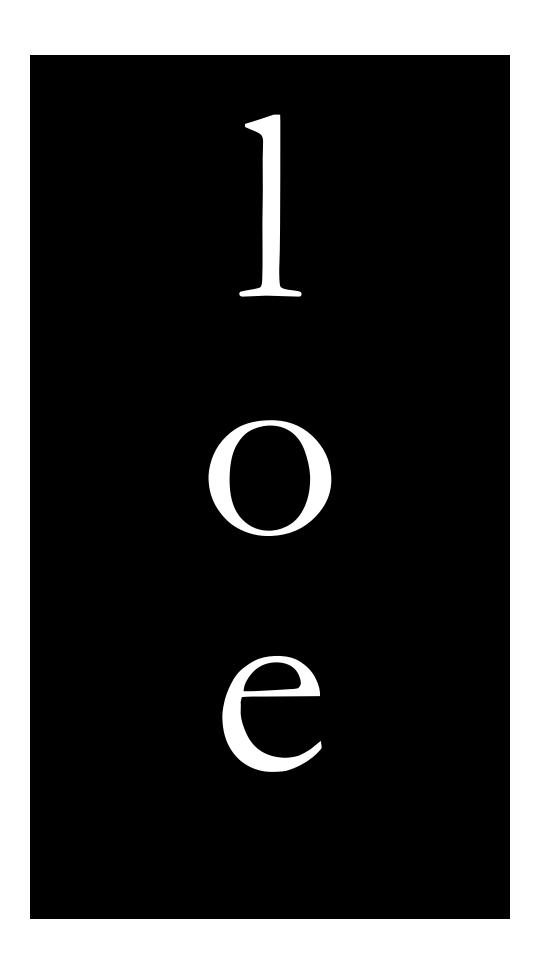
Can you hear us? She would love to be here but really regrets not being here. We have several other distinguished guests here and on the phone for us. I have a few things to share with you before we get to the Powerpoint. First of all: THANK YOU! It is always a pleasure to get out and speak to you and say thank you in person and to learn what I can do better. It is important for me to hear what you need and what your ideas are. One of the first things to

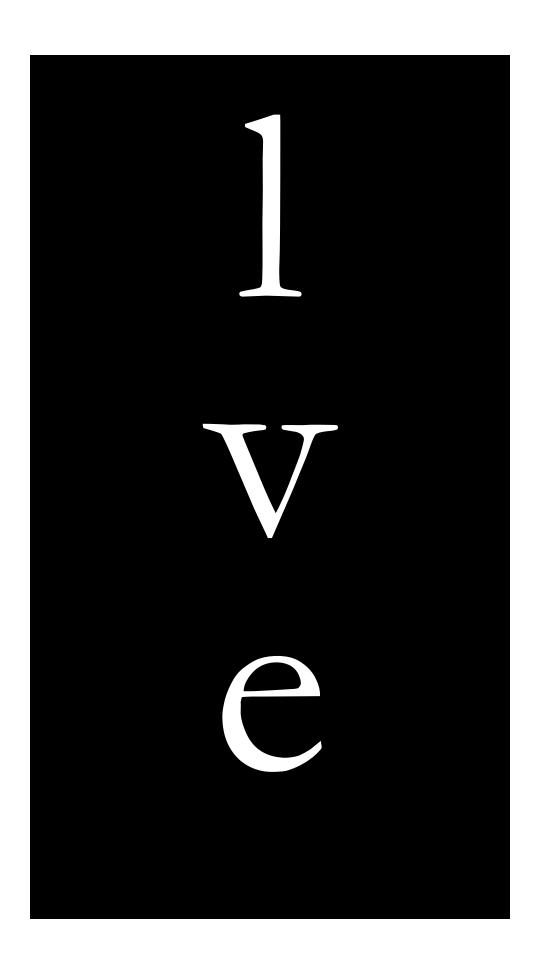
address is the elephant in the room. What is it? What is to come from it? We are all about being right, being people, being quality. We work hard to talk about what we do. And with financing we can do even more. When you question, what does all this mean to me, I want to find out where do we go from here, and I say that it is pretty much up to you. What do you think we should do? Anytime you have an idea, we have a mailbox and we welcome ideas and we get ideas and we respond to them. We hear about them. You control a lot. It all depends on you. What the future is going to be is up to you and figuring out what to do to get there. We're working together as a team to get done what we have to do. We are doing 20 percent more now and next year even more.

"Every two minutes, someone buys a Barbie doll. Erica Rand, an art historian and lesbian activist, views this proliferation in the light of Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony: the imposition of a belief system on people persuaded that their choices are still free. "Barbie's legendary slenderness encourages her queering. Like a sad Princess Diana out in Knightsbridge on a shopping spree, she goes to show how cruelly consumerdom consumes."—*Fiona MacCarthy: a review on Erica Rand's* Barbie's Queer Accessories (*TLS*, 5/26/95, p.8).

That to me is what this person should do. Maybe they have it all figured out. That's what I would have thought. Oh, good, maybe somebody else has replaced her who replaced him. Even if the design is flawed and they did goof, maybe they have it all figured out. And anyway, depending on what he says, we may be able to slip something in. Maybe you could figure out how in a non-threatening way to say that.

"The impact of the telephone on self-expression and dialogue, on the relations of the voice, sincerity and identity are [sic] incalculable.... The telephone summons its interlocutors with the sound of an alarm and gives no warning of the kind or duration of the message it is ready to convey. There is no defence against the telephone for those who cannot or will not deprive themselves of the knowledge it brings. It is a tool, yet





it makes human beings instrumental to its functioning."—Rod Mengham: On Language, Descent from the Tower of Babel (New York: Little, Brown & Co., 1993, p. 173).

People would argue that kind of stuff all the time. We really had a good time. The Coca-Cola bottles were in their own language. I think what happened is there's a world there where you know as much as, I hate to admit it, it is very different. Personally it wouldn't bother me a bit if they got rid of that world. Trash it or fix it up. Right, so he's obviously still confused about it. Chances are I don't like what you did. Do something different.

"Like *Terminator I*, Herbert Spencer's brutal paradigm has obstinately refused to die, despite countless mortal blows. With Dennett's 'Intentional Stance' a new version supplants it, which, in power, subtlety and capacity to dissemble, stands to its forebear as does *Terminator 2* to the original Arnie. This 'postmodern' Social Darwinism need not fight its erstwhile opponents – it can be and say what it likes because it can, apparently, dissolve, assimilate and co-opt all self-styled opposition. Dennett may nonchalantly personify Nature if he has already succeeded in naturalizing persons and their culture."—*Roger Harris: "Social Darwinism for postmodernists"*, a review on Daniel C. Dennett's Kinds of Minds (RP 86, p. 42).

Ideally we know where we need to be so then we figure out how to get there short term and we get there and ask questions. We are talking about significant innovations in our work, and we work on those kind of questions. What we need is to move from where we are to follow the space where what we need to do is use it for services and release some people to work on services. We are going to be coming out with some documents. They are not going to be final, but they'll work fine. So I kind of feel my time is up. I appreciate this time to talk about who we are. There are always more mandates on what we do and have to do. I am always looking for things for wisdom, and on that note I would encourage you to keep an open mind. Thank you all so much.



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