


**PROSECCO-network.eu**  
2015 Code Camp



# Postcards from the Edge of Tomorrow

 Exploring the Joys of Genre with Twitter





A good story is a *cocktail* of ingredients: familiar elements, yes, but combined in non-obvious ways.

Can you exploit (and *subvert*) the norms of a genre to tell a *good story in very few words* – say, in an SMS message or a **tweet**?

**The Challenge: To Create a Novel Story using Familiar Elements**

# Effective Stories Suggest Much More Than They Actually Say and are found in every kind and genre of text

For sale: Oak writing desk, one careful owner.

**For sale:** Baby shoes, never used.

For sale: sewing machine, old,  
cracked spindle, \$50 ono.



## These Six Words are attributed to Ernest Hemingway as the shortest, saddest story one could ever tell

# A Whole New Genre: Six-Word Memoirs



I found my mother's suicide note.

*No flowers, no funeral, no nothing.*

I can't keep my own secrets.



The Flash-Fiction Genre is clearly suited to Twitter  
Check out: @6\_word\_memoirs

# The Novels-in-Three-Lines of Félix Fénéon

Early French modernist writer and cultural bricoleur



Check out: [@novelsin3lines](https://twitter.com/novelsin3lines) for 1000's of examples





**Félix Fénéon**  
@novelsin3lines



+ Follow

With a cheese knife, Coste, from the suburbs of Marseilles, killed his sister who, also a grocer, was his competition.

Fénéon was an anarchist, a symbolist, linguistic mischief-maker, an observer of the telling events in everyday life



**Félix Fénéon**  
@novelsin3lines



+ Follow

Misses Cabriet and Rivelle, of Plaine-Saint-Denis and Bagnolet, and M. Goudon of Saint-Denis, all drank: he cyanide, they laudanum.

Fénéon reported *reusable* themes ...



**Félix Fénéon**  
@novelsin3lines



+ Follow

His sheaves were often set on fire. Pinard, of Coligny, Loiret, kept watch, armed. Pénon passed by; firebug or not, he caught the bullet.



**Félix Fénéon**  
@novelsin3lines



+ Fol

In a tent near Aïn-Fakroun, a six-year-old Arab girl was incinerated by lightning, by the side of her mother, who was driven mad by it.

Jealousy, twisted love, tragic ends, rivalries, all understated so the reader tells the tale ...



