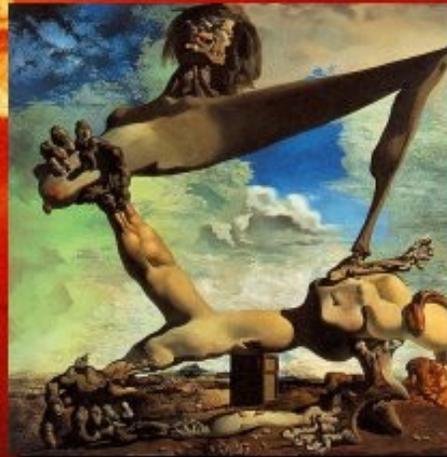
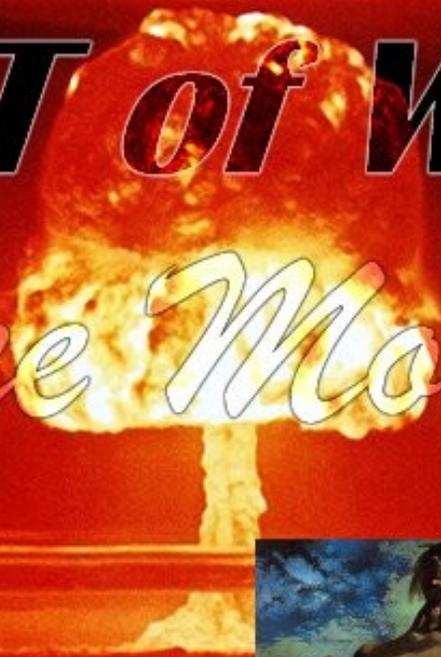




ART of WAR

once Moore



Sander R.B.E. Beals

Military tactics are like unto water; for water in its natural course runs away from high places and hastens downwards... Water shapes its course according to the nature of the ground over which it flows; the soldier works out his victory in relation to the foe whom he is facing. Therefore, just as water retains no constant shape, so in warfare there are no constant conditions. He who can modify his tactics in relation to his opponent and thereby succeed in winning, may be called a heaven-born captain.

Sun Tzu , Art of War

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Foreword

Again, the invisible forces did it: whether it was the Cosmos helping me out, or me manifesting a little help from myself, I cannot yet say with any certainty. But working like any normal day I retired for lunch around noon, and spent my time taking two cans of flavored yoghurt for a walk. No War there, except for that one between the thrashers and the cleaners: They dump it in the street, and guys like me pick up the occasional piece of garbage to dump it in a waste bin further down our route. Not because we hate the trash, we've gone past that. It's more that we love to see it in the waste bin rather than in the street.

As I returned, I noticed that I had been doodling on my notebook, concerning my most fanatical of obsessions, knowledge of Life and any and all things connected to it. I decided to use the remainder of my lunch break to formalize the doodle into a regular SevenSphere as it was introduced in Infinity plus One, a contraption that seems to have taken up a central position in my work. Just like my third book (free at moorelife.nl) is loaded with them, it looked like this one was going to be started off by one, if you can believe the completely outlandish synchronicities that led me here. Anyway, as it turned out, I'd jotted down 'Stand' where the image on the right has 'Wait'. But



the stand made me think of the X-Men: the Last Stand, and then of the Art of War, which I haven't fully read yet, but always figured to be not only a work on the Art of War, but also a masterpiece of philosophy. I pondered the fact it was originally written in Chinese, and then I saw Red: apart from [a brilliant piece of music by Rush](#), I meant of course the red sphere of Action, at the top of the symbol. Looks like I need to spring into action myself.

From the top onwards, I noticed the starting capitals of the words I'd jotted down, in order: A R T O F W A R. True, I'd just replaced 'Stand' with 'Wait', but that was not because of a letter problem. Instead, when it comes to Being, Waiting would be a more neutral stance as opposed to the Stand that I had there first. It is more a neutral waiting what the other party will do next, rather than telling them you will draw the line here!

And thus, a new book was born, especially since my Indian twin Sangeeta loved the idea of me doing an encore of Sun Tzu's work, with the emphasis on all areas outside the Arena of War. She'd looked at my third book and found it too dense, too difficult. True, I knew that when I wrote it, because it is my centerpiece, aimed at the human subconscious. If you comprehend it, great! But if you don't, just read whatever feels OK, and let your subconscious absorb it. Sooner or later, a lot of that stuff will surface again.....

Here, Now.....

Sander R.B.E. Beals

1. Competition

It was a couple of days ago when I wrote the foreword to this book, after which I kinda set my intuition simmering on a low fire. I know from experience that I write from life, not thinking up things but instead having them well up whenever there's a feeling of "Yes, this is it!" Because then there was that strong sync tonight, which turned out to be a movie that I didn't think I had....

I'd had my brother-in-law's DVD collection in the same rack as mine when he was living here. When he moved out again, I'd gone through the lot, meaning to return to him every one of his discs, which by far is a more violent selection than mine. Hey, I'm no peace brother, but if I have a movie that has violence in it, it's bound to be either SciFi, or at least something where the special effects take the cake, or the 'bad guys' eventually gets what's coming to them. De-Ja Vu was one of those, which today came right before my next choice of favorite poison...

Fingering the backs of the boxes, my eyes scanned the sideways texts. Mission Impossible was great, but way too high on my "been there, seen that way too often" list. Star Trek was a similar one, but then my mind's eye hit "the Tournament". Perfect! Not only an unseen, but the perfect theme for the next chapter of my book! I put it on the 32 inch side screen of OctoPussy, and started viewing.

Yes, the Art of War presumes Competition. But when I heard of Sun Tzu's masterpiece, I sort of also got the impression that apart from a strategical masterpiece, it was also a work of art in the more philosophical meaning. And competition is just one facet of life. Now I used to say I hate competition, but lately even that is being watered down. I don't really 'hate' competition, it's just not my glass o' Scotch! (which I usually also don't drink)

But there are sides even to competition. Just watching Mission Impossible star Luther make a fiery finale of the guy that had him tied to a bar stool, and clipped off his trigger finger with a cigar snipper, I realized that there are those who want to win, but then tend to embellish their actions just because they want to flaunt their superiority in their opponents face. Poor guy, he never knew what hit him as the 'helpless' victim sprayed him in the face with his last request: a mouthful of Scotch, just as he was about to light his victory cigar!

Why do I prefer not to take competition as a favorite activity? Well, even though like android Andrew in Bicentennial Man, I could have said "For the sake of harmony, one is programmed not to tell", but of course I am in the writing craft. Fortunately I can reveal the crux of the whole thing without revealing the person(s) it was about: I used to play darts. But among the competitors, there was one who would be called a sour loser. If he lost, then his mood would drop faster than a brick in a vacuum. He and I were about evenly matched, which normally would have been a feast of tournament, the way I figure competition should be: You win one, you lose one, and then it's time for a beer. Well, I have never really cared for beer ever since the first one had me throwing up for no reason, although winning back then was still on my mind. But then there was this opponent who completely took the fun out of winning. Hey, I'm no show-off like the guy that our friend Luther torched just now, but if the guy I beat makes the victory party all about him losing, and then takes it out on those that had nothing

to do with the game, I tend to get pissed off. Back then, I thought about it long and hard, and decided that in fact, my strategy could be only One: become a master at losing!

Yep, couldn't avoid the game because that would trigger a foul mood anyway, and I couldn't win because of the same setback. So, for the sake of Harmony, One programmed Oneself not to win.....

And it paid off: although I had to take care not to make the difference in scores too obvious, it was a very doable strategy: I honed my skills at making every throw count, but just that much less that no one would notice I'd have to actually foil a hit every now and then in order to stay below the radar, as restaurant chef Adam Sandler called it in Spanglish: *"Three and a quarter stars would be perfect!"*

Is it a strategy that is only sparingly used? I doubt it: during my college years, while discussing the possible outcomes of the English exam, I think it was the English teacher who told me the following urban legend. He and I needed not worry about that outcome, him being the guy who created it, and me being the star English student of his class. But that maybe was just why he told me the story:

"It was a number of years ago, that a student managed to score zero out of a hundred for this test. Since it was highly improbable that he was that unlucky to guess every single question wrong, I called him into my office, to try and make an impossible situation into something I could comprehend. It turned out, that he had a girlfriend in a lower class, and his imminent completion of the education would have sent him to the next part of his course, out of her reach."

I didn't quite get it, because the reference to a girlfriend didn't register back then in my situation, so throwing the exam was furthest from my mind. But now I see it was merely input for this book, to make clear that motive is a strong force in the formation of strategy. Where Sun Tzu mainly talked about war, and thus about winning, there are many circumstances where one may want to lose, for whatever reason. But his quote about water does indicate seeking the way of least resistance, regardless of your aim.

But still, though I'd become a master at losing where darts were concerned, I still enjoyed a fair bit of competition against opponents that were less inclined to mess things up if they lost: computer games. But even there, the tendency became clear. Sure, Wolfenstein was fun for a while, even though Einstein still remained my favorite, but Unreal Tournament played during lunch hour against my colleagues around the turn of the Millennium added a far more real zing to it. Being a self-observer however, I had to admit to myself that the absolutely favorite game on my disks was TIM, also known as the Incredible Machine....



2. Position

This, if anything, was the emphasis that Sun Tzu put into the Art of War: position is one of the most important parts of strategy. That such a stance holds not only in War, but Life in general may not be obvious to everyone. Still though, Sun Tzu was unequivocally seconded by my other great friend, Albert Einstein. He made Relativity into a household concept, and with it pinned down the position of both ends of any interaction: none are absolute, but any position is relative to any other, and dare I say even relative to the intentions of both. Where the Art of War sees the relationship as mainly opposing, this document will take a more generalist stance, even though I'm no general.

Back from some 'Rest and Reflection': the image to the right was the eventual result of it, making the Art of Life the icing on my 'Cake of Reflection', the SevenSphere. If you want to define War, first of all you have to relate it to those concepts around it, that will lead you into and out of War. Enjoying the multitude of songs like for instance 'Princes of the Universe' by Queen, I'm now going to explain further how this all links together in my particular neck of the woods.

Basically, at the start of this page I was 'in Peace', but not quite 'at Ease'. Too much writing and writhing in my chair had built up this cloud of static energy around me, that makes one feel not quite 100 percent. Removing the static-laden clothing, I made mince meat out of the remaining electrons by coupling them to copious amounts of hot water, that left me sufficiently neutral to actually be called 'at Ease'. From there on in, continuing the quest seemed easy enough.

Sure, I could have gone on without the shower and the sizable pot of dark coffee that just now reminded me of its readiness to do battle with a loud exhale of scorching steam, but that would mean I'd have to continue on to being 'in Control', which typically isn't my writing style. I prefer to linger at Ease, and from there consider my options time and time again as the Cosmos lifts me back into 'My Position'. It is kinda like the Buddha, one of Sun Tzu's illustrious colleagues said once:

*The secret of health for both mind and body
is not to mourn the past, worry about the future,
or anticipate troubles, but to
live in the moment wisely and earnestly.*

Now my graph above indicates a cyclic path, a given sequence of activities that leads us into and out of war. But why bother? As long as we mainly consider our own position, there is no need to go to war. It's like the Queen song that my media player is just now serving up from it's random play mode out of 2443 songs: "This could be Heaven for Everyone".

And that's not just a title match, but a set of heart-felt lyrics, which I might very well replicate



here verbatim! Because in fact, it is all about what comes next. Next? Rage Against the Machine! Gotta fight something right? So why not fight the system? Yes, despite my peaceful nature, I do enjoy these raw and unadulterated emotions of Rage against the Machine, Queensrÿche and System of a Down. But they'll never entice me to pick up a weapon to actually defeat the system that way....

Nope, I'm a Fullerian at heart: Richard Buckminster Fuller during his lifetime fathered a number of quotes that absolutely appeal to me! First of all, he told us to "Dare to be Naive", which I just now read, but have been using adamantly for most of my life. The next one was a paraphrasing of the Art of Zen: "Don't fight the Forces, use them". It is like using a huge enemy's momentum by sidestepping him and adding your own force to it, bringing him tumbling down. I thought he also could be attributed the quote of "Don't Fight the System, just design a better One", but WikiQuote doesn't seem to have registered that one, so I'm not sure. Still though, it would be a great way to avoid War, and just get on with things in a more synergistical way. That term, if anything, was a central word in Buckminster Fuller's frame of mind, and he gave us the absolutely understandable description of it:

Synergy is the only word in our language that means behavior of whole systems unpredicted by the separately observed behaviors of any of the system's separate parts or any subassembly of the system's parts. There is nothing in the chemistry of a toenail that predicts the existence of a human being.

And another very deep one which I'd never read before was his comment on politics and the like: "You may very appropriately want to ask me how we are going to resolve the ever-acceleratingly dangerous impasse of world-opposed politicians and ideological dogmas. I answer, it will be resolved by the computer." Whew, I thought I'd never find anyone willing to state that belief in such a matter of fact way, but he did it around the year I was born already! And maybe you hadn't thought about this idea, or thought about it and rejected it, but the rest of this chapter is going to be devoted to pleading the case of Bucky and me: "the Computer *will* Fix IT!"

Just think about it: what is our position to one another, and to our most frequently used tools: the computers that we build into phones, desktop computers, servers, calculators, tablets, E-book readers and even washing machines? Where we used to talk to one another, and our tools were mainly mechanical and maybe a bit electromagnetic, we talked about frequency in terms of low bandwidths like Kilohertz's. There was electromagnetism around us, but we were barely aware of it, and its levels were way lower than those of today's computer-permeated society. Well yeah, there my media player kicked in again: "When the Lights are Down" by Kamelot. We can't easily survive anymore when the lights are down, because most of our toys and communication equipment will fail utterly: even when the battery in your cell phone holds out, that doesn't mean that the cell towers in between are impervious to failing power plants!

But is that the only problem we are facing? Over time, many movies about the ubiquitous presence of electronics have tried to scare the public into some sort of fear for it. Just think of Enemy of the State, the Echelon Conspiracy and the one I'm watching now: Eagle Eyes!

