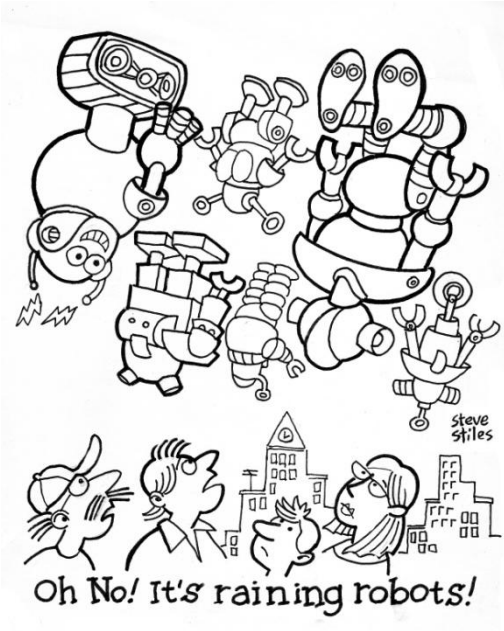
One Swell Foop #8



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Masthead

ONE SWELL FOOP #8 (July 2012) is yet another aperiodic exercise in recreational insanity from Garth Spencer, **new email** gsgarthspencer720 @ gmail.com. Be warned, kids, this is what happens when you don't eat your vegetables.

Where Have They Gone?

*

Art credits

Cover: ..... Steve Stiles

p. 1 ..... Roy Pounds

pp. 10, 11, 12 ..... Taral Wayne

p. 20 ..... Facebook

In the Boarding House I Lived In

Among other new developments, I should tell you about my impending move. I will tell you my new address when I know it myself.

In July 2012 the landlady told me and my housemates that she was moving back in, to oversee renovations to the whole place, so we would have to seek new accommodations. This is more of a problem for the housemates than for me, as I'm about ready for a move, and I've had it with 90% of the stuph I've accumulated, anyway.

So I'm holding a series of yard sales. Planning to dump a lot of books (and clothes) in donation bins. Turfing a lot of paper records. And otherwise shaking off the burdens.

*

The main thing about my last personalzine was, I let my sense of humour loose. Among other things this meant I took a recently made-up language for the Kingdom of Talossa, and put all my responses to letters of comment into Talossan. Don't suppose it's as funny in practice as it is to write about it. (You may remember a passage in *The Magic Christian* – or the scene, in the

movie someone made from Terry Southern's novel – in which an apology in a newspaper, for one of Guy Grand's practical jokes, was printed in Polish.)

Of course not everybody gets my sense of humour, which is why nobody seems to have responded to my ideas for more whacked-out organizations. I just can't seem to motivate people. I feel so alone here.

*

I have taken to saying "I feel so alone" because I failed to find True Fandom here in Vancouver, or indeed within my reach. After a while, though, I began to realize I have been going about this all wrong.

In fact I've been going about life all wrong.

From several lines of evidence I began to realize I must be an alien. I don't follow anyone's reasoning. Human instincts – or impulses, I should say; animals have instincts, because they work, but human have impulses that don't work – are often baffling and alien to me. To this day I spend up to half of every conversation sorting out what the other person means and clarifying what I meant. It is like being trapped in an English-second-language school. Which, again, is funnier to tell than to show.

Obviously I had to figure out what this meant for my lifestyle, and since I spent the last thirty-odd years trying out one hobby group or subculture after another, seeking to deduce the Standard Social Code, I must have an unconscious mission to work out how aliens can live among humans.

This mission hasn't succeeded … not yet, anyway. One of my handicaps is poor observation of people. I have on occasion taken ***five years*** to figure out how someone misunderstood

things I said or did, or to connect the dots between what others did and said. Another handicap is that I ask people to say specific things about specific things, rather than expecting me to infer what they're referring to, whether about work we're handling or social situations we're in. Maybe I make people feel like they're in a cartoon about school kids, including the young Mr. Spock. It would explain why I've only had two dates in the last twenty years.