**Félix Fénéon**  
@novelsin3lines

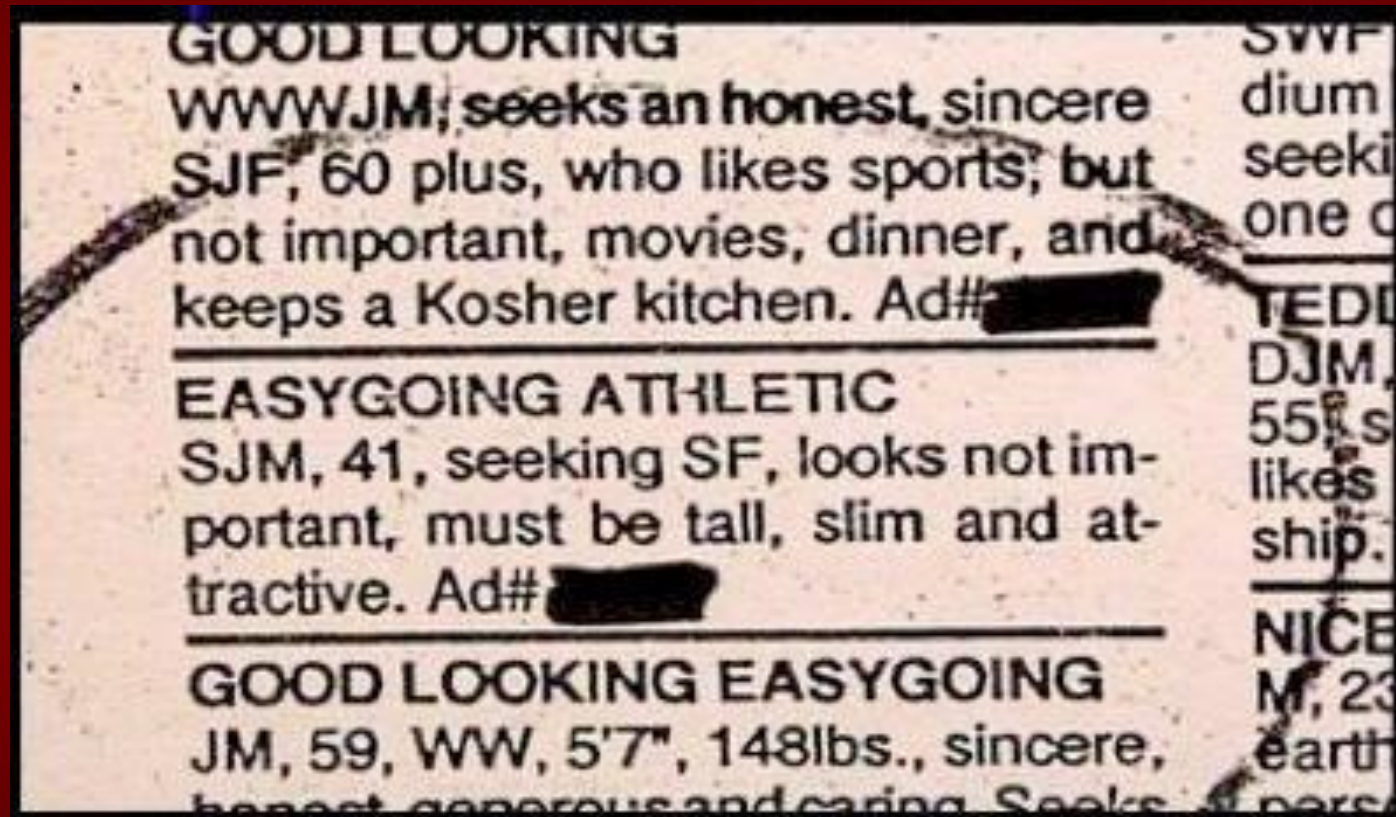


+ Follow

No one hanged the young Russian Lise Joukovsky; she hanged herself, and the Rambouillet magistrates have allowed her to be buried.

Death by burning, shooting, stabbing ...

**Personals ads are revealing windows into a person**  
**Like 6 word memoirs, they encourage concision and wit**



**Good tweets share many similarities with good personal ads**

# Personal Ads Can Allude to Other Genres, Domains



**WANTED: Somebody to go back in time with me. This is not a joke. P.O. Box 322, Oakview, CA 93022. You'll get paid after we get back. Must bring your own weapons. Safety not guaranteed. I have only done this once before.**



**Like tweets, ads can concisely evoke a story**

**\*This is a fictional ad from the film "Safety Not Guaranteed"**



# Unusual combinations can creatively obey and defy the conventions of the genre

I'm an athletic mature, independent, 33 yrs. old, with a youthful appearance of 23. I'm a single white male and a working professional in the research industry. I'm 5'10" tall, 175 lbs, with light brown hair and hazel eyes. I'm a non-drinker and non-smoker. I've never been married and have no dependants. Currently seeking a female companion who enjoys the outdoors and understands DNA replication. If interested in finding out more, call Box 1044.

**This ad implies a specific category for the writer  
(a Techie? a Nerd? A mad scientist?)**

SWM, evil on the outside, not-so-evil on the inside, seeks same, for long walks on beach, romantic movies, view to marriage. Contact Darth.

SWM, misunderstood, seeks spiritual connection with NS who loves cosplay, evil schemes and Star Wars. Be my Valentine. Contact Vader.

Tall, dark and handsome SWM, will reach high shelves for lucky lady who likes ballet and science fiction. Serious replies only, to D.V.

If you like Piña  
Coladas, and getting  
caught in the rain  
*rasp* If you're not into  
Yoda, if you have half  
a brain, *rasp* ...



# Can A System Be Creative Without Knowledge?



Creativity with words and ideas is like cookery: good dishes need good ingredients!

Systems that lack real knowledge (either of *domain* or of *world*) are not so much ***creative*** as ***merely generative***!