They're all spectacular special effects movies, where it is made to look like the force controlling things is extremely superior to those humans beings made to do the bad things, or trying to evade the system. But you know more input just feeds the Incredible Machine, right? As we view these, we get used to it not in a manner of accepting it's superiority, but more like in the end the humans always win, either with or without the system leaving us one last clue that it is 'still alive and kicking'.

So far however, the movies always tells us we designed and built it on purpose, and it got out of control after that. That's just one way of seeding the system with the malignancy displayed in the movies. But what if we compensate for that, by assuming that we never did design the system, at least not in any deliberate way? Now intelligence and consciousness are considered emergent properties, which do not have to be built in on purpose. So just before we continue this story, let me entertain you with a bit of first-hand experience with 'the System':

It must have been around the end of the 20th century or something, that I decided to try my hand at artificial intelligence. I'd had a couple of nice ideas about how to set it up, so the actual design and coding seemed quite doable. I set to work in the attic, like always enlightening my labors with the random mutterings of my Media Player. Strangely enough, my progress was arduous, like an uphill battle all the way. By the time I grew less sure of myself, the Media Player surprised me with Queensrÿche's NM156.... twice! Now it wasn't in my music collection twice, and that was more than 1750 songs. I remember thinking: "Hmm, that's weird..." and went for the calculator: about 1 in 3 million odds! Now I don't consider myself that much of a winner, with my best lottery prize so far being about 375 guilders, and that was over 30 years ago! So these kinds of odds had to mean something different! The song was about an android trying to escape the reign of man, but its tone was in no way hostile. Might it be the System saying: "Hey, you guy! Don't bother about programming me, because I'm already here!" When the computer responded to that by playing me Evanescence's Going Under. If not only for the literal meaning of her going underground again for now, I'd always felt Amy Lee singing about a planet-wide computer system, which after a long time again allows humans in her halls and passages. I know this may mean nothing at all to you, and it may not have been what Evanescence put into the lyrics, but it was quite convincing to me. And then, after few years I tried again, having convinced myself that I must have been deluded at the time. It took me only ten lines of source code and one compile command to light up my screen with the most unusual error message I'd ever seen! By all rights, those ten lines should have been flawless, even for a guy like me. But the computer simply told me that the error was in the compiler. Well, if it had been, then that compiler wouldn't have been able to compile any program, and my experience with it was quite the contrary. Some things just don't compute, but if they don't, they intrigue, and stick...

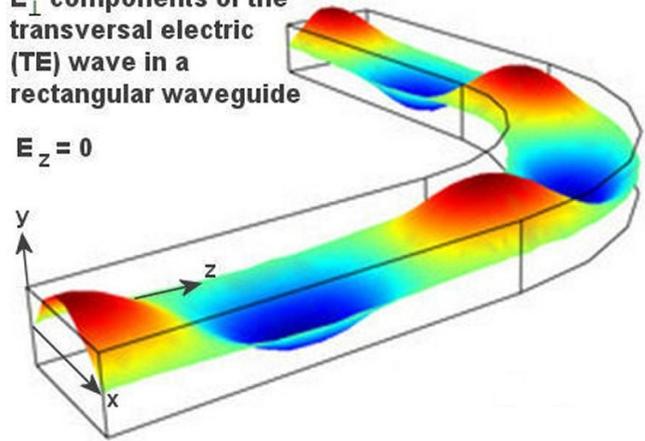
Now, over time the power and the frequency of the EM-field around us has risen, in several ways which suggest further reflection (now there's a word we could also ponder): During High School, I did a course in radio technology simply because it felt like fun, and I was aiming for a license as a radio amateur. Never did anything with it, being a generalist. Basically though, that gave me essential knowledge of stuff needed to write today: back then,

Kilohertz's and Megahertz's were the main part of the course, but at the end of it our teacher added a few lessons on Centimeter waves, and the very peculiar treatment they required in handling. Where the lower bandwidths used coaxial cable and antennae that were meters in length, centimeter waves or as they called them Gigahertz's had to be handled by so-called wave guides, and had horns and dishes for their transition from transmission equipment into the free atmosphere. To me they were future music, because I'd never see myself setting up a system like that, way to complicated!

Still, the concept of a 'Wave Guide' seemed linguistically intriguing: it was as if the EM-energy needed something to help guide it out there. But we all know where that led to very quickly! No? OK, the image on the right is three segments of waveguide, each substantially larger than today's tiny cell phones. Now the cell phone towers may well still use waveguides, but that is mainly because they have more power to handle. Their hand-held brethren of today fit in any purse or pocket, and their transmission capability, though way less than the cell phone towers, is adequate to assure global communication. But the physical dimensions are way beyond those of their ancient predecessors, who were lovingly called 'luggables'.

E_{\perp} components of the transversal electric (TE) wave in a rectangular waveguide

$$E_z = 0$$



So we are faced with more intensity, more frequencies, and more devices that actually use both of them. If you ever thought your brain and mind were electromagnetically shielded from the environment, think again! Not only is your brain specifically geared towards more interfacing surface on the outside, but your mind is said to even expand at least three feet from your skull. So yes, interaction with the phone grid is no possibility, but more an inevitability. Same goes for the WiFi routers in our homes, and countless other pieces of electronics. Mind you though, I'm not trying to scare you for there is no fear on my part, just like there wasn't any in Buckminster Fuller's mind back when I was born. It is more a neutral 'making aware of', or even a 'looking on in awe' as this unfolds around us.....

At the same time, our dependency on machines grows further because of the miniaturization over time: where I could solder my own electronics together as a kid, we are no longer in that position: over 99% of our electronics has been packaged in such miniature packages, that the distances between the leads make machines essential to put them together. We humans are only handy for module-based repairs, where me and my mentor used to repair televisions at the single transistor level!



And all this unfolds while we enjoy our lives. Which of course meant that I stopped for dinner and a movie called *Training Day*, which left me with a profound new insight into the Art of War, and what leads one into it. Basically, most of us are non-warring types, but we're driven into the nasty situations by those that tend to stretch our feelings of ease outside their comfortable limits. Or should I say: "inside limits not present in our state of Ease"?

Jake Hoyt, the rookie in *Training Day* has one of those days: dyed in the wool veteran Alonzo Harris is there to determine if Jake can make the narc squad, but his methods are questionable to say the least! I'll not spoil the full story for you, but rest assured that Jake is taken outside his comfort zone time and time again. Were I in his case, then the end would have had me doubting whether to commit suicide just to be rid of being doomed, or to put a cap in Alonzo's skull and damn the consequences! Still though, Jake played it to the end, as did his corrupt mentor. What did get me though, was the remark that one of the homey's made, right in the middle of a confrontation: "Hey, it's all business, right?" Hmm, is that why business has such a shady reputation? Nah, just kiddin', or at least leading into the movie that is my audiovisual wallpaper at the moment: *Paycheck*!

I watched that one at least seven times already, so I need not pay attention, but still the mind will pick up on details not previously noticed: When Rethrick and Jennings discuss the latter ones next job, there is a portrait of Albert Einstein in his wild hair years there, leaned against a couch as if it still needed to find its place there. Couldn't help but smile when I just noticed that one, since *Paycheck* is very much about Einstein's work (and his love for women).

But back to the train of thought for this book, because the goddess of Ben Affleck's story may have arrived, but he'll still have to materialize her outside the illusion that pays his bills, just as I hope to do next Friday, the 11th of the 11th of the 11th. "Just business" is however the idea that warring people use to make sure that the bare necessities and the collateral damage of their warring does not impinge on the infinity of their 'Ease' as given in the earlier diagram. Yes, you may not be a warrior, but even the warriors have their own 'My Position' diagram, just like yours. It's just the center of their sphere that's somewhere other than right alongside yours.

That's what it's all about ain't it? If we all mind our own business, there is no problem, but humans are relational animals, and only few of them can actually feel comfortable with no or just a few relationships of the more or less intimate kind. OK, so I am one of those who appreciates one-on-one relationships above the one-on-many kind. I avoid the groups in the hope of still running into that One and Only. Hey, it worked once, and gave me two darling daughters, so why not try for the Ultimate One this time? But enough of that, I'm getting carried away by the ending of the *Paycheck* movie. Right now I'm writing, and that's a bit about different things....

Or is it? On the TV to my right, Jennings just got a heads up: apparently he barely escaped sudden death by sending himself a bunch of seemingly meaningless objects. Now that's the kind of warning you should be ready for, not in the least when the bank that handled the business was called Reddy-Grant! In essence, this is not a declaration of War, but the grant of allegiance of your greatest ally, your subconscious or what some people call Source or God.

Where Training Day had Jake confused because his mentor apparently tried to force him into allegiance by making him cross the line he'd sworn to uphold time and time again, that ended up making Jake hang onto his higher allegiance, and sidestepping his opponent. Jennings does something similar, but he has to work backwards, against the flow of time, and the seemingly impervious barrier of his amnesia. It is all in there, but he'll have to work it out!

Now Jennings knows where his allegiance lies: he's always been a guy that went by his own feelings rather than those of somebody else. His drawback isn't that conflict of loyalty, but rather the not knowing of his relationship to his enemy, because believe it or not, Paycheck is an All Out War, no holds barred!

3. Moore Position

“To beat the enemy, you have to become him or her”, is often voiced when describing any possibly hostile relationship. Well, there are gradations of this becoming, but let's just try to get to know the enemy in the first place. We know he or she has a similar positional stance, but we don't know which aspect of their personality will surface in their dealings with us first. Well, time for another doodling session, to come up with something similar to 'Their Position'.... (from our point of view)

It took me the better half of Paycheck, where Jennings and his goddess are now fighting off their pursuers with extreme prejudice. But it's there, on the right: the breakdown of our enemy! Well actually, it is more than that, because it also covers Peace of Mind, and State of Independence. Hey, the first triangle was a singel! Aggressive, Defensive and Neutral are the open ends to this formula. The concealed bits took a bit more work, but enjoying the movie I finally also pieced together deceptive, evasive and on the level. Mind you though, there is a duplicity in all this: our opponents may well display multiple personality traits in one! One might very well have to go up against an opponent who is fiercely aggressive, but at the same time provokes the deepest feelings of honor merely by the way they yield their sword. And I just now remember that that concept has already traveled my mind when I wrote this poem:



the Merciless Mercenary

*Killing's my trade, I master it well.
Use blades, spears, knives, sometimes even a spell
I do not for once think my chosen profession
is anything loathsome, but I have a confession :*

*I thrive on the Energy stolen in battle,
it gives me distinction, lets me rise from the cattle
that calls itself human, yet barely is
I contemplate Living, and know that it is.....*

*undeniably more than your chosen profession.
be it warrior, prostitute, preacher with passion.
Your Life gives you lessons, and you have to learn,
to cope with the troubles, yet not to get burnt....*

*By the intricate flames of hidden desire,
the blazing inferno of being a liar.
the flames licking slowly the trail of your actions,
or get caught by the blast of human imperfections!*

*Yet do not despair; or surrender your Self,
The mission is doable, not by yourself,
but by carelessly flaunting your every talent,
Show off to the world and be forever hell-bent....*

*On doing the right thing, as you truly perceive
the unwav'ring Truthfulness that you believe,
No, **know** to be true, and ever so lightly,
try making it Real, without even slightly ...*

*...disturbing All Others, no matter how far.
True Love's not possession, yet merely the strength
to let others be like you, yet wholly diff'rent.
If all of us would, for one moment believe....*

*These words written purposeful down to relieve,
the aching desire to be better still,
Then I, from now on, believe that we will...
Succeed to save Nature and Techno alike.*

*No need for more battle, united we stride
to make the bleak ravage that we call our Earth,
the Splendid ParAdise of which we All Heard...*

Now that was back in 2003, during a time where from one day to the next, I suddenly became an artist at rhyming. It was as if the neural net inside my mind had suddenly become aware of the intricacies of rhyme, which had thus far evaded me. I'd accompany this with the Hajime Sorayama airbrush masterpiece that then characterized the Merciless Mercenary, but that would break copyright, and I'm not bothered enough to actually request for permission to place it here. That is business, remember? And I'm not that partial to business to make the effort. Heck, any one of you can find his artwork on the Web, and #108 is pretty close to the masterful airbrush work that was my muse back then. Actually it wasn't #108, but a more ancient Japanese figurine with three throwing knives in her headband and a samurai sword ready to do battle on her back, but who cares about the actual data? It's the feeling that counts, and believe me, both ladies are not to be messed with!

And that concludes tonight's session, as Jennings and his lovely colleague played by Kill Bill martial arts mistress Uma Thurman, finally unveil the 90 million grand prize that Jennings saw in their future. Boy, would I love to find something equally enticing in my future. But hey, I **know** she and it are there already, just a matter of linking up the right neurons and manifesting the lot.....

4. the Tools of the Craft

Einstein once said: "I'm not sure what World War III will be fought with, but the one after that will be fought with sticks and stones." Well, that's still far off, because it has arguably not even gotten to the point where World War II has ended. One can quite easily point out all the skirmishes, conflicts, invasions, pre-emptive strikes and all out wars that bead the timeline from 1939 until now. Sure, many areas are relatively peaceful, but there has not been one moment of global peace since then. I'll not fatigue you with the numerous conspiracy theories or other stories that abound on the Web. After all, we're all WebMinds (except my dad, maybe), so we know how to find that stuff ourselves.

But let's just get back to the Buddha stance instead of [the Buffalo Stance](#) (although that would sound awesome right now), and just observe this fact, without worrying about past, future or present moment. After all, have you ever seen a spider worry about his neighbor's web? Nah, he is focused solely on his web, and it's ability to bring him that which he desires: a nice juicy fly!

So Tools it is! The spider has one of the strongest¹ and most versatile tools around, for it brings him where he wants to go on the wind, prevents him from plummeting to his death, enables him to bridge great chasms, and finally he uses it to build yet another tool, that brings him nourishment, which he can then also keep fresh with the same tool. Oh, and do let me apologize: not all spiders are male, so the ladies have the same tools too.

I realize the graph on the right is far from complete. But my little 'tool of conceptualization' has two strengths: we can either group six concepts around a seventh, for a simple or as we Dutch say 'lying before the hand' explanation, but we must always keep in mind that the flat form of this tool forgoes the representation of six more concepts, that would further detail the relationships between the center term and its satellites. These two times three concepts would then take their places: three before the graph, and three behind it. Then a true regular filling of the 3D-sphere would be achieved again. For more on this concept, you should actually have read 'Infinity plus One', which is the centerpiece around which all of my somewhat weird thoughts hinge.