Of course the biggest handicap is that Anglos aren't aware of living in a social code, not in contemporary North America anyway. Even in Vancouver, where people are pretty much aware of different cultures, most of us seem to be naïve about our own cultural imperatives. Maybe I should learn to hypnotize people to get them to verbalize their subliminal assumptions? Or would that be alarming and rude and illegal?

*

It sort of frightens me that the Anarcho-Surrealist Party, among other jokes, keeps *reappearing* in my personalzine, as if I just now reinvented it and don't remember that I'm repeating it. I don't care for this sign of Being Old. It could also be a sign that I keep on trying to encourage local fans and distant correspondents alike to Get Fannish … and they just don't respond. That also obscurely frightens me.

Graeme Cameron has pointed out that he and I are the last remaining fans who remember fannish fandom, or at least fanzine fandom, and I can only please myself. I have to get better at doing so.

Letters

Taral Wayne, April 1, 2012

It isn't so much that eggs are obscene as that they just won't stop whistling...

Jinnie Cracknell, April 6, 2012

A friend and I are currently working on the manifesto for "The Ridiculously Liberal Party". It's one of my plans for fixing the world, second choice actually. (First choice is to buy a bunch of Kindles, load them with all the Iain M Banks Culture novels, hook them up to all the AIs being built and then sit back and wait.) I like your ideas on miscegenation.

I think that the best way to stop illegal immigration is to make all immigration legal. (previous sentence may contain attempt at humour.) Digital Anti-Defamation League - ooh, cool idea!

Lloyd Penney, 1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B2, April 12, 2012

Thanks for a little more recreational insanity, better known as *One Swell Foop* 7. I don't eat my vegetables, and I turned out okay. Okay, keep it down over there…

The Anarcho-Surrealist Party would certainly have my vote, if you weren't giving me the credit/blame for the Liberal Secular Rational Humanist Cult. If followers show up on my doorstep, I hereby disavow any knowledge of my actions, and I may join the Anarcho-Surrealist Party. Or not. Now that the Conservatives have done away with a lot of the funding and perqs of running for federal office, there's not much incentive to run.

The Liberal Secular etc. sounds very good. Let's treat each other decently, find common ground, agree to disagree, and not

try to rip each other part. Let's work out our beliefs reasonably, and come to common ground. Am I asking for too much? Of course I am, but I've been a friend to lost causes before.

My letter…the employment at the advertising agency came to a premature end just before Easter. The only thing I've been able to figure out is that the boss didn't like me. I tried to be as professional as I could, and that might have done it. The hunt continues. At least I still have the *Globe and Mail*.

Excellent article on copyrights and trademarks. I will pass it along to Yvonne, the almost-law clerk, and see what she thinks of it.

I have decided to shut down my fanzine review column that I had in John Purcell's *Askance*. I just don't have the time. Maybe John will be interested in your reviews.

I'm done, and my jaw hurts from yawning. I'm going to fold up before I type something really ridiculous. Take care, and see you next issue.

Eric Mayer [groggy.tales@gmail.com], April 19, 2012

We need politicians who will actually represent us but I fear that even if we did invent new parties, the corporations would quickly buy them off. I'm sure you realize that the lunatic right-wingers on the US Supreme Court have declared corporations to be people, for the purpose of buying elections that is. (They aren't people when it comes to being eligible for capital punishment, for example.) In fact we now have a corporation disguised rather poorly as a human being running for president.

Prisons are as you say a burden on taxpayers but they are great money makers for those folks known as corporations and that, after all, is the important thing. My impression of those Old Testament cities of refuge was that they provided a safe haven for people who had unintentionally (or claimed to have unintentionally) killed another person until they could be tried. Otherwise, even if the killing was unintentional and no fault of

the refugee the victim's family would have had the right to kill them without any trial.