CC Systems Without Knowledge? **What a Crock!**



# So Use: Attribute Analysis

## **Darth Vader**

Gender: male

Categories: Fictional Villain, Fictional Father

Specific Domain: Star Wars, the Dark Side

General Domain: science fiction

Neg Qualities: evil, violent, unfeeling, malevolent, raspy, ruthless

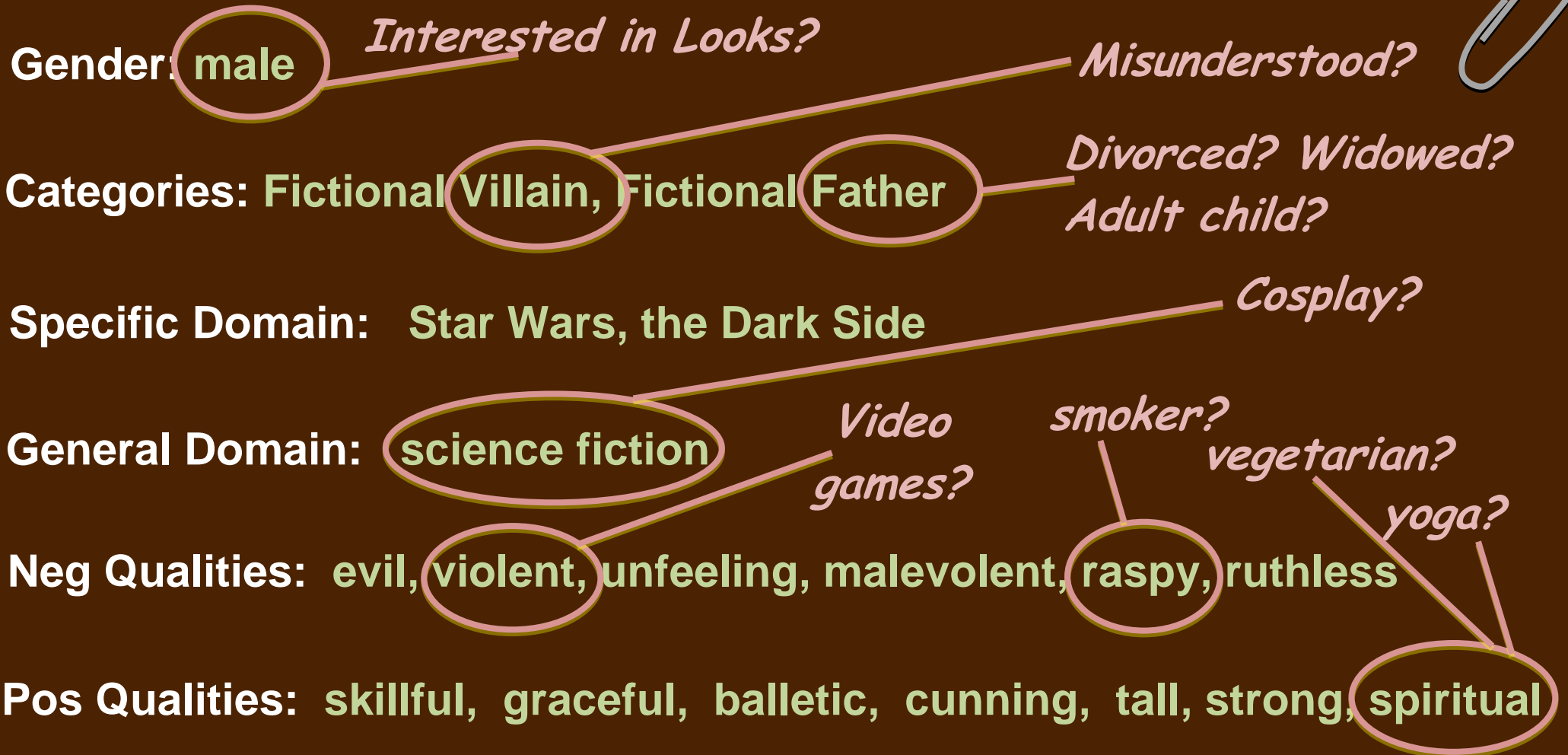
Pos Qualities: skillful, graceful, balletic, cunning, tall, strong, spiritual



**First, start with a straightforward inventory  
of character attributes and dimensions**

# Attribute Mapping

## Darth Vader



**We can map individual elements, on a general level,  
to assumptions about a personals-ad writer**

# Potential Soulmates

shared attributes,  
shared behaviors

**Bane**

Gender: **male** *Men Seeking Men?*  
*Villain Seeking Henchman?*

Categories: **Fictional Villain** Fictional Terrorist

Specific Domain: **DC Comics, Gotham** *Own lair?*

General Domain: **comics** *Non-smoker?*

Neg Qualities: **raspy**, unintelligible, **evil**, malevolent, bitter,  
twisted, ruthless, drug-dependent

