

Human JPEGs

The Urth list — 6 messages, 5 voices, 23 Apr 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3191>

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Nigel Price — 23 Apr 2002, 00:39

Dan Meliza wrote:

But then, there must be some way
to vastly compress an intelligence
if you're going to send it through
the optic nerves in a few seconds.

All I wanted to do originally with this thread was point out the possibility of Lupine wordplay around the idea of "two byte word"/"two word bites"/"two word bird", but then I was foolish enough to put down that idle bit of nonsense about the 48K Spectrum.

Having failed to learn my lesson, I have to confess that I too, like Dan, have been whimsically speculating to myself whether, in the Whorl, the copies of personalities which are transferred between windows and people and windows and night choughs might not in fact be radically compressed in some way, or use some sort of wonderfully super-advanced lossy algorithm which gives such an accurate approximation of a personality that you really don't miss the bits that aren't there. In other words, Scylla didn't unload a "bitmap" of herself into Oreb, it was more a sort of "human JPEG".

Only speaking metaphorically of course.

Nigel

Andy Robertson — 23 Apr 2002, 05:35 · follows Nigel Price

----- Original Message -----

From: "Nigel Price" <nigel.a.price at virgin.net>

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Human beings seem to understand themselves best by using the machines the build as
parables of their nature. Strange fact, because our machines are probably nothing at all like us:
yet our imagination insists they are.

hartshorn

Jason Ingram — 23 Apr 2002, 08:09 · follows Andy Robertson

One question that has perplexed me is why multiple copies couldn't have been 'downloaded' at
the same time, and why all the 'data' seems to have left mainframe whenever downloading
occurs. I can think of reasons why the narrative might demand this, but I'm not sure what the

logic is.

One possibility: there is a 'one copy per person' limit because of a rough analogy to a soul (not identity, since Typhon and others seem to retain their personality even after uploading; and Silk remains 'in' Silk, presumably, even as Pig contains a downloaded Silk. The timing of the last part might warrant some scrutiny, however).

If it's just data, why not have three or four or four hundred versions at the same time? Perhaps Typhon wouldn't have trusted himself; maybe it's hypothetically possible, and an innate desire to think ourselves unique prevented duplication; but I seem to remember hints that the data were irreplaceable . . . no backups possible.

Strange, considering Severian--or perhaps a purposeful contrast. Serial versions of the new sun, single duplicates in the long sun, bilocation and identity sharing in the short sun.

Of course, maybe I've gotten my facts wrong again.

PS I hope this is now in plain text format.

Sepia

----- Original Message -----

From: "Nigel Price" <nigel.a.price at virgin.net>

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Andy Robertson — 23 Apr 2002, 06:41 · follows Jason Ingram

----- Original Message -----

From: "Jason Ingram" <j_ingram at mac.com>

To: <urth at urth.net>

Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2002 9:09 AM

Subject: Re: (urth) Human JPEGs

One question that has perplexed me is why multiple copies couldn't have been 'downloaded' at the same time, and why all the 'data' seems to have left mainframe whenever downloading occurs.

Maybe it's a quantum computer? Maybe the brain is a quantum computer?

Qubits can be entangled and projected elsewhere, but not "copied" in the sense bits can be.

hartshorn

Dan Meliza — 23 Apr 2002, 17:26 · follows Andy Robertson

The other possibility, I suppose, is that the gods upload (download, whatever) fragments of themselves into people and animals which can later be recombined into a full personality. In fact, fragments of holograms display the same image as the full hologram but at a lower fidelity. So any intelligence can serve as a substrate for personality transfer but in proportion to

the size of the brain. What we see in Oreb is actually the interference pattern between Scylla and Oreb proper expressed in the limited vocabulary of a two-bite bird. As Nutria points out this is a fine metaphor for human interaction, a tidy attack on modernism's atomic individual; and it goes a long ways toward explaining why Scylla's personality is more or less admirable depending on who she's occupying.

never one to capitalize after a colon,
dan

-----Original Message-----

From: Nigel Price [mailto:nigel.a.price at virgin.net]

Sent: Monday, April 22, 2002 5:39 PM

To: urth at urth.net

Subject: (urth) Human JPEGs

Having failed to learn my lesson, I have to confess that I too, like Dan, have been whimsically speculating to myself whether, in the Whorl, the copies of personalities which are transferred between windows and people and windows and night choughs might not in fact be radically compressed in some way, or use some sort of wonderfully super-advanced lossy algorithm which gives such an accurate approximation of a personality that you really don't miss the bits that aren't there. In other words, Scylla didn't unload a "bitmap" of herself into Oreb, it was more a sort of "human JPEG".

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Michael Straight — 24 Apr 2002, 18:15 · follows Dan Meliza

On Tue, 23 Apr 2002, Andy Robertson wrote:

Human beings seem to understand themselves best by using the machines they build as parables of their nature. Strange fact, because our machines are probably nothing at all like us: yet our imagination insists they are.

I don't know of any natural phenomena we understand as well as the things we make ourselves. Naturally, we try to explain what we don't understand in terms of what we do.

-Rostrum