You ask, what can a rationalist believe? Nothing supernatural certainly. Religions are peculiar. People purport to believe their religions but never give evidence of practicing them. Such belief systems are aimed at achieving good in the world but seem to most often have been used for evil purposes. In the US Republican politicians regularly thump their Bibles yet every tenet of their party is totally contrary to the things Jesus taught. Did Jesus tell the lawyer if you want to be a Christian I'll give you a truckload of coats so you can create jobs? If I recall he told the guy to give his coats away.

((These days it looks as if religious practice was never essentially about moral improvement. Some religions are explicitly amoral, or so I am informed. This begs the question of what it is about; probably some kind of psychological well-being, or emotional experience, achieved through ritual exercises. This only works if you're raised on it, I guess.))

Yet I don't want to dismiss religion out of hand. There is certainly nothing inherently wrong with wanting to believe that there is something more to existence than the filthy mess made by humans. I would love to believe that there is something other than this cesspool we float around in until our heads go under forever. But how do you force yourself to believe? As a rationalist (I guess) I can't work up any belief in things of which I see no proof. I don't think belief is something you can talk yourself into. You have to simply feel it. I feel that Ulaan Bataar exists, even though I've never seen it. God, not so much. Maybe someday that will change but it won't be through any act of willpower on my part.

((Life, I have come to believe, is neither a cesspool nor a drama leading to a higher state of enlightenment, but something like a screwball comedy as directed by Woodie Allen, in which we all play the butt of the jokes. This begs the question of who is the audience for this performance.))

Taral laments the lack of paper copies of his published fanarticles. Although I can sympathize, as a faneditor, and considering the cost of postage and printing, there isn't a thing I can do to help him out. And he's done a raft of excellent articles for my recent zines too. Fact is, if I had to expend money and physical labour I wouldn't publish. Fandom to me is a fun hobby and spending money and cranking a spirit duplicator I did not consider fun even back in the day.

As for fandom not being what we want it to be today, I am beginning to believe it never was what I wanted it to be even back in the seventies when it seemed to be. It's just that fanzine fandom was so much larger that you could choose your own fandom from amongst the wealth of fanzines being published. You could fill up all the time you had available by reading, responding to and contributing to only zines that mirrored your own interests and attitudes toward fandom. Looking back I realize that during my stay in fandom, from the early seventies to mid-eighties I received only a few of the fanzines most fans today remember as leading zines yet I didn't feel like I was missing anything at the time.

((Either we're enjoying our personal experience or we're disappointed in it. A number of us, locally, are mutually disappointed in each other.))

Lloyd Penney writes in the loccol "...*today's fanzine fandom and its so-called leaders are generally unwelcoming, which seals its fate eventually.*" I'm glad I am not alone in noticing this. Not that all fanzine fans are unwelcoming but the ones who push themselves forward tend to be. They are not interested in enlarging their own group, unless by the addition of someone exactly like themselves, sharing their tastes precisely. No new attitudes or opinions need apply. So rather than growing and changing fanzine fandom is likely to just get old and die like its members.

Copyrights and the Internet don't get along. My feeling is that you shouldn't put anything out on the Internet that you really, really don't want anybody to steal because, although technically, you may still have a copyright, practically it is too expensive to defend if it comes down to it.

Nice to see fanzine reviews. I should do some but damn I hate doing reviews of anything let alone fanzines. I'm a putrid reviewer anyway. I find something to enjoy in almost any zine unless the editor comes off as unbearably obnoxious.

Brad W Foster, bwfoster@juno.com, PO Box 165246, Irving, TX 75016, USA, April 19, 2012

Actually just finished an email to Felicity at *BCSFAzine* about the April Fool's issue, so was surprised to "open" (I guess that term still works for an ezine) this issue of OSF and see your proposal for the Anarcho-Surrealist Party here as well. I am shocked, truly shocked, to know this is just some kind of "joke" or, as the young folks say "wicked-cool parody", and not a truly heart-felt proposal to bring some good into this sad, sad world.

Shocked and saddened. But, maybe some day, some far thinking individual will take your cruel hoax, and turn it into the reality it deserves to be!