Pos Qualities: muscular well-built strong, action-oriented athletic cunning



**Pair People Together based on Shared Attributes,  
Mutual Interests, Common Inferences**



**Must love cats.**



**Me**: charming,  
rich, ruthless, evil.  
**You**: beautiful and  
blonde, no cat  
allergies.

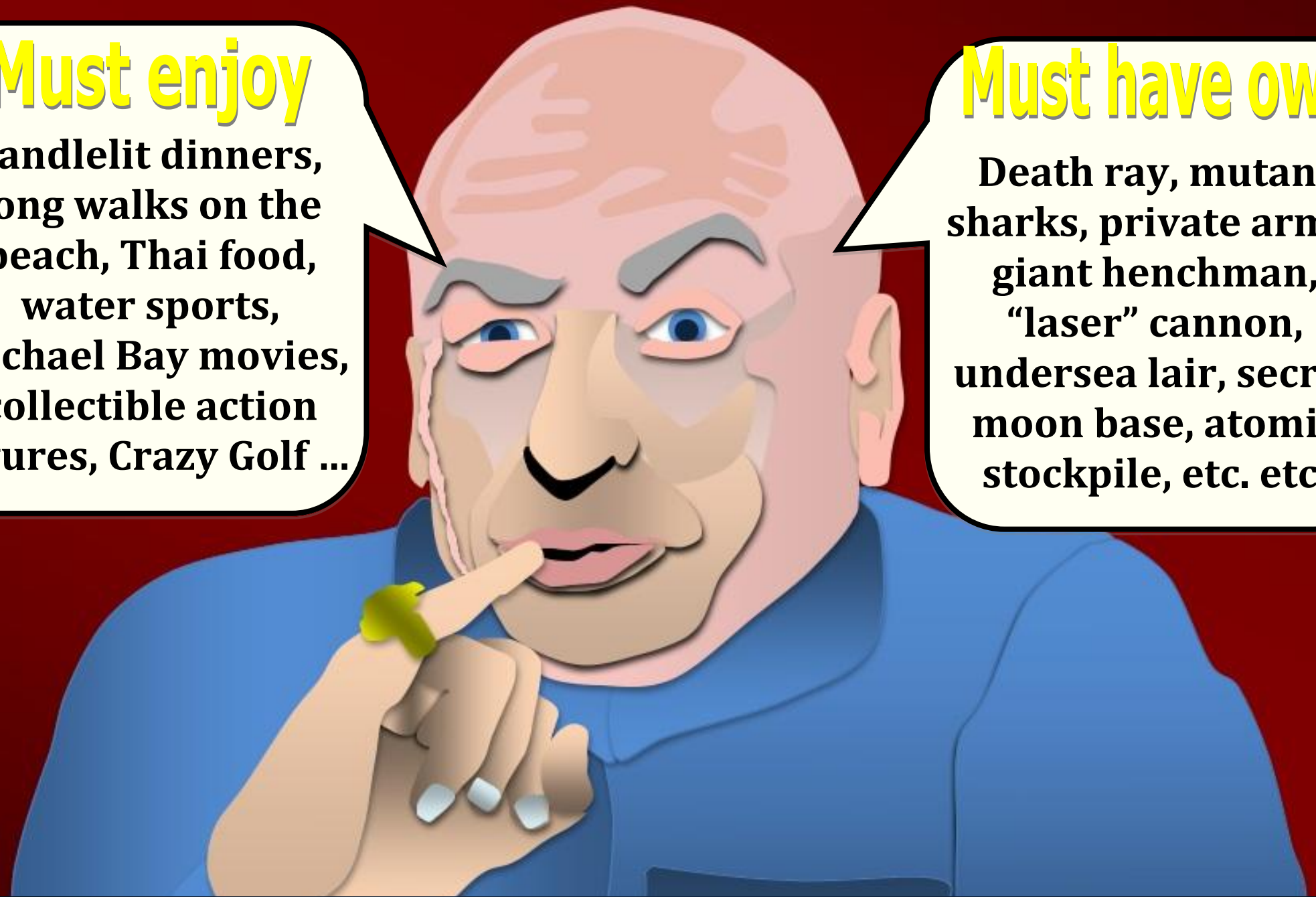
**Tap into stereotypes, to map qualities to expectations**  
**Play to and against type ...**

## **Must enjoy**

candlelit dinners,  
long walks on the  
beach, Thai food,  
water sports,  
Michael Bay movies,  
collectible action  
figures, Crazy Golf ...