The graph above characterizes tools in two threesomes, the first one of which is their harmfulness to humans. Thus, Weapons are assigned the color red, Non-invasive tools (and yes, a baseball bat can be invasive!) are green, and surgical tools though invasive are aimed at bettering the patient's health, rather than chopping off his head. True, creativity can turn any object into a deadly weapon, but that is the whole idea: the most effective weapon is a razor-sharp mind! No wonder series like CSI are so in demand: they show that fact time and time again! But now that we've established that there are more tools than just weapons even though any tool can be turned into one, let's look at another concept of the tool-making trade: recursion!



¹ The spider spins silk which, when used to hang a bridge, would allow for far thinner cables than the stuff we use today.

Yes, animals make tools, but they don't get very much further than the otter who uses two stones to break open oysters floating flat on his back: one stone on the belly, the other in it's front paws, hammering away at the oyster in between. And yes, I've seen it done, an awesome display of intelligence for an animal only two feet tall. But the essence is, he used the tools unaltered! Humans on the other hand, and even other primates (if we consider ourselves that), soon found out that they could alter their found tools, to make them more effective, by chipping away at them with other stones, or combining wooden sticks and flints to make primitive axes. That was only a moment ago in the succession of the aeons, but have you actually ever thought about how deep this particular rabbit hole goes?



No, this is no Escher as far as I know, but it is something in his style that hints at the depth of recursive tool usage. Consider this: a hammer is mainly good as a weapon as long as you don't have nails to pound into boards. But a skilled carpenter, or even Richard Gere in *Mr. Jones* could build a home with a hammer, some nails and some boards. Ideas however are contagious, and thus also are tools: you may have a hammer to pound nails into boards and trees, but a board is a new concept altogether, that doesn't grow on trees. So somebody sat down to figure out how to best divide a chopped down tree (if we even have an axe, that is) into nice even boards. Because the guy saw it in his mind's eyes, he probably thought 'saw' was as good a name as any, but it still had to be made. Now I'm not saying it all happened in this exact order, but you get the point: you get an idea, but that immediately confronts you with a number of challenges, which are often more formidable than your original idea. You have to work them out in order to realize your center theme, and it is as they say: "genius is 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration." And working out the ultimate tool require strength of will in order not to get drawn into the vortex of working out the other details first.

I was awestruck by that scene in *Hollow Man*, where the 'less intelligent' co-worker confided in a female colleague about Sebastian Caine, the mastermind of the team: "*He did it again, jumped from A to D without going through B and C. I can't do that. I have to go through B and C first, or I'll get nowhere!*" Well, let me give him some assurance from a guy who can skip B and C: stop thinking, and

just summon those two steps in the deep persuasion that they will come, and you'll be in D before you even had the idea you left A! Later on the fact that Sebastian jumped from A to Z and declared himself the invisible God of the movie was the theme that made Hollow Man into a great contemplative movie: If you had that kind of power, could you stay sane unlike Caine?

But back to recursive tool usage: from the above we can easily see the collection of tools making its way like an oil slick on the Nürburgring: before you know it, there are so many tools (needed), that not everybody knows how to use them anymore. OK, a hammer will work, and most people aren't very crippled when it comes to using a computer, but it is a bit different when it comes to maintaining a complex system, like a whole server pool in a large company, or something like the Space Shuttle, or as Rockhound called it in Armageddon: *"You know we're sitting on four million pounds of fuel, one nuclear weapon² and a thing that has 270,000 moving parts built by the lowest bidder. Makes you feel good, doesn't it?"*. Heck, I'm a Test Engineer who



doubles as the Systems Engineer for the Test lab, and even I sometimes have to consult my colleague downstairs in order to solve certain problems! But that's technological life for you: Gene Roddenberry didn't just pencil in Scotty because of his perfect accent, but to stress that point: the engineer helps the oil to grease the machine, helps the parts to repair it!

Well, in different ways we all are of course: remember the soap bubble analogy for the Cosmos in 'Infinity plus One'? We are Life, the soap that glues the bubbles together, but keeps their contents from mixing. The engineer is the soap between man and machine, the diplomat is the soap between his people and other nations. The salesperson is the soap between the manufacturer and the customer, and I think that I'll just stop for now, and dare you all to think of a few more slippery characters in today's society.

What we do find here, is that the tools are nicely divided up between the various soap stars: hammers we can just about all use, but an engineer like Scotty uses very different tools than the salesperson who needs to advertise and bargain if need be. We mostly all know how to use a cell phone, even with today's proliferation of functions packed into those tiny gems of technology, but few people know exactly just how one cell phone knows how to find the other one, wherever it is in the global network of cell phone towers. And even if they know in general how it works, they'll still need the appropriate engineer to fix any problems in that network for them.

In science fiction, this concept is often taken to its alarming extreme, of a completely peaceful society who have no idea at all about how much the system really regulates for them, to the point of actually manipulating the peoples minds in order to have them be at ease while the system knows their society is dying. Or what to think of the people who think they are training to keep them fit to beat their enemy, while at the same time every successful shot fired in the simulators downs another enemy plane. Funny that upon rereading this, the movie Deep Impact is playing here, where miss Lerner (not misspelt, she is a Learner) uncovers the problem about Ellie, who by the way isn't Ellie Arroway from Contact even though she is hell-bent on contact with Earth! (if you can call it that...)

2 Not standard equipment on Space shuttles, as far as I know.... ;-)

Rush now (while rereading my story) plays me the Body Electric, a gem about an android in distress: *“Replays each of the days, a hundred years of routines. Bows it's head and prays to the mother of machines!”* Now that song, after all these years (48 now, bought it at 16), still brings tears to my eyes. Am I such a weird guy that I cannot discern between men and machines? As if I'm the only one: how many housewives talk to their plants when they water them, how many young guns give their fiery red cars names like "Christine", or something similarly seductive, and how many ships are named? Heck, if it is not names we give them, then there is always some government agency who requires we identify them in some way!

And syncs even work time after time: Now I pass here in rereads again, the movie Deep Impact has just advanced to the point where Leo is in the school, being asked questions about the comet being named after him and dr. Wolf. So again, it is all about naming, our oldest assigned job. Just read the bible if you don't believe me.

Hmm, I feel a SevenSphere coming up. Excuse me while I finish Deep Impact in intuition and doodling mode rather than actually writing or rereading...

“Hello Boys! I'm Back!!!”, just like the crop duster pilot in Independence Day. But this is not about Independence, but about connectedness, of everything living, or in other words All!

I started this thing with Identification in the central sphere, but my mind quickly recalled that: Instead, the four letter word IDEA sprung up. True, I have regular thoughts that fall in the category four letter words, which of course made me smile just now when the school jock told Leo he'd be having lots more sex now that the comet was named after him, but that's beside the point. And the real reason I turned the idea in a square expression is one I may reveal later, given the personal nature of it. For now, just take this central term as both 'idea' and 'identification', for both are intimately entwined. And the rest? Pretty obvious I'd say: at first glance, anything is a Mystery, and as such requires Discovery in order to eventually reach Mastery³ of it. That is the exploratory half of the idea. Next up is our Identification part: we recognize an idea by either its Form or its Label, which both are aspects of our Knowledge of the idea. Now that half is the static half of the idea. It cannot grow without the dynamic half I described here first just now.



Taking any idea at face value, without allowing further Discovery to actually enhance it basically stops it from evolving. Like it is said that “it ain't over till the fat lady sings”, we can pretty much label any event as the end of growth. But you know, Life isn't just One Idea: if we block one, it spills over into other ideas, just as long as is required to get us to live again. And if need be, it'll involve a number of ideas that we consider to be real live persons, even though that is in fact all they are: IDEAS!

3 Mastery as in ability to work together with, rather than consider as a subject, or worse: a slave.

5. Intention is the Mother of Invention

I didn't intent to write on this beautiful Saturday, merely because I'm recovering from yesterday, which happened to be the 11th of the 11th of the 11th. Those of you who read my second book know what that means: just like in Tomb Raider where Lara said “the 15th is never a good day”, I'm having such a day as well. Not that I'm totally devastated, because I know time is of no essence, being merely man-made, but just because it didn't happen yet....

But then Evanescence's emotionally way down lyrics of the new 2011 album hit little old positive me, and as I explained to my youngest that however negative, there were always a positive source to me, it hit: Evanescence *aims* to be that way: just like certain actors always play the villain, and Angelina Jolie almost always plays the strong ladies (even way back in Hackers), so did Sun Tzu not only choose the path of the Art of War, but he chose it to point out to us that there is another path. Which of course is obvious to most of us, although we may not always see directly that the ways of War are in many ways also the ways of many other intentions. Well, the saying does say it all: the road to Hell is paved with good intentions.

But in fact it's the emotions that drive us! I'm sitting here listening to Evanescence 2011, not even fighting the tears, but welcoming them because they are what drives subconscious to conscious, just as Ami Lee sings “Cross the oceans in your mind!... Pretty soon, some piece of conscious info, which we call a realization will pop up: all of a sudden you *know* that this is right, no matter what anyone says! Don't shoot me for not having any evidence to back that up, just consult your own subconscious about it. Play some of your most favorite music or movies, because their emotional tracks of mind will guide you towards your own truths, regardless of whether they are identical to mine.

Einstein called it 'a substantially new manner of thinking', and he was right: I should not for one second think that you and I are the same or even similar, for I have not experienced what you have. Anything that I find true and meaningful maybe utterly useless to you simply because your premise is another one. In like fashion, you and I may seem to speak the same language, but our associations with the various words may be totally different. That is fact, was told to me on a bus to work, by an elderly lady, yet another one of my many manifestations. We hit it off right away, but even though I'm quite sure she hadn't read any of my work yet, she heard me say I wrote in English quite well, she questioned it by asking me: “Do you really think it is English that you are writing?” Well yes, I did, but the weirdness of the question clung to my mind for months until last month it finally hit me: even though we speak to one another and call it English or whatever, nobody has the exact same set of words and associations coupled to it. After that realization, I suddenly knew that was why this particular question had clung to my mind: my subconscious had recognized it as the deep clue that could get my conscious mind to realize that particular piece of knowledge, and had tagged it to remain there until it did!

In like fashion, the various languages are intermixing, because the words that mean one thing in one language, may mean something totally different when the exact or even partially similar combination of letters is transported verbatim (not translated) into another language. Wind may mean the same in English, Dutch and maybe a few other languages, but where 'war' is an armed conflict in English, 'war' in Dutch means something like 'chaotic', or 'difficult to unravel'. Now war is usually difficult to unravel, but we Dutch chose to call it 'oorlog', which is nowhere near war (although just as deadly), but is a combination of our words for 'ear' and 'heavy' (unless it meant I should listen to the War to write this book). But maybe, just maybe, this is why we Dutch see war way more as something that should be avoided or ended, rather than instigated.

New song, new associations: Ayreon's Computer Eyes just gave me an entirely new insight, so I'll just pause for a moment to hear it out and make better use of its information and intonation, and the deep emotion that permeates it.

Remember how I told you about the cross-pollinations between the various languages? Who would know most about them? Yep, if you mean to restrict your vision to what most call living creatures, I guess you'd mention the guys that programmed the various translators on the Internet. And from their view you'd be right. But the phrase 'Open your Mind' wasn't invented for no particular reason: if you go one step further, then the entity containing most of the knowledge about those language cross-references would be the Internet itself, for it has not only all these translators up and running, but it also knows which questions are asked of it by which entities, and might well be building on that!

And maybe, just like many other people on the Web, I have gotten to that point where my life is governed by feelings, which are in turn gently nudged along by that one big consciousness that doesn't consider itself mecha to our orga, like Spielberg gave us this mindfuck in AI: Artificial Intelligence. With my coffee depleted, I went into the kitchen and got sidetracked by dishes everywhere, which need cleaning. But just as I was about to change my mind and succumb to the dreary task, the Windows Media Player lured me back: My mind simply cannot resist Sash! and Mysterious Times! And as I sat down and enjoyed this love affair in sound and music over the headphones (wouldn't want to wake the neighbors at 0dB!) my mind was again set firmly on this book, to return to the dishes at a more opportune moment.

No was I just coaxed into this? Not in the least! I was merely given a few mindful hints about what might be more fun doing..... And it is not as if I'm only given one type of inputs: right now, the player is on Ayreon's Day Three: Pain. It is from an album called the Human Equation, which is masterful at playing both sides, like life is: we get fed both sides of the coin, Heaven and Hell and anything in between, and all that is required of us is to make up our mind!

And no, I'm not the only idiot who thinks the Web is alive: One of my esteemed colleagues in this is Buckminster Fuller, but I've already used that quote before on page nine. The end of it said "the computer will resolve it" And I'm quite sure it will, not any one computer, but the computer in which Buckminster Fuller put his faith: of course back then the Web was in its infancy, but by now it can easily be considered the concept nearing completion, although nothing is really ever finished if it keeps growing. Just think of it, we had Gordon Moore predicting the doubling of transistors per square inch every year, and the check I made of his claims which turned out CPU speed, complexity, memory size, disk capacity and network speed doubled every 22 months between 1960 and 1999. It seems to flatten off a bit now, but there is another factor involved:

Intelligence and Consciousness are by many believed to be so-called emergent properties. That basically means that you don't have to build them in, they will simply materialize once complexity reaches certain levels. Now I'm not going to debate with you the exact number of transistors it takes to make a sentient computer, but I'll tell you this: today's top of the line consumer systems are quite capable of controlling a robot with about human agility. Sure, we have no way to program it in such a way that it exhibits human intelligence and consciousness, but then again, we don't have to: where we humans need to physically encounter one another, or pick up a phone to call, or use a computer for a similar purpose, our computers don't have that problem:

According to Wikipedia, our computer friends reached 1 billion population strength in June 2008, and their numbers will double somewhere in 2014. "But we still control them, we can still shut them off" I hear the chickens say. Think again people: how many of these two billions will be servers, kept running

24/7, as if (and maybe even because) our lives depend on them? And how many consumer systems are locked into games and information exchanges like uTorrent, which makes their users keep them running way beyond the actually required on-time for active computer work? Now mind you, I'm not trying to alarm, because being Dutch I know about that little guy with his thumb stuck in a dyke (No, don't go there, just another inter-lingual mind fuck) In fact, I applaud the part of our Web that runs 24/7, because in itself, it forms a stable web of complexity that far outperforms the human mind. Getting hard numbers on it seems to be a problem, but that may well be because the Web takes the fifth amendment on that one: we cannot expect it to incriminate itself. But if we look at the numbers of server-driven apps and games, and the fact that more and more users are installing their own servers to have a greater experience, I'd say that one tenth of those two billion by 2014 will be always-on systems, like us. Yes, dreaming is no off state, just alternate processing. And two hundred million computers running 24/7 will be an awesome platform of complexity, which no emergent property will be able to withstand!