((This was one of my sporadic attempts to re-create fannish fandom by exposing fans to the concept. Once again, it didn't take. Or hasn't borne fruit yet.*))*

Google translation had no luck at all with your two comments in Taral's letter. They seemed to think it was out of either Catalan or French, but could manage a few of the words into English. Was that Anarcho-Surrealist writing? And hey, there's more of it later on to Lloyd. Hmmm, kind of cuts back on opportunities to make comments...

((It was Talossan, a language made up by Ben Madison, who founded the Kingdom of Talossa, which almost but does not quite entirely exist.))

But then, my locs are usually -not- why I get fanzines, which is why I send the toons instead!

Henry L. Welch, knarley@welchcastle.com (April 25, 2012)

Thanks for the latest issues of *One Swell Foop* (6 and 7). Glad to see that you are being a bit more active.

I don't know that anyone ever truly finds the fandom they are looking for. I have never been able to match the one or two really best fannish experiences despite over 30 years in the endeavour. I'm not certain that fanzine fandom is any more open than other sub-genres despite the professed belief that fandom is an open place for people who would otherwise be misfits.

Interesting social-political-religious constructs. I wonder if, in the end, the anarcho-chaotic-procrastinating apatheticists will dominate?

Interesting take on intellectual property. Hand in hand with "the Internet makes something free to copy" is the belief that "just because the technology exists to make the copy doesn't mean you are allowed to do so".

Surprisingly, I only get about half the zines you review.

As a means of trade, I attach the latest issue of TKK in electronic form and have added you to my e-distribution list.

Miss May 2012

Wanted: a columnist to write cutlines for centrefolds

Miss June 2012

Miss July 2012

How to Be Evil

(part 2 in a series)
Husband banned from Target
(copied from the Internet)

"After I retired, my wife insisted that I accompany her on her trips to Target. Unfortunately, like most men, I found shopping boring and preferred to get in and get out. Equally unfortunate, my wife is like most women - she loves to browse.

"Yesterday my dear wife received the following letter from our local Target.

Dear Mrs. Samsel,

Over the past six months, your husband has caused quite a commotion in our store.. We cannot tolerate this behavior and have been forced to ban both of you from the store. Our complaints against your husband, Mr. Samsel, are listed below and are documented by our video surveillance cameras.

1. June 15: Took 24 boxes of condoms and randomly put them in other people's carts when they weren't looking.

2. July 2: Set all the alarm clocks in House wares to go off at 5-minute intervals.

3. July 7: He made a trail of tomato juice on the floor leading to the women's restroom.

4. July 19: Walked up to an employee and told her in an official voice, 'Code 3 in House wares. Get on it right away'. This caused the employee to leave her assigned station and receive a reprimand from her Supervisor that in turn resulted with a union grievance, causing management to lose time and costing the company money.

5. August 4: Went to the Service Desk and tried to put a bag of M&Ms on layaway.

6. August 14: Moved a 'CAUTION - WET FLOOR' sign to a carpeted area.

7. August 15: Set up a tent in the camping department and told the children shoppers he would invite them in if they would bring pillows and blankets from the bedding department to which twenty children obliged.

8. August 23: When a clerk asked if they could help him he began crying and screamed, 'Why

can't you people just leave me alone?' EMTs were called..

9. September 4: Looked right into the security camera and used it as a mirror while he picked his nose.

10. September 10: While handling guns in the hunting department, he asked the clerk where the antidepressants were.

11. October 3: Darted around the store suspiciously while loudly humming the 'Mission Impossible' theme.

12. October 6: In the auto department, he practiced his 'Madonna look' by using different sizes of funnels.

13. October 18: Hid in a clothing rack and when people browsed through, yelled 'PICK ME! PICK ME!'

14. October 21: When an announcement came over the loud speaker, he assumed a fetal position and screamed 'OH NO! IT'S THOSE VOICES AGAIN!'

And last, but not least:

15. October 23: Went into a fitting room, shut the door, waited awhile, and then yelled very loudly, 'Hey! There's no toilet paper in here.' One of the clerks passed out.

