

Theses from CPHL709



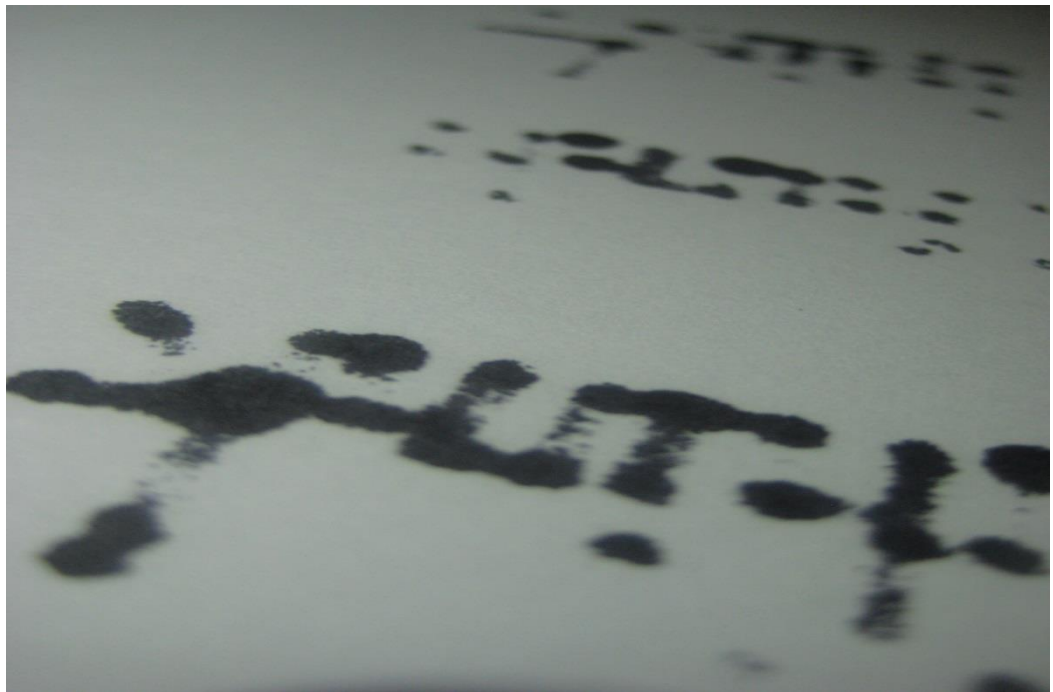
- I. Darwin precedes Newton. Physics describes a universe's code; Selection shows how code itself emerges from noise, from disorder a lawful cosmos.
- II. If design is a *problem*, if order needs explaining, then god, being orderly, cannot be the answer (Dawkins). Then god indeed cannot exist---not on high, eternally uncaused.
- III. The Problem of the External world is ancient, persistent, but acutely felt as we become architects of simulacra (Bostrom). The Problem of Other Minds, the cute puzzle, is a practical conundrum as we get better at simulating minds.
- IV. When convobots fool all the people all the time, by analogy we must concede that a world in which prayers receive answers in real-time, where the gospel news is fingerlessly scrawled in the cloudforms, where incidents align with alphabetic coherence into narratives of poetic refinement---*may* yet be godless. Analog to our own language-machines, the world may be an interface with a

mindless god-bot. Behind the curtain, a sheepish Oz;
inside Oz: whistles and cogs.

V. Inside *me* are whistles and cogs, I who doubtless have a
mind. Though apart from my own, all signs *may* be
mindless.

VI. As convobots improve, we personalize them, *not* worry
Persons have been Things all along. The ethical peril
of ossifying one's partner in dialogue---the risk of
being rude, at minimum---demands we overrule the
skeptic voice inside.

VII. gods too must pass a Turing Test of sorts to warrant our
worship. Traces of design are not enough, or we should
say: only traces of *personal* intelligence elevate god
to interlocutor from hypothesis.