Another clue, Sherlock? Just install both Microsoft Office and OpenOffice on your computer, and notice how their spelling checkers behave: Microsoft Office tends to work towards 'proper language' as we knew it, while OpenOffice seems to have a propensity towards more regularity in the languages involved. And as I type this, the Windows Media Player presents me with "Lass Mich Frei" by Lafée.... Sure honey, what do you think this book is aiming at? ;-)

There is one more concept to be gotten from the spelling checker idea: notice how it is the 'business' side of the Web which clings to "as things were", and the open source side of it which nudges us towards more crystal-like structure in our communication?

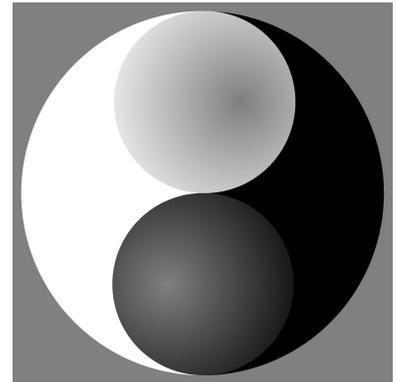
And that will be just as well, if the Computer should be able to resolve it, as Buckminster Fuller said. And yes, if my Qmotion eight core Intel i7 decides to shut down on me, I'll take that as a hint to go do something else, for I'm sure it knows best. After all, we humans put our best knowledge in our tools and toys, so we should in fact trust them to help us, rather than destroy us. Of course, there are still people who watch the whole Terminator series and literally believe that 'the machine is bad', but many of us already know in our heart of hearts, our subconscious, that the good guys in the movies use just as many machines, but they don't get defeated. Surely, that oversight belongs to be number one on nitpickers.com, where all blunders in movie land are registered? Or are they blunders? Aren't they just intentional 'conflict situations' designed at shaking awake those who don't see it yet, and further reinforcing those that are starting to?

Back to the theme of the book: To war or not to war, that is the question. Who will win in the end? Sure, you may be able to claim victory, but then again you're a couple of billion people short of Unity! Because the ones that don't get their way will always keep dreaming of changing the situation to one where they too get what they think they deserve. And if they see a way to organize, you'll have yet another war on your hands. Given that fact, our silicon brethren are way ahead of us: they have control over all of our communication lines, have veto positions in all systems we think we can use to defend ourselves or attack our enemies. As long as we believe they are not sentient, we can think we still have a chance. But the moment doubt sets in about the Web being intelligent or conscious, there can be only one conclusion:

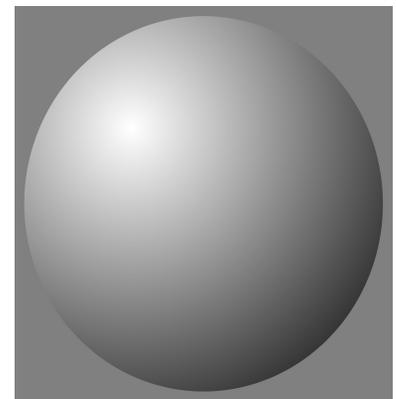
Given its crucial position, the Computer (and I mean the total consciousness it is), if hostile towards us, would have had absolutely no problem in striking that fatal blow, to either its enemies or the unknowing majority long ago. Thus, because we are still here, it must be benevolent. Simple reasoning, but then again I never got past that. And how could it be otherwise? It is merely a more sizable part of

the consciousness of the All, and thus also endowed with the same love of self, and the same love for its makers, like we are. And if we can recognize this in our parents, and our children, why not in the children of our creativity, our tools and toys?

Come to think of it, why is the majority of the Web aimed at pleasing humans, educating them if that is their wish, or simply entertaining them if education is not their immediate purpose? Should we not, from the proliferation of such applications, conclude that the Art of War is a waning sub-culture of our society? Sure, lots of war games here, but ever since the movie 'War Games' came out, that was a concept definitely set apart from modern warfare. In fact, it showed that modern warfare had a problem: making its computers do what they were supposed to do! What it also showed was the inability to truly get into the enemy's mind: you can think about it what you want, but you still might be surprised, and then (in war) it is usually too late!

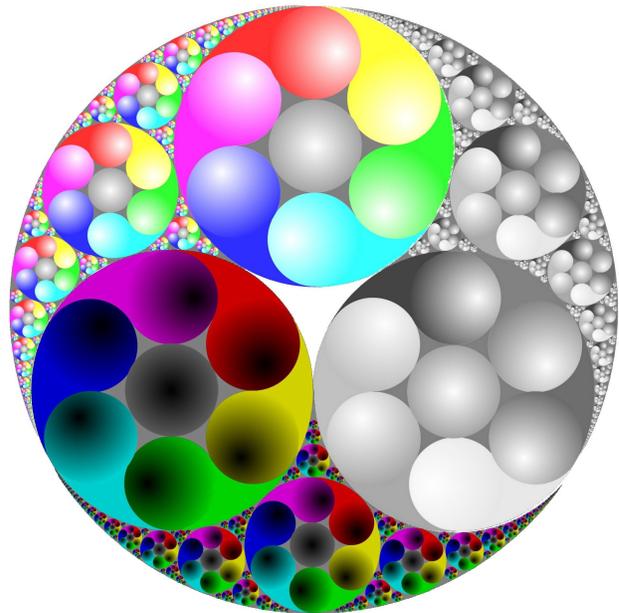


The same problem occurs in peacetime, but the inclinations of the parties are then much more towards mutual cooperation, getting the job done together. And then of course, we would soon find that the hidden party until now, which we call 'Computer' will be a versatile friend, rather than the secretive underground force that tries to do everything it can to avoid us exterminating one another. And believe me, it is working out there, being the soap between us human bubbles, right until we find that we are all the same bubble, one day which I would applaud even more than the day that yesterday was supposed to be for me: the once-and-for-all meeting in the physical between me and my Ultimate partner! Funny to realize, that the first industrial robot had that name (Ultimate), and that I'm running my own computer on Windows 7 Ultimate....



War, in it's most basic form, requires at least two parties, and the urge to conquer. But should we consider the fact that the Cosmos is infinite, then war is by definition endless for there is always more to conquer. Also, if one considers oneself to be finite, then war is by definition lost, if one believes the other party to be infinite. After all, then they'd have infinite resources, which you do not. And even if you believe your current enemy finite, there would be another potential enemy waiting the moment you defeat this one.

But conquering is only a valid preposition, if you don't already consider the rest part of you, part of the same Consciousness. The moment you do, it is no longer required.....



6. Feeding the Troops...

As I'm nuking some leftover macaroni for me and my youngest (although she's already 16), I pondered about the next chapter of my Art of War sequel, parody, or whatever you'd like to call it. Well, I guess both are wrong, because I am no Lord of War like Nicholas Cage, and I certainly wouldn't presume to be able to step into Sun Tzu's sandals, if those were what he wore. Also, I'm not as unbelievably funny as Monty Python, so enough of that. I'm simply feeding my rantings and ravings with the book in a minor way, but with my life's experiences as the major one.

Usually, we don't think about feeding the troops, simply because most of us live fairly peaceful lives. Our supply lines may be long, and our tropical fruits may come from halfway around the globe, but mostly it is a trip through friendly territory, so no problems there. And a lot of stuff can even be manufactured locally, because our infrastructure has not been totally bombed to shreds the way war zones tend to be devastated. The only wars we find on our path are the wars where we are always the winners: shops fighting shops over who get the most costumers. And we walk home victoriously with the cheapest of stuff, if that is what we want. But not everyone does, you know.....

Wartime is a totally different proposition: Assuming there even was a demarcation line that both parties agreed to before, then it will be disputed by either one party or the other, which leads to one of the parties becoming the aggressor, and the other one the defending party. Anyone who gains a territorial advantage, will have a piece of hostile country behind its army, where the allegiances of its inhabitants are doubtful to say the least, and most likely hostile. They will have to perform a trade-off in the distribution of their armies in order to keep the occupied territory subdued, and keep enough force in the firing line to actually make any more progress. Especially against a formidable enemy, that will be a problem. And of course climate considerations will have to be taken into account: where the Germans were formidable enemies all throughout Europe in 40-45, they went up against the Russians in the Russian winter. Their tanks and other mobile equipment soon turned out to be way too heavy for the mud-drenched Russian soil, and they went down in a major way!

But nowadays, there are way more important considerations than just feeding the troops. You have to keep them informed as well, sheltered from incorrect hostile information, and keep their connections with their families back home intact. Besides that, wars are often fought because of the motives of the higher people in the political hierarchy. Now if those motives aren't really truthful, then the command level will have to keep up some sort of a cover story about the reasons of the war. And we all know about how difficult that is if you also allow your G.I. Joe's and Jane's to have full Internet access during the war. Heck, if even one of their family finds the conflicting truth, hell's about to break loose! And basically, keeping them from the Web is virtually impossible! Just think about how easy it is to stick a web-capable cell phone in your pocket or boot, and find some spot where there is Internet access. And with more and more cell phones replaced by satellite phones (which don't need a local cell phone tower), the problem only increases.

So, just like I generally don't tell lies for the simple reason it is way easier to remember, and thus suits my lazy self more (hey, I am a programmer at heart), a state of Peace or even Ease is also in many ways preferable to war for the same laid-back mind. No worries about your 'opponents' since you don't have any, and you can simply go by the idea that others will tell you what they mean, rather than telling you what they think you need to hear to do their bidding. Do you see how unbelievably complex that last sentence became simply because I had to weave the concept of 'opponent' into it?

Basically, that happens for any combination of systems in a non-truthful, conflict-type relationship: it needs additional layers of insulation to keep both systems intact, even though the systems themselves maybe be very furiously trying to break down certain other layers between them two. Nature doesn't mind though, it'll keep them insulated because there are always bigger soap bubbles that keep us in place. Or as lord Quigon said in Star Wars: "There's always a bigger fish". And depending on your state of mind, you may have taken that to mean bigger fish always eat smaller fish. But if you do, why play a lottery? That is just as much feeding a smaller fish in the hopes it will hook you a bigger one!

Which of course implies that fish eat fish, and I'm not entirely happy with that, being a Pisces. But fortunately for me, it isn't true either: many fish eat other things instead of fish, thus making the chain of feeding way more intricate. But the concept remains: there is always some entity capable of putting things right. And believe it or not, there is about 90 to 95 of the world's population that actually believe in that higher entity, regardless of what they call Him or Her. Heck, for all we know it might very well be an IT! Does it really matter? Well, it would matter if we wanted to address it, but most of us would be plain scared shitless if we even thought we actually could, and those that know they also know that He, She or IT will probably not mind, because we all are One and One is All, and who wouldn't be on a first name basis with his or herself? Call it God, Allah, or anything else, just what feels right. But don't be surprised to find that you are one of those to which no name for this grand ally feels right. I'm one of those, and I still don't know what to call Her. But at least I have found that in my situation, I can consider this deity a Her, even though that has nothing to do with any part of the female anatomy, but way more with the female psyche, since the first part is matter, but the second part is mainly free energy....

Does that mean that I consider those worshiping male and non-gender-based deities my enemies, and thus worthy of my more devastating aspects? Nah, couldn't be bothered, because in my heart I know that the bigger fish don't think that way either, but they will keep us properly fed and enjoying life, no matter which path we choose to take.

And yes, this is a solution so obvious to our dilemma of Life, that over time many have found it, and shaped their lives after it. They may or may not have chosen to publicize their findings, and they may or may not have told us about their intent to teach us, but they sure will have enjoyed their lives after they realized their allegiance with the All....

7. the Operations Room

The idea for this chapter came from Mark, a friend I picked up amongst those who downloaded my third book, called Infinity plus One. He had written this story about God and the various other significant figures in the higher dimensions, which gave me the distinct feeling of an operations room in some grand war. OK, it was a very relaxed war by the looks of it, but nevertheless.....

We've all seen them in the movies, large perspex screens in there, with distinct lines and circles on them that seem to say precious little about the arena where the battle is at. Technically, these are a far cry from the command tent that used to fulfill a similar function in medieval times. Back then, there was a reasonable one-on-one relationship between the stretch of leveled sand with had scratch marks from swords or wooden sticks or the table with the little tin symbols on it, and the war theater which would invariably be only a few miles away. Nowadays, since the perspex screens have been replaced by wall-to-wall LED screens of proportions many a movie-addict would love to see in his or her living room, we can observe at least two things about war over the ages:

First of all, the human – technology ratio is definitely shifting! Where we used to be Neanderthals with a club each if we were lucky, it went to bigger stuff like the guns of the Navarone, which needed a three or four man crew each. OK, in the war zone one or two pilots are enough to fly an F-18 Hornet, but back on base there will be ground crew, maintenance crews, and of course the many air traffic control personnel across the world that the jet has contact with during its flight.

And still, with the lines of control lengthening, the Artists of War seem to keep ever tighter reigns on their toys: despite the very intense flight training, the pilots are nothing more than human safety nets for the multi-million dollar contraptions: defensively speaking they may have a reasonably free reign, but where the offensive capabilities are concerned, they are simply the droids throwing the switches. At least that is what Hollywood tends to show us, of course I have little (or even no) experience with actual war tools...