Copyrights part 2

On June 16, 2012 I learned two new things. One was that June 16 is "Bloomsday", when James Joyce's character Bloom experiences a day in Dublin, in *Ulysses*; and that copyright had expired the previous fall in James Joyce's published works, for the first time allowing public performances based on Joyce's writings. (Stephen Joyce, James Joyce's descendant, had previously prevented any such use.)

I also learned that as a result of a nasty political fight in Minnesota, someone had détourned a poster advertising *V for Vendetta* with the phrase "V for Vagina"; the state's Republican party had barred a representative indefinitely from the state legislature, for using the word "vagina" while protesting some invasive legislation. (I had to wonder what Natalie Portman thought of the use of her image, in the détourned image.)

* * *

According to Cory Doctorow, among other writers, there is every reason to reinvent our concept of copyright, given the fact of media such as the Internet and the World Wide Web.

The new concept on offer is the Creative Commons license. As Cory Doctorow has summarized it:

> Attribution. The licensor permits others to copy, distribute, display, and perform the work. In return, licensees must give the original author credit.
>
> No Derivative Works. The licensor permits others to copy, distribute, display and perform only unaltered copies of the work -- not derivative works based on it.

> Noncommercial. The licensor permits others to copy, distribute, display, and perform the work. In return, licensees may not use the work for commercial purposes -- unless they get the licensor's permission.

Cory Doctorow, among other authors, has written extensively about the Creative Commons concept. As far as I grasp it, this means that handing out his work freely – which in effect is going to happen anyway, given modern digital technology – works as advertising for his work, so readers are motivated to buy what they haven't already downloaded.

It may have occurred to you that this is not as new a concept as you might think. Consider the "open source" movement in programming. Consider the rise of Project Gutenberg, and other efforts to put our cultural heritage within everyone's grasp, freely. You can probably think of other examples.

What this comes to is that a traditional, indeed archaic model of intellectual property is being reshaped by a host of circumstances, despite legislative and corporate resistance.

So much for twice-told tales. What is the next question? Is property itself going to be redefined? Or means of exchange?

Further Reading

Boing-Boing: boingboing.net

Canadian Intellectual Property Office/CIPO: http://www.cipo.ic.gc.ca

Canadian Internet Registration Authority/CIRA: www.cira.ca

Canadian Trade-marks Office – see CIPO

Craphound (Cory Doctorow): www.craphound.com

Creative Commons license – summary: http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd-nc/1.0

Doctorow, Cory: www.craphound.com

The Internet's Network Information Center/InterNIC: www.internic.net

Office for Harmonization of the Internal Market/OHIM (Europe): http://oami.europa.eu

United States Patent and Trademark Office/USPTO: www.uspto.gov

My Crank Theory

about human behaviour
Garth Spencer

As a matter of maintaining the general order of levity, it is probably the business of every good SF fan to cultivate at least one crank theory. My own crank theory follows below.

Crank Theories as a Class

What is a theory, and what is a *crank* theory?

The history of science, not to mention the history of science fiction, is littered with discarded theories, with various degrees of absurdity in retrospect.

From one point of view, crank theories are merely theories that are ridiculed at the moment: in the 18th century scientists scoffed at meteors, but accepted the phlogiston theory of combustion; in the 19th century, Lamarck's theory of acquired characteristics was a serious competitor with Darwinism; in the early 20th century, many physicists refused to accept Einstein's theories of relativity, and Wegener's theory of continental drift was not generally accepted until after the International Geophysical Year. Today there is still argument over the Alvarez theory of a giant meteor impact playing a role in the decline and extinction of dinosaurs, or over the current signs of global climate change.

From another point of view, crank theories are those which invalidate themselves, for a number of reasons that surface repeatedly and frequently.

From my point of view, crank theories are a form of creative art, like conspiracy theories or certain psychological conditions. The general error is to take them seriously, or to get sold on the very first one.

My Crank Theory Which Is Mine And Belongs To Me

For the purpose of setting an example, let's pursue the following theory to its conclusions:

"The 'soft' sciences of social behaviour can be more rigorous sciences, even if they're not fundamentally quantitative, if a consistent taxonomy and notational system can be established.