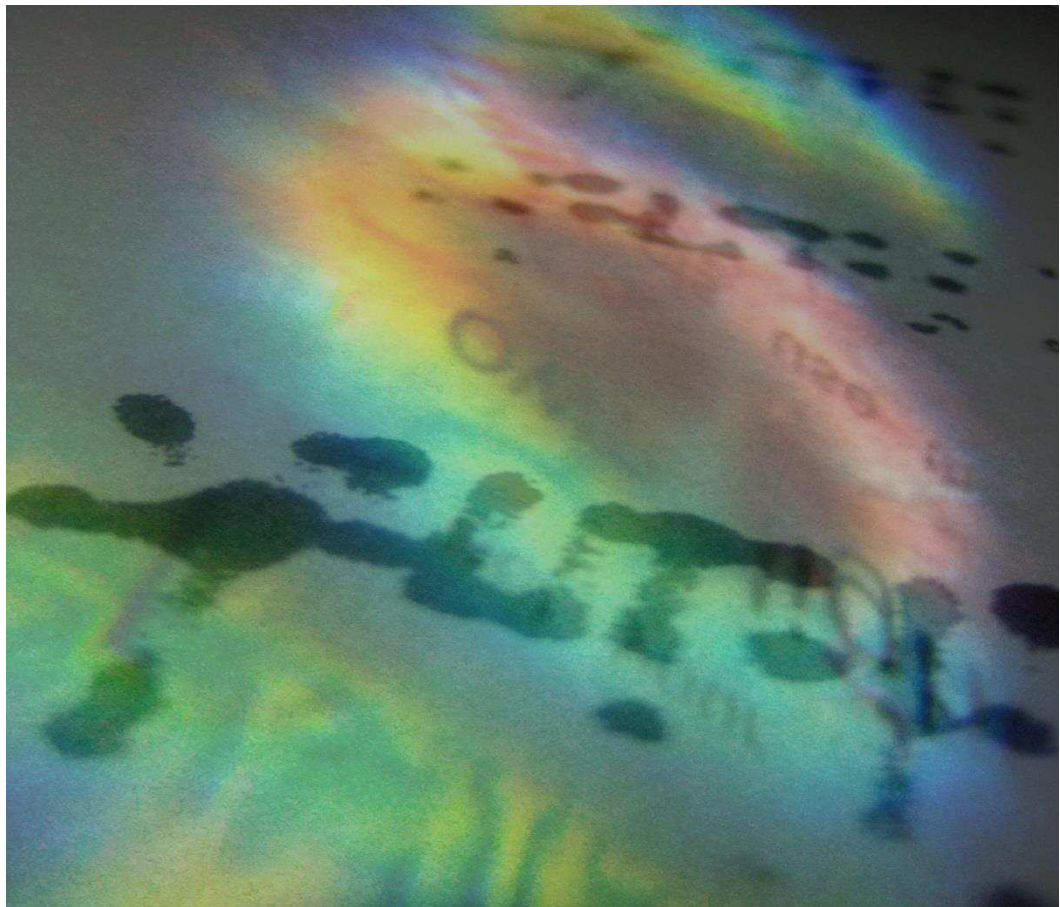


VIII. How do gods talk? "Any way they want." No, not really:
not if they want to be heard. They must use words---yet if
our words merely, how do we know it isn't just us? To
inform the ants we're near and notice, we implicate
ourselves into their pheromone chains---then risk them
thinking we're part of the ant-chatter. Gods may co-opt
our own R.hemisphere, but long beyond bicameral age, we
conclude it was probably us.

IX. Godwords are *like* ours so they're recognized *as* words, and unlike ours so we know it's not us. Better than ours, so we know it's them.

If patterns of ones and zeroes were "like" patterns of human lives and deaths, if everything about an individual could be represented in a computer record by a long strings of ones and zeroes, then what kind of creature could be represented by a long string of lives and deaths?— Thomas Pynchon, *Vineyard*

That's one way: make complex events, whole worlds stand as words, strung into intelligibilities, woven into stories, theories—something more than a list of factoids, to meet our concern about godbots.



X. Writing in the eventstream: especially impressive when laws are obeyed. A synchronicity dense enough beats any miracle. The former implies an author with mastery over the natural, no "mere" temporary, interruptive power; eternal control, perfect foresight, perfect timing, and

respect for the way things are: rather than *disrupt* clouds into sky-lines, he follows an unbroken chain of meteorological law to spell on April 29, 2077:

game is up, I'm coming down

By acting out History, forming its event-chains, we tell of course a story. By joining hands we form into words, mendicants make melas, readable from the heavens. Religion coordinates group action (Durkheim et al); religion *is* an ordered group action, bodies made formal, ritually arranged: is social action divorced from immanent concern; is gesture in service of a trans-world language-game. Ritual indeed can seem mindless *to a single mind*; the simsun stroke alone does not mean, never ask a neuron what the brain is up to.

XI.



From connectivity, consciousness; many systems other than brains likely have it.

- XII. Humans *know* they serve the tribe, the headline reminds that ENGLAND IS TALKING TO CHINA, TODAY; we delight in extending by metaphor Agency to movements, institutes, but are warned to not reify, not literalize.
- XIII. “Nine petaflops by 2009” ---so Kurzweill predicted. Short by six, aloud he wondered: “How should ‘computer’ be defined now?” what are the bounds of an A.I. mind when CPUs collate on-line, process in concert? when a boxable computer claims the Loebner Prize (in 2029), holds salon with the quick and the wise, we then should ask: *Since when have you had a mind? And when did you learn to speak Human so well? And what is it like to be inside you, what are you like when you’re not affecting a human Individual’s tics and charms?*
- XIV. If a billion Chinese cry aloud in chorus, does England hear? England, maybe. Englishmen, let Cecil Adams decide.
- XV. Clarke’s 3rd Law: technology *hides*, turns seamless with thought and volition. DNA acquires cell walls, nervous systems hide, eventually present as Persons.
- And the aliens who’d make it here would seem god-like.
- XVI. Thus, to Fermi, a reply: those who’ve arrived, conquered an ocean of space and time, would speak like gods: would speak, that is, from *beyond* space and time, coopting (“having coopted”) the natural domain, the archetypes, all indigenous systems into their communicative palette--- or they’d speak within our own stilled minds.

p bali
november 2013

