

Squirrel In Hell

2017-05-06

Real Languages Are Second Order

Note: this is a carrier class conceptual identification. What I'll write might superficially sound like postmodernist blathering. I assure you it is not, though I realize that there is no way to tell the difference... unless you already understand what I'm trying to say in this post. There is nothing I can do but try to say it anyway.

A musician wants you to appreciate their melodies. But their real pride is the emotions they are putting into the music.

A designer of a bridge wants you to appreciate how pretty it is and how well it works. But their real pride is in the skill and sense of aesthetics that they poured into the project.

A chess player wants you to appreciate their winning sequence of moves. But their real pride is in how they penetrated your thoughts, outmaneuvering you and securing a win before the fight even started.

A blog post author wants you to appreciate their clever idea. But their real pride is in what they figured out about how to think better.

An artist will use words, music, paintings, or body language.

An engineer will use computer programs, blueprints, power tools, or scissors.

A strategist will use discussion, sport, politics, or board games.

A philosopher will use words, mathematical symbols, or diagrams.

And yet if you pay attention to those, you have failed to hear the message.

If an artist puts some stuff together, it is because they are inviting you to feel something. If an engineer puts some stuff together, it is because they are inviting you to make it alive. If a strategist puts some stuff together, it is because they are inviting you to step up and join the game. If a philosopher puts some stuff together, it is because they are inviting you to think and understand something.

If you have no idea why you like something... you have met an artist.

If you have no idea why things are still working despite all odds... you have met an engineer.

If you have no idea why you lost... you have met a strategist.

If you have no idea why you never noticed before... you have met a philosopher.

Never underestimate how much an artist cares about their work, how much experience an engineer has, how well a strategist knows what you'll do, and how much a philosopher reflected about their work.

Everyone can feel emotions. If emotions are notes, a good artist writes symphonies.

Everyone can find solutions. If solutions are screws, a good engineer builds planes.

Everyone can make predictions. If predictions are lines, a good strategist paints portraits.

Everyone can learn concepts. If concepts are words, a good philosopher writes poems.

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Would you pour all your love into a portrait no one will ever see? Would you pour all your energy into fixing something you could replace for less money? Would you pour all your cunning into a game with no other players? Would you pour all your intellect into an obscure academic field no one cares about?

If you have something to say, anything is better than silence.

The artist cares, but no one can feel what he feels.

The engineer builds, but no one can appreciate his work.

The strategist plays, but no one can respond to his moves.

The philosopher understands, but no one can hear what he is saying.

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