"Human behaviour can be described, explained, and predicted within probabilistic limits, even if it is not particularly rational behaviour, by applying some rules of logical inference."

Notice that this is a theory about a *non*-problem to almost everybody, so from the outset the proposition seems absurd. The implication is that only a minority of people are concerned to work out, slowly and painfully, something surprisingly obvious to almost anyone else. This satisfies one condition of a crank theory: it is apparently a maniacal waste of time and motion.

Notice also that I have placed the emphasis on *behaviour* in a social context, rather than the actors; this immediately puts the proposition in a different language than most hearers are prepared for. Adopting eccentric language satisfies another condition of a crank theory.

A Basic Taxonomy of Human Behaviours

From a certain point of view, different people at different times and places – quite out of contact with each other – behave in very similar ways. Accounting for their behaviour, then, is not so much a matter of who these people are, but of their situation; what opportunities or deterrents in a situation are shaping their responses.

Of course you have to wonder whether you can reduce human behaviours to a single, coherent system. Conceivably the set of elements of human behaviour is about as large as the set of verbs and adjectives that apply to humans, in any given language.

A set of hundreds or thousands of terms is absurd. This is why John Dalton condensed the absurd vocabulary and symbology of alchemy into a vocabulary and notation system we now use for chemistry.

If our field of study is limited to interpersonal and social behaviour, though, and all synonymous terms are reduced to one term each, then the set can reduce to some hundreds of words. (I nominate C.K. Ogden's "Basic English" wordlist as a starting point, unless you prefer Longman's defining lexicon.)

Another way to organize a taxonomy of social behaviours is to proceed from ethology, the study of behaviour in animals. Viewing human behaviour in broad categories – approach/avoidance, response to perceived threats/attractions – can reduce behaviour to a limited set of terms.

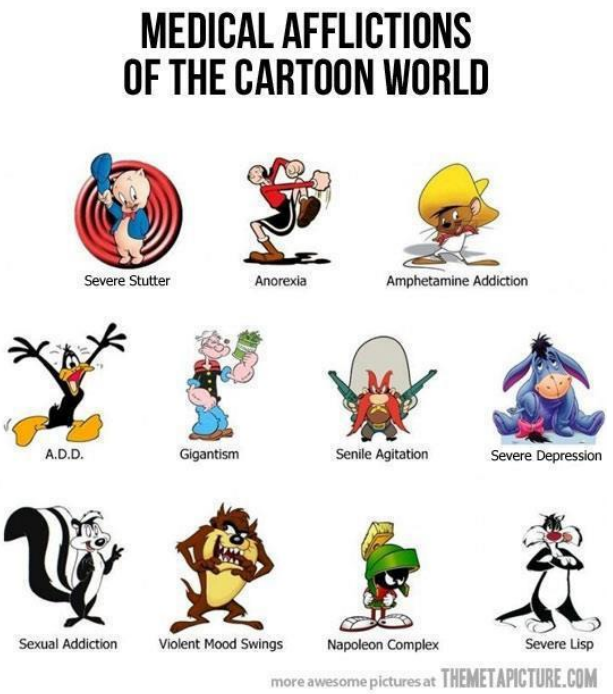
Towards a Taxonomy of Personality Types

Sometimes different people are known for having the same repertoire of behaviours for similar situations, down to saying the same things over and over again (even if they're not retired grandparents or Wobblies).

A wide variety of schemes have sought to explain how the same personalities or temperaments or character types reappear over and over again – from the medieval theory of four humours, to the twelve astrological sun signs, to reincarnation, to nine-point enneagrams, to the three "representational systems" of neuro-linguistic programming, to the Myers-Briggs temperament-type scheme (sixteen temperaments labelled "INTF", "ISNJ", and so on).