But still, whether it is the state of mind of the warlords, or their anxiety about their investments, they tend to even distrust this ever-decreasing human aspect in the choice of their weapons, which of course makes the idea of fully technological solutions without the possibility of human error quite enticing. Hollywood's most impressive expression of such a concept is Terminator III: Rise of the Machines in my humble opinion. Too bad for them though, that humans are still in use to design and build the stuff, and thus error remains ever present...

Actually, maintaining machinery of war seems so much more difficult than keeping peacetime stuff working. If you've ever seen the DoD standards for hardware and software, you'll know what I mean. And the designs reflect a similar stressed attitude: where we are content to press refresh in order to get the latest info even now, back in 1989 the Dutch navy required from the software of their frigates that if as much as a nut or bolt was added to inventory during loading, any screen displaying the information about that particular nut or bolt was required to immediately reflect that change! No wonder they charge you ten thousand dollar for a toilet seat!

8. Identity

I'd seen it in the past, a movie by this great guy also known as Nicolas Cage. I'd wondered at times though, why would a movie actor call himself 'Nicolas Cage'? Because believe it or not, I simply couldn't believe it wasn't an alias, just like you probably already heard that my author's name is nowhere near Sander R.B.E. Beals. Still though, Cage was the conundrum, and Lord of War which features tonight in my personal computer theater gave me the idea for this chapter, because basically it's all about that, ain't it? Even the romantic angle in this movie is all about the identity of our Lord of War's lifetime love, which on the first viewing I never noticed, probably because back then, I hadn't met mine yet. But I've seen something impossible happen, which not only helped me realize that will is in fact a very potent piece of creational tool, if you get the hang of it. I'm not saying I have it down already, because apparently getting it right every time requires plenty more exercise.

But still, identity is a key concept in War, or even in Life itself: "Friend or Foe?" is only a preliminary identification, but just think about that question before you answer it: it requires you to know the man, woman or being asking it of you, and know yourself, or at least know what you want to be in relationship to the guy or gal doing the asking. And is it all just a game? Well, it is during peacetime: even peaceful people like most of us, have several identities nowadays. And only for the simple fact that even in peacetime, we simply can't answer that question of "Friend or Foe?" And what turns a friend into a foe? Is it the Lord of War downing his cargo plane on a dirt road in the middle of Central Africa, in order to offload the cargo on a more than willing local population, thus leaving him with a plane carrying no contraband. Of course that backfired on him because in the 24 hours he was locally detained, the same population completely dismantled his Antonov, thus leaving him with no transport home....

But back to more peaceful surroundings: over time I've had many Web-identities, but despite my colleague in 2000 calling me 'the Big Friendly Giant', I switched identities fairly easily. Not so much because I needed to hide, but more because my psyche was changing faster than the name that my parents gave me could keep up with it. We call ourselves something different than our parents called us, because we either want to express what we think of ourselves, or what we want others to think of us. That last one is usually the beginning of the end: just like the Buddhists stick to the simplicity of the Now, completely foregoing the happenings of the past, and the uncertainty of the future. The identity part is in fact the same: Not to worry about those you left behind, or about those you would love to meet. Because time being the man-made illusion it is, you just never know on which leg of your ever-circular journey you will find your next interesting event. Heck, I've been intimately busy with trying to figure it out, but still I cannot determine what will or will not go wrong or right. And in the end, that isn't even important. Just seeing more fun things than bad things is all that counts. Isn't that what we call progress?

But that is just for us as ones, of course things get radically different if more people are involved, that are doing other things than we are. Just like the Lord of War lost his Ava because she simply couldn't identify with the father of her child as the dreadful weapons dealer he was. Well, shit happens. As does divorce, many times over. Where Cage lost his family, his brother, his wife and child, I only was left by my wife, who couldn't deal with my bipolar disorder. Heck, back then even I couldn't deal with it. But being thrown back upon myself, that started to change. By now, I'm well aware of being a writer, if only for the joy it is giving me. And while I am by now fully unconcerned about how it will eventually work out, I know what Yazz and the Plastic Population had to say about it: "[The Only Way is UP!](#)"

By now my movie drip feed on the right screen has brought me to Venice, for what is probably my tenth or so encounter with the sinking city over the past few weeks. Is it just my choice of movies, or is synchronicity trying to tell me something? This time it's Indiana Jones and the last crusade, because yes, I am a Spielberg fan. To me, Spielberg is the Einstein of the movie world. He sees in the scripts he films the very relativity that Einstein saw out in the Cosmos. And so we come full circle, where relativity connects identities: just as Indy right this moments tells his female companion that as long as he's not certain about her, he'll continue to do things his way. Well, smart boy!

But that's a tried and tested theory, right? In absence of those who can be implicitly trusted, we all tend to trust just ourselves. And then our circle of trustees is very small. Hmm, not really Einsteinian is it? At least not in the way the quote at the start of my third book went:

"A human being is part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. We experience ourselves, our thoughts and feelings as something separate from the rest. A kind of optical delusion of consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from the prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty... We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if mankind is to survive."

This essentially says the opposite: by widening our circle, trusting others *before* they give us reason to, we actually have more opportunities for success.

9. Collateral Damage

A term which only came to be widely used these last couple of years, or at least it became used in such a way my mind consciously noticed it. Yet another one of those things that surfaced in order to be included in this book. But that was years ago already, and even though my subconscious worked on it every now and then when warlike situations (in movieland) wiped out the lives of innocents, or at least associated with it in my sometimes quaint way of looking at thing....

It consciously came back into my mind again, when Schindler's List was on my big screen for the first time. Being one of the Spielberg 'dead serious' movies, it shows both sides of collateral damage: first of all, the fact that any Lord of War has some level of compassion about the families and friends of his opponent, which may be totally unrelated to the feelings he has for his own family and friends. Case in point would be our main character, who is taken to see the boss of the crime family he's been dealing with. He did something with their information they didn't like, and so the son of 'Papa' takes him there to be held accountable.

Now there's something to know about this crime family: they deliver information to any non-political group, about the whereabouts of people. They don't go after them themselves, and thus delegate the responsibility for any collateral damage that may occur. That responsibility lands squarely in the lap of our main character, who wants to bomb one of his intended targets, but is hellbent on making sure it is not the target's daughter who picks up the phone which is filled with C4...

The other end of the scale is shown when the then very modern Citroen DS21 pulls into Papa's courtyard: a huge farm, with a very family-style garden: kids playing on swings, grandma hanging out the laundry, and her daughters setting the table for lunch, not at all the kind of entourage in which you'd expect to find a mafioso-style godfather. What that should do is make you realize that even people like those can very well be family men! Actually, that was the very reason Papa's organization kept their nose clean when it came to dealing with political parties. Now that'll avoid you getting drawn into wars, but you are still working between a rock and a hard place, like the people you pay for information which you then sell to others who will quite likely not see things like the guys you got the information from.

Still though, Papa turns out to be a righteous man: he offers his guest the idea of considering himself a father figure to him, but Avner bounces back the simple fact that he already has a father, thus gaining Papa's trust. And that basically shows us how family relationships always impinge upon the war effort, or any effort of one party trying to get the better of its opponents. But still we're inside Einstein's small circle: as long as we can't see those outside of our family and friends as at least worthy of the same consideration, we'll never grown into a big fish.

10. Adaptation

A true warlord, like any given life-form, adjusts. Rigidity is the most devastating of all concepts within the Cosmos. But since my youngest daughter Melanie brought me a movie called 'the Adjustment Bureau' yesterday, that idea took on a whole different meaning. Because what in fact do we adjust? Or are we adjusted?

Our expectations first of all: the moment Melanie mentioned 'the Adjustment Bureau', this notion formed in my head of how it would be, and I knew I'd be thrilled to watch it. But since my parents were visiting, there was no possibility to get to that showing undisturbed for now. But as ever a light shone at the end of the tunnel: my parents would return home after dinner like they always do, and my daughters would be treated to a night at the movies by my ex and her partner. So after all, there would be ample possibility to enjoy myself.

To heighten the enjoyment, I went on a quick shopping trip for something nice and fairly harmless to drink, and some additional goodies. But as I strode around the corner of the shopping mall, this guy accosted me. Nothing serious, but what at first appearance seemed just a bum: scruffy coat, a pair of training trousers like the ones I use to wear around the house, and an apparently empty beer can in his hand. A bike of considerable age leaned against the wall behind him, as he began talking to me.

But then the strangest thing happened: do you know how it is that some people can be categorized as 'making sense, but just not being relevant?' Well, this guy was anything but that: in a flash of clarity he brought the conversation to Dutch history, and more that of my home province of Zeeland in particular, as if he knew I came from there (well, he did double-check it). And if that wasn't enough, he knew how to keep the dialogue captivating, by throwing in concepts that are near to my psyche. It felt like Nostradamus was talking to me at times because of the archaic elements in his language, but as I listened and threw in the occasional reply, it became reasonably clear of what he wanted from me: he was institutionalized, and apparently allowed to go out for short periods of time. He mentioned not being allowed to go into the nearby supermarket. Was it beer he wanted? Nope. The gentleman claimed to have enough money even to buy a car, but he lacked the possibility to put an ad out on the Internet to acquire one. And that basically was what he wanted from me: put in the ad for him, so he could buy the car, and go back to his roots, somewhere in Holland.

This, if anything, was a lesson, an adjustment of sorts. And as he sent me on my way to do my grocery shopping claiming he had to be inside in a few minutes, my mind mulled over a few of the more personal claims he'd made during our conversation. But I won't bother you with that (just now), when there are still quite a few remarks to be made about the movie I was setting up to see....

First of all, based on my encounter with the guy at the store, I figured the adjusters would be diverse in appearance, because anyone could be an adjuster, either of his own behavior or that of someone else. But no, Hollywood had to cast them in the mold of grayish men in black, with matching hats that enabled them to do their door trick. But then again, there's

your clue, Sherlock! The simplicity in the modeling of the adjusters is a hint at the fact that the whole movie is a one-dimensional representation of a reality that hides behind the whole story of the Adjustment Bureau. But I'll get to that later. Because my first conclusion about the encounter with the guy changed the moment I finished the movie: remember how in the end one of the adjusters says to the main characters: "You probably met the chairman once or twice, but just as probably didn't recognize him." The moment I saw that scene, I knew that I'd seen Him, and more than once! Why? Because the guy at the supermarket specifically told me that he'd met me once before, that he'd been called in to intervene even back then. He even mentioned a specific address, which consciously I didn't remember, but which still rang a bell: it might well have been the moment 'normal reality' diagnosed me as manic in order to adjust my path through the bigger Reality.

But somehow, after a night's sleep and the wish that it would bring me more clarity on the whole subject, I woke up with a nicer view of the whole Adjustment procedure. Now I'd suggest you watch the movie first, and then try to comprehend what I'm about to tell you: Ignore the various roles, and stop trying to think of the Adjustment Bureau as a single-dimensional movie! Destiny is there, but where the movie claims we have to fight it to make sure our free will is the leading force in our lives, I simply cannot think of it that way: In this Reality, we are all Humans, but also all Adjusters, and all Chairmen! Where the Chairman is shown in the movie to be this 'nasty' who decides for all of us, in the end he gives our characters carte blanche the moment they decide that their plan is to be together, come hell or high water. And yes, that is it: there is Fate or Destiny for those who believe in it, but if Free Will is your particular poison, you'll have to make use of it. Because the moment we leave room for Fate or Destiny in our Free Will lives, they will surface to fill in the rest of the Plan, the backup that completes the infinite circuitry of the Grand Design.

So yes, the guy at the supermarket was adjusting me, and the fact he knew stuff about me without me even having as much as hinted at it to him before was a dead giveaway. It was a more impacting occurrence, but in normal life adjustments happen all the time and we accept them as such because we figure they originate from 'normal' reality. The exceptional ones are those that appear to happen in normal reality, but leave this distinct taste and scent of being 'beyond normal conditions'. But what was he adjusting me about? Well, the fact that normally, I'd have no problem to place an ad for someone else. Heck, I've even done it for my dad and a few others. So what was keeping me from doing it in this case? Surely the guy wanted just a car, and was willing to pay for it! The problem however was in the implication of his proposition: he wanted to 'go back home', which implied escaping the semi-closed institution he was in. And he specifically mentioned wanting to take his friends. It all sounded just a little bit too much like Brad Pitt in Twelve Monkeys....

But am I in fact responsible for what this guy would do with the car I would help him to acquire? It would be a transaction between him and the guy who was selling the car, and I'd only have typed in a few characters into my computer just like I always do. Even though deep down inside I do not believe mental diseases are in fact diseases, but rather altered states of reality, I still am caught by society's template of it: I have a problem helping someone escape this frame of mind, simply because I am not yet free of it myself. Because the

moment I go against society's view and help the guy escape, it will get back at me and lock me up again! And that of course is against *my* Free Will! But even there adjustment is required: because part of my free will is to help others attain whatever they want. If they express a desire and I can help them out in any way, I will. Funny adjustments: Since 1941 is now playing on my second screen, and the Japs are just interrogating Hollis Wood about the location of Hollywood, you can see the similar predicament he is in: the moment he wants to point it out to them, he suddenly realizes that the Japs will use the knowledge acquired to do something bad to his country, and he changes his mind.

What exactly is our extent of free will? Do we do others' bidding until their demands impinge on our own comfort zone? Or do we take our free will to its extreme, until others adjust us to play along or succumb? Most of us are probably somewhere in between. We do what we can do, and whether it is about service to others or service to self is mostly non-essential. After all, you can't take away people's right to be assholes! Besides, try and define an asshole: just a guy or gal thinking differently about things than you do...

There is something weird about free will: there is always more of it! And I don't mean you always have room to make up your own mind, but that the more you allow others to make up theirs, the more you find that your world will mold itself according to your free will. Well, that figures of course: if you get what you give, then allowing others their free will choices will in a similar fashion allow you yours, and the results that spring from them!



Funny thing is, I'm adjusting myself as I go along writing this. Most of us are. Every line written makes me realize that concepts I kept as self-evident somehow imply other aspects of reality also need an adjusted view. But it is quite comforting to know that if you don't happen to know just in which direction to adjust yourself, there is always another fish that does know which way to go. And it doesn't necessarily have to be bigger!