It is uncertain whether anyone encounters or understands quite all the personality types available. It is uncertain whether any description of temperament types is complete, so we may

need to admit *all* potential descriptions, and see which actually play a part in human interactions. There are times when I think people are better described by cartoon characters, such as Eeyore or Bugs Bunny, than as Capricorns or visual-kinesthetic thinkers.



Standard and Non-standard Situations, and Our Responses

In social situations, there are standard actions and reactions to employ for many events, many people, many places and social roles: greeting a bus driver, making change with a cafe barista, giving up a place in line to a senior lady, pacifying a mugger or a police officer.

And then are the unexpected occasions, such as interacting with people during a riot or a flood or an alien-abduction experience. If humans have any unique gift, it may be a gift for creative responses to unprecedented situations.

In emergencies, some people perform at their best, and some at their worst, and not always predictably. Some people who cannot stand up to family members are capable of heroism in a natural disaster; some people who have shown moral courage in facing down authorities, and enduring imprisonment and disgrace for a principle, will panic when faced with gunfire, or wild animals. The only rule seems to be individual variation.

Conventions from Formal Logic

One of the ways cranks make it difficult to popularize their theories is to set themselves up for misconception. There are a good many misconceptions about mathematics and about formal logic, so invoking any of their conventions is a good way to defeat any act of communication. This fulfils another condition of a crank theory.

Formal logic - either in natural language, or in the form of symbolic logic - includes a number of important rules for clear reasoning (see online).

One of misconceptions about logic I have encountered is that it only applies to logical, predictable situations, or to rigid, homogeneous categories. However, anyone who actually learns formal logic realizes that logic is merely about the consistency in real situations, and symbolic logic is simply a set of symbols with rules for maintaining consistency.

(Come to think of it, the fallacies of popular thinking – *non sequiturs,* guilt by association, *post hoc ergo propter hoc, argumentum ad crumenam* ["I've got a great big stick here"] – may be the best rules for predicting how people are likely to think.)

A first stage in logic is "sentence logic", in which several situations are designated by single letters, and one analyzes how one situation leads to another. E.g.:

$$p \supset q \qquad (1)$$

meaning "if (p), then (q)". There are other logical relations between situations – "and", "or" – and statements about situations can be chained indefinitely:

$$((p \supset q) \wedge (\sim p \supset \sim q) \cong (\sim p \vee q)) \qquad (2)$$

If we were concerned only to designate standard situations, we might well adopt symbols for the 64 situations in the *I Ching*. (Since the 64 hexagrams are easy to confuse, we might prefer to adopt symbols from the Cree or Cherokee syllabaries, assuming that gives us enough symbols for our needs.) If we assign meanings to these signs, either of these statements just says that one situation leads to another.

Where does it get us, to translate plain English into p's and q's and sideways horseshoes? Well, for one thing, there are rules for making a valid statement – one that can at least be either true or false – and using symbols puts the words in the background and brings the structure to the foreground, which makes some mistakes easier to spot and correct. For another thing, a series of statements in formal logic – like a series of code lines in a program – can either act on each other to produce a result, or *fail* to react at all, like a program that refuses to compile. This is where the rules applied to formal logic help you debug an argument.

A second stage in logic is "predicate logic", in which parts of situations are designated by upper- and lower-case letters – actions or personal characteristics, let us say, by capitals; or individuals and members of groups, let us say, by lower-case letters.

If we identified human individuals as members of the Myers-Briggs temperament set, we could as easily designate them by the first 16 letters of the Latin alphabet, or by the 16 runes in the Younger Futhark.

$$(Am \supset Bn) \tag{3}$$

$$(A\not\vdash \supset B\not\vdash) \tag{4}$$

If we assign actions to the capital letters and names to the lower-case, or runic letters, either of these statements just says that what one person does leads to what another person does.

Conventions from Set Theory

When it is important to talk about groups or sets or classes, more than individuals and interpersonal relations, it can be important to establish what groups exist:

$$V = \{x \mid x \text{ is any member of Vancouver fandom}\} \tag{5}$$

This can be an issue when, for instance, a traditional society has fixed and rigid codes of behaviour towards social equals, superiors, or inferiors, as in the military or in religious hierarchies or in business organizations. Thus

$$(x)(y)((Sx \;\; Iy) \supset (Axy \wedge \sim Ayx)) \tag{6}$$

This is the form of statement we would expect to express social rules such as "*If x is a Superior and y is an Inferior, x may address y by his first name but y may not do likewise*".