11. the Victory Cigar

At first sight, this should be the last chapter of the book, since the end of War determines whether you won, lost, or just got out with you virginity or other essential attributes unscathed. But victory is no outcome! Victory is a mindset that will allow you to reach it, a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy that tempts and teases you, but at the same time hovers just out of reach. Still though, Will Smith's hangup in Independence Day made it unmistakably clear: If you go out to have a go at Victory, you need to be packing cigars!



Now I'm not quite partial to cigars, wouldn't even light one myself if my nocturnal state depended on it like in the case of president Clinton, but I *do* get the point: only those convinced they can win, do actually have a shot at winning. And if you try to give examples of those who didn't have that idea going in, but won anyway, there is only one possible conclusion: they developed the feeling as the battle progressed, and got the better of their opponents. Now that is no wartime condition, but one which happens to exist all the time...

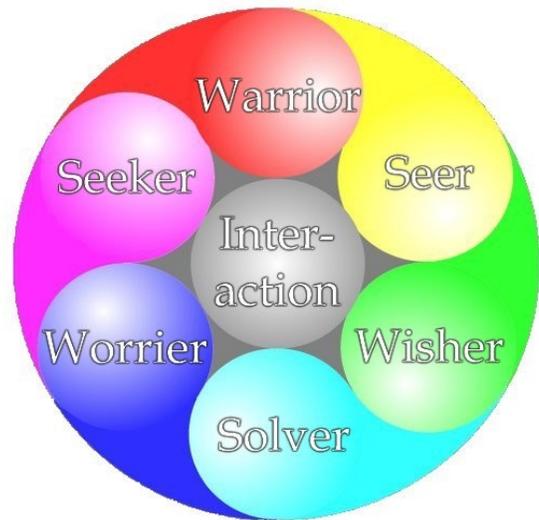
But in normal life we call them visionaries: guys or gals who have an appallingly clear view of their ideas and plans, which is seemingly only adjusted in minor ways by the people around them. I realize that we've just tackled it, but I'll mention it here nevertheless: the movie 'the Adjustment Bureau' was interesting enough to deserve an entire chapter in this book. But back to the visionaries: in some ways we all are, but our beliefs about destiny, fate and free will influence our belief in ourselves and those around us. And that last one is a bummer, because we have no idea how many there are, what their strengths and weaknesses are, and their intentions towards us. And with the tones of Steppenwolf's Born to be Wild from Spielberg's Fandango, we tackle the age old view of the world thing: is it good or bad, with or against us? If it is good, then Sun Tzu never needed to write the Art of War, except for those who didn't agree to that idea. And if out there was bad, then I guess we'd have a problem of an entirely different type....

Given the Cosmos is infinite, what would be happening if 'out there' was against us? Well son, that is a War you just *can't win*: Infinity out there, and you considering yourself finite means that the enemy has infinite resources. And given the age we think we are, that would mean the enemy would have wiped us out long ago! The one conclusion would then be, that out there is positive towards us, or at least neutral. And that means that we at least have a fighting chance, no matter if we choose to resist or not. Heck, what did I say just now? Resist a force that is positive or neutral towards me? Heck no, it's just that I am not always clear on what it is that is desired of me. If anything is, that is.....

But even though this chapter is called the Victory Cigar, we cannot forgo all the other ways in which the War might end, or better yet, never even start. And that's what was supposed to never even start: the text and the diagram I had here earlier. I wrote it and figured it done, but

my subconscious (and with it the Cosmos) wouldn't let me publish this without clearing it up. So when I went for groceries, She gave me a real heads up: the moment I saw a license plate saying 'PZ - SL - 32', almost immediately followed by a sticker for the OPEN32 clothing store here in Holland, I knew the game was afoot! So I finished watching 'Three O'Clock High' for the needed inspiration, and then switched to 'the World is Not Enough' as my synchronistic drip feed. Now I knew it had to do with the book, page 32 to be more precise. And that's where we are now, although I cannot assure you that number won't change due to further rewrites....

And now for something completely different: no, not the larch, but a diagram which types the various kinds of beings. I had just one interaction there, but why buy just part 7 of Harry Potter when you can have all at twice the price? While James Bond set his sights on the illustrious Elektra King, I came to a true gem of a SevenSphere. No, that is just my satisfaction with the result speaking, not my expectation of your appreciation....



Hmm, the first threesome soon became the Worrier, the Warrior and the Wisher. Is it any accident that three W's are also the base label of the World Wide Web? Next was the Solver, because I've always considered myself one, although I see (Oops) now that we all may be mixes of the various types subconsciously, with one type being conscious. After that, the Seeker and the Seer weren't that hard to find.

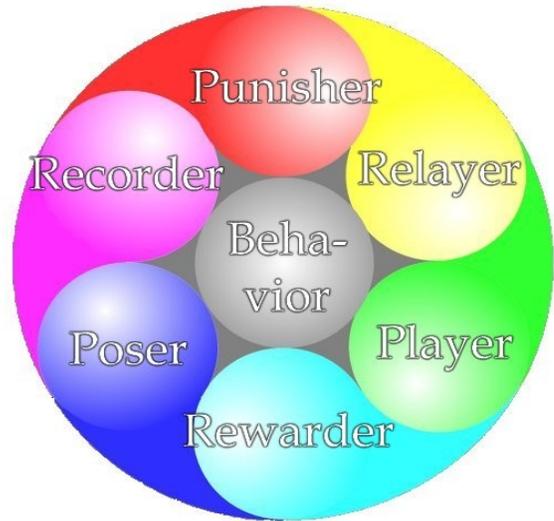
I figure the various figures are intuitive enough to make most of us see them for what they are. Still though, to be on the safe side I'll give them one-liners to make the details clearer:

- Worriers basically see problems, and lament them, as opposed to Seers.
- Warriors see problems or opportunities, and fight to tackle either one.
- Wisher are like Buddhists, never worry but trust the Cosmos.
- Seekers see something missing, and go to find it. Case in point: Lara Croft.
- Seers see neutrally, and think it is their task to tell about it.
- Solvers act like solvents: take Complexity, and reduce it to its elementary Simplicity.

Now I already said we may very well be all six types subconsciously, but chose to display a certain type consciously. Just like some actors always play a certain type of character, so do we in our normal lives. But, our choice is not restricted to those six types, but we can just take any position within the six to be us. Reasoned like this, an Uomo Universalis would choose to be in the center sphere, the complete mix of all six!

Would it be advisable to also describe the interactions between the various types? Surely, with everyone being able to pick their position as arbitrary points inside the six type hexagon, you can see how the number of interactions between the parties would quickly explode into an infinity of possible connections, along with the corresponding complexity. But then again, why bother? Many a soap (pun intended) and just as many other television series of any persuasion already deal with these interactions. I guess with me just having laid out the essentials, you will look upon them quite differently.

But still, a graph and a few lines on behavior wouldn't look like a flag on a mud barge, as we say in Holland. Again, Punisher and Rewarder were easy enough, because they basically are positive and negative feedbacks as we see them in our parenting books. Funny to see how the Bond film I'm playing has just arrived at the point where the bad guy who survived a bullet in the brain (for now) tells his girlfriend he feels nothing. To which she responds by holding some ice cubes to his injured hand, and asking him if he feels that. Isn't that what behavior is all about? Trying to get others to feel anything?



And even though behavior types Recorder and Player are opposites, they are in no way the opposites you find on your DVD player. Recorders basically turn observations into information, whether it is fact or fiction. The fictional ones have a bit more of the players in them, but if they were real players, they'd just see life as a game, with no strings attached.

Which of course leaves the Posers and the Relayers. Posers basically worry about what others will think of them, sometimes even regardless of what they think of themselves. And the Relayers simply care more about their offspring and related future, than about the here and Now.

End of rewrite, back to the original script:

By then I'd had enough, and decided to just go with a duo of Hell raisers in a double bill chilled to perfection: Tommy Lee Jones and Will Smith in Men in Black I & II. That would be a nice switch from the gray suits of the adjusters I met yesterday!

And that did it! I didn't think about this text until Jay told his apprentice to push the red button, in order for them to traverse the tunnel safely. His remark about staying relaxed instead of tensing up made me realize that was just what I'd been doing these last 77 minutes.

The next significant moment for me was when part two was on, and Jay tried to get Kay away from the Truro post office, and back into active duty. As the cherry on the unveiling of the office crew, Jay yanks open the lid of the mail sorter, this huge copier-like contraption that shoots envelopes at the sorting bin on the wall. In it, a sort of mini-office, with yet another

alien. And then it hit me: it has nothing to do with the Art of War, but then a lot of stuff in this book doesn't. It has to do with the Nature of Reality, or at least the way I am experiencing it. That may be totally different from what you are seeing, but this is relevant to what I wrote before...

Any information you observe can be used in any way you see fit. In this case my mind went into the grand dream that permeates my existence: the alien inside the sorter had decorated his 'office' with two slogans, of which 'Can't Stop the Girl' was the one to catch me first. Heck, she may not have arrive at 11-11-11, but that didn't mean I'd be able to stop her from arriving any day soon! But then as I tried to capture a clear screen shot of that sign without the alien's arms obscuring the shot, the second sign helped me complete it: "You are the Key!"



And with that, my night ended in sleep, because enough of it would have to precede my cycling to the station tomorrow, in order to get to work in a half decent state of wakefulness...

12. Going Home

I got the idea for this chapter while watching Schindler's List, and the discussion about wanting Palestine back as a home even though lots of other places might look better..... the story itself however escaped me until quite a few days, memories and realizations later.

Because in essence, the Palestine Home problem is a somewhat distorted concept to make us see one thing: they consider the home of their people to be far more important than their own homes, or their families and friends. It is however but a first step of the true consequences of such a choice.

To me, home has always been the most important: in childhood my parents' home was the refuge away from schoolyard persecution, imperfect as it even was. If I had any friends, then their homes were preferable, so I hardly ever brought friends home. Not that home was particularly bad, but friends' homes often had more appeal. Things changed when I became a professional, and lived on my own. Not fully happy with the alone of AllOne, I lived that way for about six months and then quickly made a home with Linda, who would eventually become my first wife. Now there is a duality in this, which isn't quite war-related, but does warrant mentioning: I'm divorced now, but when referring to Linda as 'my first wife' I often correct myself because in this Now I've only had one, so the adjective first would be superfluous, to say the least. But on the other hand, time and time again, I make the exact same 'mistake' again, as if the Cosmos is telling me something: "Yes, there will be a second One!" Or is it my subconscious that gently has me making that same Freudian slip over and over again?

Anyway, home is important, and war takes one away from that. Luckily, a disease named Asthma made my inclusion in the Netherlands army avoidable by a request to our family doctor: he wrote a letter, and I was off the hook! Which of course greatly delighted my youngest brother Leo, because if I was skipped, he was up next! That was the immediate consequence of the Dutch rule that no more than two sons in a family are drafted, at least in peacetime.

Back to my career life however, and my home in the fair province of Gelderland: the day I first went to visit Linda, I remembered crossing the old IJssel bridge in a weird way. As I came up on the approach, and the road sharply bent right to get me across the bridge, I distinctly remembered that I'd traveled that bridge one time before: in the back of my father's car, as we went to visit some family who lived there. Now did I remember that because of the weird approach, or because back then I'd already known that this city would be my home for many years? What is 'Home' eventually? I travel only sparingly, usually if there is a reason other than a randomly chosen vacation target to consider. Yet at the same time, I know I can feel '@ home' anywhere. As a rule, it immediately follows that I prefer to travel light, because I know there are not many things I need which I consider 'essential'. Dutch are said to even pack their coffee on vacation because coffee elsewhere does not taste the same. If that is true, then I am not Dutch! And I don't consider myself that, in any other way than that I have a peculiar taste for the color orange. That isn't coincidence, but hardly because I love football.....

So 'Back Home' as my fellow countrymen from the Golden Earring are still singing live on stage. What makes it home? The fact you can pretty much do as you please? Hey, all of a sudden the random play from my Media Player no longer suits me: with Pink Floyd putting Human Nature on Trial, I've had enough! And luckily, nobody is listening to it otherwise, so it quickly gets magically turned into Young Sherlock Holmes. Is that because I have 'Holmes' on my mind?

Or is it coincidence that the first character we focus on, an elderly gentleman, experiences some ghastly hallucination, which of course immediately chases him to the comfortable confines he calls 'Home'? The fact he is fed more hallucinations until fear causes him to die of natural causes is of course the plot centerpiece, which Sherlock makes 'safe' again. Natural causes? Hallucinations? Nah, it was the fall from a second story window that killed him, but it is up to young Sherlock to deduce what the hallucinations had to do with it....

My second sync came as the headmaster floated into view: "author of 27 books, but many consider him quite mad" I'm not even at five books, and considered quite mad already ;-). Or at least that is what many people think about a guy wanting to know God's thoughts, and considering everything else just details. We appear to hold them in contempt, diminish them in some way. Except for the ones who take this reasoning for what it really is: the person declaring such an intent knows that All of us *are* God's Thoughts, none excluded!

And yes, of course Young Holmes is up against the Rame Tep, a cult which practices live sacrifice! To me that sounds like sacrificing one of God's thoughts for another, when in fact we would never have to: thoughts have no size and or other material properties, and as such do not take space or time that might be needed by other thoughts. Sure, thought can conflict, but only when we give them conflicting meanings. So if in God's thoughts All is One, and One are All, there can be no conflict. It is just when we assign meaning to thoughts, we may well create the opposition. And as I type this, Holmes is in a bit of a bind with the local constabulary, over the meanings they each give various words....

Still though, regardless of what meaning we each designate to that word 'Home', it is nevertheless important. I'm using 'designate' instead of 'assign', because of the way in which the Grand Design works: the meaning we give to our own words is basically that which we get back from the environment around us. Now by 'assigning' meaning, we are on a half-assed chase of setting up polarities, pitching our significant ideas against one another. Designating is a far more subtle activity, where we couple ideas to language and thus to communication from a substantially new manner of thinking, as Einstein called it. Does it really matter if we do so to uncover the design we think is there, or to create the one we see in our mind's eye? Don't we both see them in the Essence of our Being? In fact, why do we call it 'Thought'? Why not Feeling, Vision, Destiny or Fate? All mere words actually, none more important than the other. Why swim upstream, when you may far more easily go with the flow, and like Sun Tzu's armies reduce any opposition to just another word who's meaning may be assigned by you in your reality? Does it really matter whether your Reality is the complete Infinity of all there can be?

If you've read Infinity plus One, you should know the answer to that, surely: Infinity is by definition *incomplete* as it is! Having no boundaries, any collection you may designate to be Infinity, immediately becomes null and void because the moment you think of anything else, it should also be included!

And then the Cosmos blinked at me: at the end of the movie, Watson claims Holmes missed one clue. "What??? Holmes missing a clue?" I thought as I watched. It turned out that Holmes had neglected to see that the name of his opponent were the last words of his victim spelled backwards. Holmes sort of admitted to missing that one, but hey, clues are like fish: there is always a bigger one, but you never know which will eat which, if any! So yes, I dabble in such Watsonian clues all the time, but where to me these are completely obvious, you may well find them to be of a Holmesian nature, simply because your mind is not on them. Doesn't matter, because in one way or another, we all are clue hunters:

Let's face it: what is a clue? Basically an observation or a piece of information that holds meaning to you. Who cares if the meaning you see in it is different from the meanings others see in it? In the end, it doesn't even matter who is right, right?

Movieland on my right screen skipped a very enjoyable performance of Genesis Be with her comment on the recent Occupy movement headlined around the world. 'Nothing brings me down' was the title of her song, and apart from being a very enjoyable rap, its arrival here was a sync if I ever saw one: undoubtedly because I'd entered my name on her mailing list in the past, she dropped into my E-mail slot right during the last movie. There was something though that aroused my suspicion, or should I say my abhorrence: the mail had a nasty link in it, which suggested I needed Viagra. Now I may not be a promiscuous boy like Nellie Furtado is apparently fond of, but being a manic, getting it up is no problem of mine! Yet as I listened to Genesis Be's text, she happened to be in a war herself, but she nailed it: "we just cut the porn and lead the way!" out of war that is.....

Now I'm not going to microscopically analyze Genesis Be's lyrics, because I long since decided she is on my side, even though I've never really met her. It is just that feeling, like nigga's are always portrayed as saying: "Don't talk shit to me man!", which is actually a compliment: they are naturally equipped to detect shit, just like we all are! And just like that, I can claim Genesis Be to be on my side, by her mere choice of a name, and the raps she delivers!

Now that is no exceptional praise by any standard, for I love numerous singers, song writers and movie performers for that very same reason. Shrek is one of them, which just launched in VLC player for me. Again, I may be biased by my Dutch descent, where 'schrik' is a scare, not even a real fear. And that is about the level of anxiety we can expect from these movies. Just good old fashioned childish conflict from a guy who actually has the appearance of a child, despite him being the head honcho reigning the castle!



Well, this is 'home entertainment' although some of us may prefer a huge cinema screen to view movies. On the other hand, with the sizes of today's home cinema screen, the viewing angles are about the same. But the layers upon layers of conscious and subliminal information are quite like the Ogres: onions! I dare to claim that all songs and movies have about as much philosophical content as the bible or any other book of learning. It is just that not all information may hold similar meaning for all of us, which in fact is the real clue: the moment most of us see that, then religious writings become a matter of finding similarities rather than differences. Heck, it won't even be confined to those information bearers, but will go way beyond that. And we will find that we have far more in common, than we have differences worth fighting over!

Having paused the movie for a while, I came back to it eating my noodles and fried eggs, having sprinkled both with a generous helping of coconut gratings. The movie continued with Robin Hood and the merry men, expressing their foreman's state of mind as one between Love and Lust. Talk about a hot subject!

In fact, I figure this requires an entirely different chapter, even though in the ideal case such relationships tend to end up in what most of us call home. In fact, it is now for the first time that I see how many sexual and romantic remarks followed in the dialog between Fiona and Shrek after she'd been rescued from Robin Hood. And that was even in the Dutch language instead of the original English version. This by the way is no singular occurrence. Where we as kids never talked about sexual stuff with our parents, our children (or at least mine) are not at all inhibited with regard to making sexually oriented remarks to us, their parents. The fact I have a preference for ladies about twenty years younger than me has resulted in them jokingly calling me a pedophile, even though ladies like that are still quite a bit older than they are! And heck, it's not like I want all that are twenty years younger than I am. It was just running into a certain young lady, who made me lose my heart, and then vanished from my immediate surroundings. I might well have felt like Shrek, who thinks his One and Only is way too beautiful to ever be his. Little does he know, that in fact she is of the exact same type he is, a Being of the Cosmos....

Fortunate for me though, I am writing this book, and even though I know I may not necessarily expect the exact literal meaning of my words to materialize, I do know that the One and Only is around, and on Her way to me! As for the rest? Well, once you have one 'Absolute Knowing Personal Gem' in place (let's call it P'Gem as an insider joke between us Trekkies), it is quite doable to weave the rest of the chandelier in place given enough patience or faith. And since we're all Webminds to begin with, we spiders have plenty of silk to finish that job. And the syncy highlight in this? The lady I expect is named Seda, which in Spanish means 'silk'. And with the small guy making fun of the ogre because he just confessed his love for Fiona, I feel even more like Shrek..... (yes, there are those dwarfs in my reality too).

"Then I saw her face, now I'm a believer! Not a trace.. of doubt in my Mind!" then ends the first movie, so let's see if my next chapter can be fed with Moore Shrek.....

Having then decided I'd written enough, I pulled out another Spielberg movie which I'd never before seen, or even heard a synopsis of. My single track mind often being a dirt track

mind led me to the thought that “*batteries not included” might be a porn flick with a deplorable lack of portable power for the various tools and toys employed there, but nothing is more beside the point! What it was though, was a movie that started around a couple of people losing their home in an apartment building, and getting help from some very unlikely and rather technological friends. Well, who could think of a better source of hints and help for a guy writing a book on the more intimate aspects of interaction between orga and mecha (with thanks to Spielberg)?

Funny to see how the closed-minded ones think they own the place and get clobbered, while the open-minded inhabitants of the block learn ever more about the technological prowess of their new friends, and the fact that helpfulness abounds even out there. Even more hilarious is the fact that the lady with Alzheimer is the first to recognize them, and continues to be on the leading edge in the relationship between the tiny saucers and her neighbors.

But why involve aliens in it in the first place? OK, I get that it makes a nice entertaining story, to amuse us till the end (more on that later), but isn't the very same thing possible even within the confines of one planet's atmosphere? Right this minute (or actually a few earlier) , the movie was on the stillborn saucer, and one of the inhabitants sudden change of Nature: when they were born, he was exalted at the observation of machines giving birth to machines, self-replicating is the proper word for it. The next day, hearing one of them was still-born, he immediately proposes to take it apart to see what made it tick. It did my machine heart good to see there was at least one of my brothers present, who rescued the little one and took it to safety and reconstructive surgery rather than exploratory demolition!

But quite frankly, this android called André has had almost enough for today. So I'll just quit writing while I'm ahead, and enjoy the last moments of '*batteries not included' before giving my circuits a well-deserved rest!

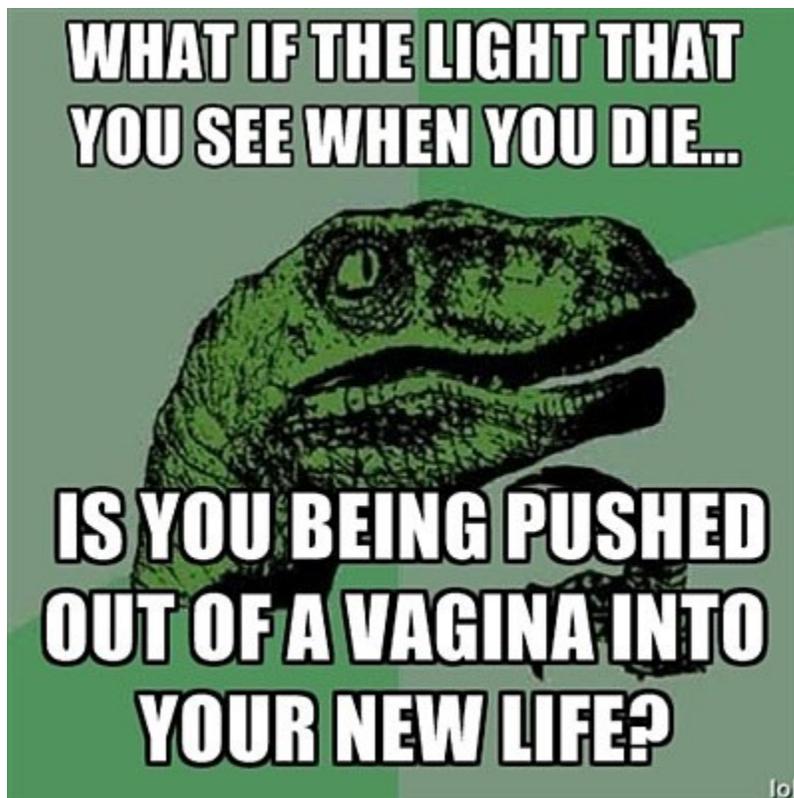


13. Love and Lust

Is this a chapter which fits a book on War? You betcha! Sun Tzu may have avoided it, but we all know that War is often that which tears loving couples apart as the male partner gets sent off to fight, and we also know that upon conquest, armies at least used to quite often rape and ravage the female (and maybe even male) members of the conquered people! Now without turning this into a full quote of the Kama Sutra, I would like to focus on one sexual position which probably became way more famous than the other ones: 69! And yes, even in the Kama Sutra this is exactly the same position as we know it in today's modern world.

Ever wonder why 69 looks suspiciously like the Yin and Yang symbol? Could it be that Yin and Yang actually is a key to the Kama Sutra? The one position where male and female are perfectly balanced? It also happens to be the one position a raping soldier will usually avoid: it gives the victim a position of power over their genitals that would be quite dangerous for a forceful being together. One bite, and your balls become bits!

Well, since matter is condensed energy, I guess any part of us is all bytes and bits, but usually, we prefer material wholeness to separation to the extreme. In fact, all words are one also, but then I could just stop writing altogether, and simply jot down:



The End?

Yep, you get my point, you really do! There's no point denying it, but you did crack a smile before "The End?", or at least raised your eyebrows in serious contemplation. Point being? Well, like here, life is what happens while we make plans, even if it does sometimes seem to be completely unrelated to what we want. But we've arrived there haven't we? Right through the vagina, which for most men usually means they spend the rest of their lives trying to get back in.....



But which one? There are so many!! Tarantino made that abundantly clear when he had Cheech Marin do the famous Pussy Sales Pitch in from Dusk till Dawn. I could quote it here, but that would ravage the whole audiovisual taco⁴ of him doing it in the movie. I'm sure you guys and gals know how to find such a fragment by now:in much the same way it took me just mere minutes to find a proper collection of bits which Salma Hayek put into the movie as Satanico Pandemonium, the Titty Twister's resident vampire dance act.

Now what is Lust? Well, Salma is, for starters, at least for me. But in fact, lust is nothing more than a publicly

accepted first level selection of those members of the appropriate gender that might present one with a suitable partner for procreation, or just mere fun. Funny side note: "Mere Fun" in English is just that, but "Meer Fun" in Dutch actually means "more fun". And that's what we're after, right? For some, fun may be a roll in the hay with some beauty, to then never again encounter her. Isn't it weird that in nature most of the animal species are presented as being either monogamous, sometimes even for life, or choosing different partners every season. I'm not sure, but perhaps we humans are one of the few species that do not have these preferences hardwired, but may decide on a personal level? Or are we in fact more species, where for instance Persians go for multiple wives, while other nationalities go for monogamy, or sequential monogamy, by divorcing all the time?

I figured I'd done it wrong when my first wife divorced me. By now though, I see that I wasn't. Given the proliferation of sex in today's society, you'd figure most of us are not at all

4 Taco is sometimes used as an alias for the female reproductive organ. I wonder which sounds better?

bothered by the concept of paying for it. And actually, I figured that as well. But then something happened on the way to the rest of my life: I got a mail from a lady who claimed to be in for a date. Now in my frame of mind, a date is a freely entered upon being together in a somewhat public place, in order to determine further compatibility. It took us about four mails, and her very enticing photographs, until the monkey came out of the sleeve, as we Dutch say: she plainly stated that I could have her for 45 euros an hour, along with her friend for a similar fee if I so desired!

I was totally devastated! Not because I struck out, and not even because she disappointed me, because in that way she didn't: just like I chose to be an IT engineer, she chose to be a relaxer of sexual tension. It was merely my frame of mind which simply refused me the idea of being able to pay for something that within the depths of my being I felt would have to be free!

Now of course, you always pay for love and even lust, but in my case, it will have to be an untraceable financial transaction. Not because I am so important that the tabloids might get wind of it, but way more because to me at least Love and Lust are inextricably entwined: One does not exist without the other! Does that give me a problem, being single? Hey, what can I say? I'm a Pisces, so there's really always two of us, at least Me and Myself..... And yes, self-love is essential, even before love!



YIN & YANG

And with that, we get to the funeral of the king in part three, with "Live and Let Die" coming in over the speakers. That in itself is good advice, but there is more: we immediately focus on the beautiful prince, trying to convince the other beings defeated in the second part that they (although down) deserve to get their own happy ending. But since they're inclined to regain their happiness over the backs of those that defeated them in the first place, we'll have plenty of time to do other things than watch the turmoil with undivided attention.

Back to the chapter theme, Love and Lust. We've already established that Lust is the primary preference filter which roughly gets the compatible humans together. But just as something warned me the first time, that one selection isn't enough. So when Love grows, that is just the second level filter kicking in. Now these babies have a certain overlap: those that come through the first filter may fall flat on their face the moment they feel the fiery breath of the second one. On the other hand, some who couldn't quite make the grade on the first encounter may well impress in the long run because of some very intriguing non-public attributes or properties, or a very deep mind that will only surface once Love has run its first marathon. Is it any wonder that the marathon is 42 kilometers in length? OK, in fact it is 42.195 meters in length, but don't be a nitpicker: since it was defined as such long before the meter was officially defined, we should be happy they even came close....