There are number of other symbols and rules for set theory, which are available elsewhere.

Conventions from Probability Theory

One of the obvious things I have to point out repeatedly is that neither formal logic, nor this theory, make the mistake of assuming people are consistent. In fact, we can assume that at their most robotic, people are only *likely* to behave as habit or social conditioning lead them to behave:

$$P(q) = xx\% \quad (7)$$

Where q is any given proposition and P is some *probability*.

$$P[(x)(y)((Sx\ \ Iy) \supset (Axy \wedge \sim Ayx))] = xx\% \quad (8)$$

Remember the hierarchical rule we described earlier? Now imagine assigning a *probability* to that rule. At this point we have something that can be *tested* by standard observational and statistical techniques – e.g., one of several measures of formality vs. informality, in the business culture of specific corporations, or in different countries, or in different decades.

Fundamental Problems

A fundamental problem ignored by all the foregoing is how you gather basic information.

People who have trouble absorbing the basics of standard behaviour for their societies are, infamously, people obtuse about "body language" - the non-verbal cues, gestures and expressions that accompany speech, but which carry different information, often complementing or contrasting with speech. It is often specifically this non-explicit information that is the basic input for the kind of sociological algebra being proposed here. Autistic adults, foreigners, and academics looking for a means to compensate for social dyslexia are not going to find it by this means: they still need a way to perceive social information they can't see, like colour-blind drivers faced with a single solitary light hanging over a street crossing. The notational system *assumes* information that has yet to be established – which is *another* condition of a crank theory.

Conclusions

The foregoing is my example of how to build a crank theory. I think this has shown how to ignore established science, build a complex structure without discussion or input, and proceed from false assumptions to foregone conclusions. Above all, this

structure demonstrates how to make a plausible structure that remains useless. Obviously, more research is required.

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Son of the Revenge of the Return of Even Yet More Fanzine Reviews

For a number of not-very-good reasons, this is a very restricted list of fanzines received, with laconic and even cryptic fanzine reviews.

Auroran Lights #7 and *Beloved Binema* #1 (both July 2012) – rgraeme@shaw.ca - Two of R. Graeme Cameron's zines, one about Canadian fandom (its several pockets and versions) and one about movies so bad they're fun; two of Graeme's favourite interests.

BC Renfest Newsletter 35 (July 2012) – an online newsletter from the team bringing a Renfest to the Lower Mainland. See **www.jadedragonpirates.com**

BCSFAzine (April, May, June, July 2012) – Felicity Walker produces this Vancouver clubzine to much the same plan as I did. I don't know whether that's flattering or not. Felicity has now caught up and will be producing the August issue before August 2012.

Chunga 19 (April 2012), 1013 North 36th St., Seattle, WA 98103, USA. A fine example of what a fanzine can be, if you develop advanced composition and layout skills. The kind of zine that showed me trufandom, and I pressed my little button nose up against the shop window and wanted some too.

Ethel the Aardvark 161 (Aug-Sept. 2012) from the Melbourne SF Club at ethelaardvark @yahoo.com.au. A finely-produced clubzine, stuffed full of movie reviews.

Nice Distinctions 23 (July? 2012), 206 Valentine St., Yonkers, NY 10704-1814, USA. Arthur Hlavaty's opinionzine about fannish and mundane issues, primarily for FAPA but also (e)mailed to people like me; one of the several influences on my own writing style.

Opuntia 248 (April), 250 (June) and 252 (July), P.O. Box 6830, Calgary, AB T2P 2E7. Dale Speirs' opinionzine about mundane, mostly economic issues, which taught me more than I learned at university … basically that there is a school of thought that economic events *are* coherent and foreseeable. Which is not something I knew.