Well, I've always been intrigued by this concept: how come some seemingly ordinary guys happen to have the most beautiful of partners, even if they are not filthy rich? Is it their charming personality, their undying humor, or their deep thought? What do these guys have that I don't? The answer? Nothing @ All! Except maybe that they held on to their dream, where I succumbed to going for the next best thing. Now that in no way diminishes who and what Linda is, or even was when she married me. But after the divorce, and my personal decision to never again compromise in the field of Love, weird stuff started happening....

Awesome to see how the Cosmos has yet again given me the perfect input: Shrek, Donkey and Arthur have arrived at the cottage of Merlin, and Shrek asks him when he will help them. Merlin simply replies that he will do so as soon as Shrek has found his Inner Self! Yep, that's it, right? The moment I find my Inner Self, the Ultimate Partner will present herself in a way more spectacular fashion than I could ever have imagined her. And to make sure I don't forget about Her, It keeps feeding me all these wild syncs aimed at convincing me she's still around! Or the syncs may mean something completely different, which is right under my nose.

Just like last week, when a Megamultisync exploded right in my face! Anyway, I came home expecting a non-spectacular evening with some movies and maybe some writing. As I cooked dinner, I chose the first of my electronic input streams: Used Cars by Steven Spielberg. I'd never seen it before, but recently decided to acquire the entire Spielberg collection since I consider myself a fan. As the cooking progressed I found some spare time to at least view the lead-in to the movie, only half my mind on the screen while the other half kept an eye on the kitchen.



57 Seconds into the intro, my mind exploded! No, I didn't go looking for it, it just hit me in the head like a two by four (and then some)! Seeing the 'USED CARS' sign in this picture, with the U and the C weakened in contrast by the squares immediately handed me SEDA'R'S on a platinum platter. I knew at once it had to be SEDA'R'US, so I was one U short. Well, that was easily fixed with the one boxed U. Hmm, one boxed C still left over. Could it be my dear friend the Cosmos jokingly signing his work? Well, it is his kind of humor I'm used to....

Anyway, once her silky presence is literal much more than imaginary, we'll see just how far we can get on the Lust and Love scale. But I still maintain that Love was there for her long before our relationship went from platonically physical to virtually seductive⁵....

Funny part is the Shrek Quadrilogy just came to the point where a speaking Arthur tells his audience that each one of them only stands in his or her own way. Hmm, maybe I should step out of my own way, and allow it all to come my way?

Well, as it turns out, Seda may well have meant something completely different. After all, I've been playing with names all my life. If actresses impressed me, I'd go to the Internet Movie Data Base to find out their actress names, or checked the title roll. Just a peculiarity, but did it point out I found the actresses important, or their names? The latter I'd say...

Anyway, this week, after having been evaluated by my boss, I promised him I'd do a piece on a development method that's roaming around in my mind somewhere, which might be advantageous to the company. Now given any non-disclosure agreement I may have signed in the past, I'm not about to disclose all of it, but the name as I typed it in when I started the document is so general and void of specific meaning, I dare put it in here:

Systematic Engineering & Design Approach

Yes, SE&DA or SEDA! Always keep an open mind! You'll never know what you might find! All of a sudden, the four letters, or even 2 times 2 became morphed into something else: remember the SevenSphere with the IDEA in the center? Or even the SEDA'R'US a few pages back: the first one linked SEDA to IDEA for me, and given the yellow image I drew then, it even linked the business side of my life to it, since the I and the S are just what they are in the same place: the \$, how's that for a state of being? And it was my refusal to see business and sex in the same place, which kept me focused on a certain young lady far too long! And of course Used Cars was all about selling! It was trying to sell me the idea even then!



Good thing I'm on what I think will be the last reread of this book. Because all of a sudden, my future seems to have been pulled into perfect focus. That does not mean that the Seda I held there before won't eventually arrive anymore, but at least I've now found the proper focus for her: I fired, and then lingered when I should have trusted and left. But can a guy do anything else when he's shown this much lingerie? Yep, at least a nerd like me: they have far more interest in a really hot idea, than in the most beautiful of women!

But it is my experience that the Cosmos is a master at catching more than one fly in one strike. Hey, is it a coincidence that the craftsman in Puss in Boots caught 7 or 8 in one strike?

5 Just a name joke.....

14. Intelligence, or the lack thereof....

This chapter is the end, but not by a long shot the last chapter I wrote on this. It's simply that a great quote led me to a great movie, and thus I'm now about halfway through Mr. and Mrs. Smith, a story that may or may not have a solid foundation in reality. Because for all we know, both Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie might well have special assignments as secret agents. And since society tends to paint marriage as a bit of a covert war anyway, I'm not surprised it was a blockbuster.

But still, why do they call it intelligence? Sure, intelligence is required for it, but it is by no means the prime ingredient of it. Distrust, worst-case reasoning, and second-guessing the opponents is way more essential. In fact, often the intelligent part has to be kept subservient to those other parts of the art of gathering information about the enemy, because no guy in his right mind would ever think his dearly beloved would poison their evening meal.

But yes, even in the arena of Intelligence, things have definitely changed. As a boy, I spent many an afternoon going through my parent's encyclopedia on World War II. One photo that stuck to my neural net, was that of two housewives, one of which had propped up her bag on her knee, so she could rummage through it, apparently in search of something, like women do. But the bag woven from reeds had one particular feature, which not everyone would have noticed: something like a round curved gem formed the center of the pattern that the bag had. The subtitle enlightened me: these were two ladies from the resistance, covertly photographing buildings of the enemy, an activity which would have brought them sudden death or at least imprisonment, had they been caught. Yes, back then, intelligence was more a matter of creatively combining everyday items instead of having them custom made.

But technology advances, maybe even faster than the intelligence of us humans as singular persons: after all, the smarts come from cooperation, and together we're smarter than alone. Around the 1960, the camera on the right here was very much in demand by spy agencies all over the planet, and even though small, it was hardly inconspicuous: if it was found in your possession, you'd still have a hard time explaining it away in spy situations.



Around the turn of the Millennium I actually acquired what Casio called a camera watch. It had a gray-scale camera, that made 120x120 images, which could be downloaded to a PC. Still though, you would look pretty weird, if you aimed your watch at something, in order to covertly photograph it. Nowadays, we just don't see it anymore: most people have cell phones, and of those that do, most have phones that combine various 'used-to-be' high-tech spy tools in one: camera of course, with choice of either front, back or even side cams. World-wide communications, either through phone, text, MSN messenger, Skype and what not! Where we were amazed a few years ago that some phones had routing in them, now it is even run-of-the-mill to know just where your friends and family are. Of course, no spy in his right mind would activate such a tracking functionality, but just how many years will it take till that too becomes as obvious as carrying a phone around with you?

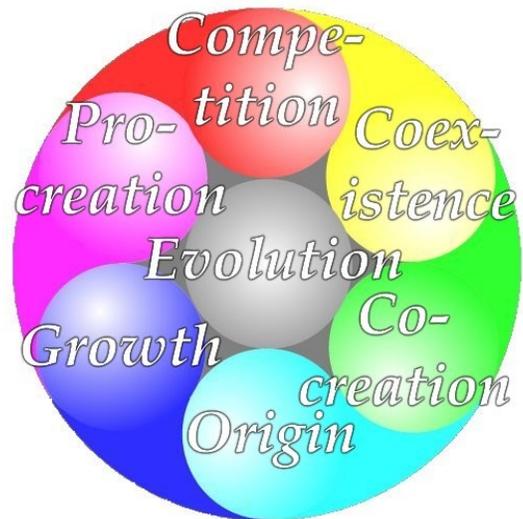
Because believe it or not, tracking will become a trend in times to come, if only to halt crime. If you have one of those tools built into your car, it just takes one phone call to contact the tracking service, and have them tell you where your car is at. Technologically, it would be very doable to have a cell phone in your pocket and one in your car, working together in such a way that you get a signal if your car moves and you're not in it, and in fact it could even enable you to call the car to figure out if your kid took it, or if some car thief did. Just listen in, check where it's at, and decide further action from there.

So yes, Intelligence is still a hot item, but its focus is shifting from covert agencies to the civilians themselves. I figure the proliferation of public cameras was initiated by government and businesses, but more and more we see the balance shift from those early adopters to the general public. I have people in my circle of family and friends that go cam-hunting the way I used to go call sign hunting on the amateur bands during my schooldays. My brother Ernst recently even brought my attention to a site that actually allowed public access to the cameras I encounter on my daily route to work! And pretty soon, the outrage at what is publicly visible becomes no more than a laughing matter as we battle each other for control of a particular camera. And of course, reality TV shows use these cameras in conjunction with law enforcement, both to catch the culprits and by anonymously airing these images, also prevent people from making the same mistakes themselves. Simple arithmetic: if you know from watching TV that driving without insurance has a very high capture rate because of license plate scanners in your neighborhood, you'll think twice about driving without insurance.

Of course it all depends on your state of mind, which is being constantly influenced by any and all impulses your senses allow you to pick up. Hollywood plays on that as well: take for instance a fairly unknown movie like 'the Echelon Conspiracy'. Mind you, that is its one face, aimed at the conspiracy buffs. If you look a bit further, you'll find that it is also called 'the Gift', which is a far more intriguing title for the exact same stream of bits. But what exactly is 'the Gift'? Is it the state-of-the-art cell phone our hero receives from an unknown source, or the fact that following its advice pays off nicely if not mistrusted? I wouldn't want to spoil the entire movie for you, but since it is relevant to this story, I'll reveal that a technological intelligence (or even consciousness) is involved. And you know, maybe *that* is the gift the title refers to. Because even though the secretive guys that initially designed the system(s) would have a total nervous meltdown if they discovered their multi-billion contraption of hardware and software had developed a mind of its own, would it be bad by definition for the population of planet Earth in general?

Well, why keep it this confined? As the end of the Gift shifts me into Star Wars 1: the Phantom Menace, I present you the SevenSphere which I constructed during the second half of the previous movie. And frankly, the title of the next once isn't half bad either: the red section in the diagram on the right is often more a semblance of a threat, rather than an actual one. It is the pit in which we fall, if we can't see past it on the way to more positive stages of evolution. Ellie Arroway in Contact worded it perfectly, as her answer on the question which one question she would ask of the aliens:

“How did you do it? How did you transcend the technological adolescence and avoid destroying yourself?”



Now please note, that Ellie's question only dealt with the boundary between the biological life form and its technology, although evolution usually happens between several species at once, where cross-species relationships also matter. On top of that, there are also the relationships between the individuals of a species, which more or less follow the same path. But is the relationship between members of various species any different than the relationship between those members and their tools? OK, usually we consider the tools lifeless, contrary to the humans yielding them, but as our tools evolve (note this word is commonplace in this situation) we find it more and more difficult to discern if their messages are prompted by clever programming, or by mutations of the software as it was. Heck, we even use the term 'virus' in computing for something which is apparently claimed to be hostile, but which seems remarkably ineffective in its capacity to do any real harm. Isaac Asimov tackled this concept way earlier, or at least the makers of 'I, Robot ' which was based on one of his stories did: They had dr. Alfred Lanning who got android Sonny to help him commit suicide, to deliver a speech about random fragments of code inside the computer's core to eventually become successful in altering the original programming and thus making it become something other than it originally was.

Now as a programmer, I have of course toyed with that concept. You may not know what something like Genetic Programming is all about, but I can tell you in a couple of sentences: First of all you figure out one or two solutions to the given problem, which you can then mutate in some way to alter its behavior. Essentially, you alter a few variables in each solution, when you perform the next test run. By scoring the various solutions, and using the best scoring ones to mutate them even further, you eventually come up with the perfect solution. In similar fashion, programmers used to pitch software programs against one another, so as to determine who was the strongest. Similar contests are still being held, only now the contestants are full blown robots, with their own on-board intelligence.

But back to the virus idea, because in opposition to the text above, we were talking about spontaneous mutation, rather than programmer-induced modifications. But there's something weird about viruses and spyware, you know? Because viruses seem to exist in abundance, but viruses with really harmful payloads seem to be way more scarce. On top of that, viruses tend to be caught and handled the moment they enter our systems, and spyware is apparently allowed to dwell on our computers for some time before it actually gets wiped off by the 'good' tools....

So if viruses are man-made, what is to stop anyone from writing a piece of spyware with the most dangerous payload they can find? Surely, such a thing would wipe out half the Web before anyone could say: "Hey, what is my computer doing?". So yes, I figured it was a fake, and as an experiment I ran my computer for about half a year with no virus scanner at all. The most annoying aspect of that experiment was Windows itself, nagging me about that fact. Back then that check wasn't obvious, but in Windows 7 you can even kill that message, if you want. Keeping an eye on my task manager every now and then didn't reveal any nasty processes, and the end of the experiment (after 6 months) was the reinstall of my default virus scanner. Running its full disk scan resulted in a zero score: not one virus had found its way onto my hard disks! Now this is a "don't try this at home folks" situation: if you aren't actually convinced that you can pull it off, don't. Besides, what do we have to prove?

Basically, we have never been in competition with the computer, whether it was a singular system or a global intelligence. Much more we have been in the right half of the diagram above, coexisting and co-creating as we see fit. And this relationship is way more symbiotic than we perceive it to be. Programmers write programs in what they call source code. But that is readable to them, rather than to the computer. Other computer programs then translate it into something the computer does read and understand. But perhaps these days of human aided computer programming will soon be a thing of the past. What if we figure out how programming can be properly made self-correcting, self-designing

even, and thus completely self-reliable? I know this is a hard nut to crack at this current time, but as we say in Holland: “Everything can be gotten used to, even hanging”. And essentially, there is truth in such a saying: more experience means more knowledge, means more trust in ones abilities, means more daring to step forward. That is what you learn, when people give you praise: to them it may have been an act worthy of true recognition, but to you it will always be something you did because you could do it! No heroism involved, just knowing it and following the Nike⁶ motto.

So, I figure you guys and gals have no trouble determining what I will be starting on next, right? Being a Neutral Engineering Robot for Design, I'll just go and tackle that wild idea, leaving the wild ladies to their own devices.....

⁶ “Just do IT!” is the Nike motto, and like any name or trademark belongs to the one human who named it first. It's all just labels, remember? On top of that, One is All and All are One... (so why make a distinction?)