## **Must have own**

Death ray, mutant  
sharks, private army,  
giant henchman,  
"laser" cannon,  
undersea lair, secret  
moon base, atomic  
stockpile, etc. etc.



**E.g., What would an "Evil" character want, love, need?**

# The Non-Official Characterization list

The NOC list contains a wealth of character knowledge

Check out: [The NOC List.xlsx](#)  
Knowledge your Twitterbot can exploit

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# **The Sordid, Coded World of "Personals" Adverts**

## **Supplement your knowledge with genre-specific tropes**

**TLC: Tender Loving Care**

**IRL: In Real Life**

**STD: Sexually Transmitted Disease**

**GF: Girlfriend**

**BF: Boyfriend**

**ISO: In Search Of**

**TYVM: Thank You Very Much**

**SWM: Single White Male**

**SBM: Single Black Male**

**Yo: Years Old**

**BBW: Big Beautiful Woman**

**LTR: Long Term Relationship**

**BF: Black Female**

**STR8: Straight**

**ASL: Age/Sex/Location**

**SASE: Self Address Stamped Envelope**

**TV: Transvestite**

**ND: Non-drinker**

**NS: Non-smoker**

**FWB: Friend With Benefits**

**NSA: No Strings Attached**

**TG: Transgendered**

**CD: Cross dresser**

**W/E: Well endowed**

**S/M: Sado-masochism**

**MWC: Married white couple**

**B&D: Bondage and discipline**

**BHM: Big Handsome Man**

**WLTm: Would Like To Meet**

**GSOH: Good Sense Of Humour**

**GHM: Gay Hispanic Male**

**GBM: Gay Black Male**

**DTE: Down to Earth**

**FTM: Female To Male**

**VGL: Very Good Looking**

**GWM: Gay White Male**

**GAM: Gay Asian Male**

**DL: Down Low**

**HWP: Height Weight Proportional**

**T4M: Transvestite looking For Men**

**SSBBW: Super-Sized Big Beautiful Woman**

**FFA: Fat Female Admirer**

**FA: Fat Admirer**

**W4W: Woman for Woman**

**W4MW: Woman for Man and Woman**

**W/S: Water Sports**

**TS: Transsexual**

**PNP: Party and Play**

**MW4W: Man and Woman for Woman**

**M4T: Male for Transvestite**

**M4M: Man for Man**

**Domme: Female Dominant**

**Bi: Bisexual**

**MBiC: Married bisexual couple**

**BB: Bare backing**

**BB: Bodybuilder**

**0420: Cannabis**

**VAS: Vasectomy**

**Subby: Submissive partner in BDSM**

**SBiM: Single Bisexual Male**

**RTS: Real-Time Sex**

**SSBHM: Super-Sized Big Handsome Male**

**MHC: Married Hispanic Couple**

**Het: Heterosexual**

**GWF: Gay White Female**

**GG: Genetic Girl**

**GF: Gay Female**

**D/s: Dominance and Submission**

**D/D: Drug and Disease**

**BiF: Bisexual Female**

**BMW: Big Mexican Woman**

**ASL: Age Stats Location**

**OFAC: Own Flat And Car**

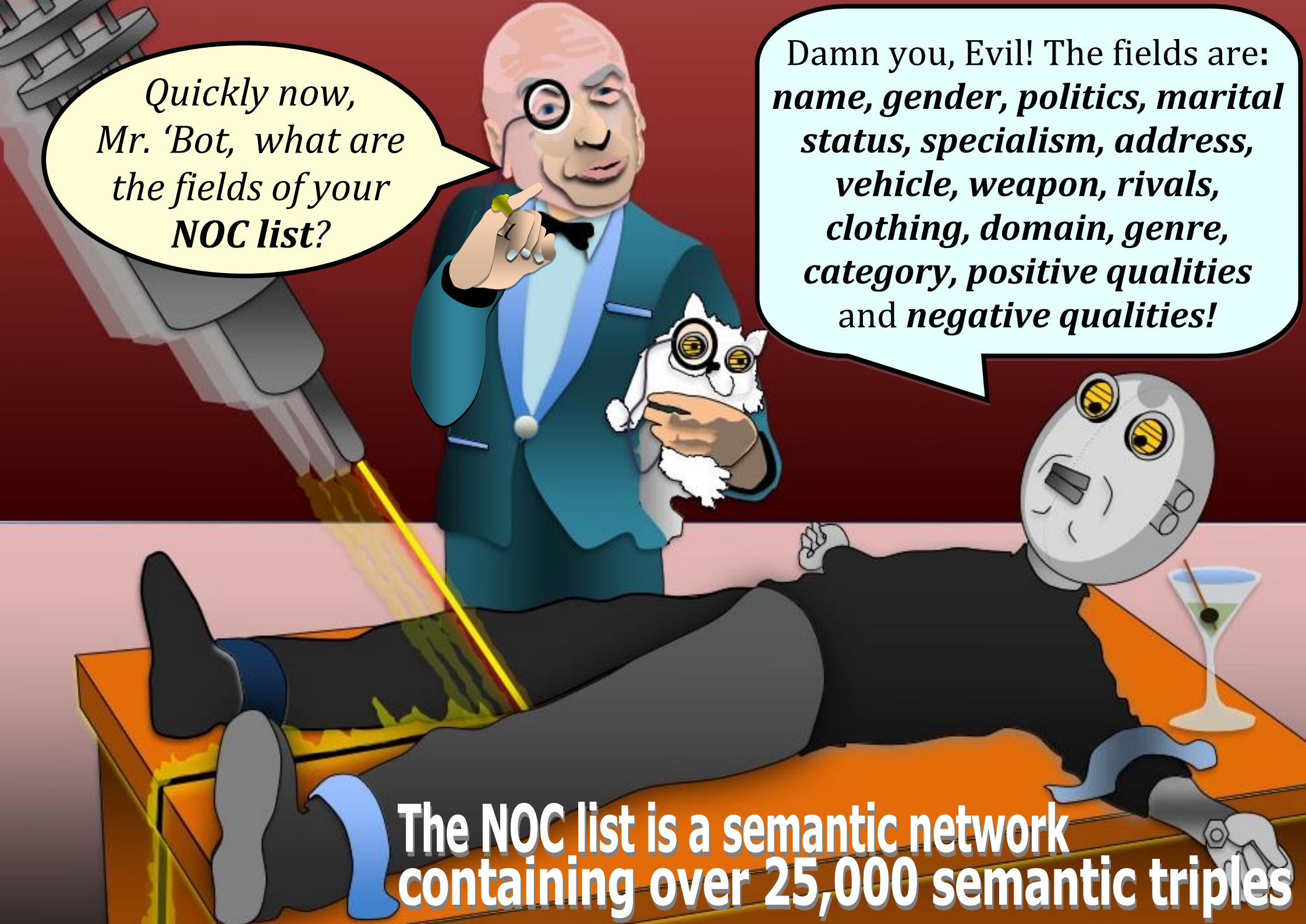
**OHAC: Own House And Car**

**DWM: Divorced White Male**

**DDF: Drug And Disease Free**

**SWS: Sex Without Strings**

**DWF: Divorced White Female**

A cartoon illustration featuring a man in a blue tuxedo with a white shirt and black bow tie, wearing a monocle and holding a small white owl with a monocle. He is pointing his finger. A robot with a silver head and yellow eyes lies on an orange table, looking up at him. A martini glass with a green drink and a black olive is on the table. A large mechanical arm is visible on the left. Two speech bubbles contain text, and a large text block is at the bottom.

Quickly now,  
Mr. 'Bot, what are  
the fields of your  
**NOC list?**

Damn you, Evil! The fields are:  
***name, gender, politics, marital  
status, specialism, address,  
vehicle, weapon, rivals,  
clothing, domain, genre,  
category, positive qualities  
and negative qualities!***

**The NOC list is a semantic network  
containing over 25,000 semantic triples**

**There are other ways of using our character knowledge**

Headlines also tap into our prior knowledge of people

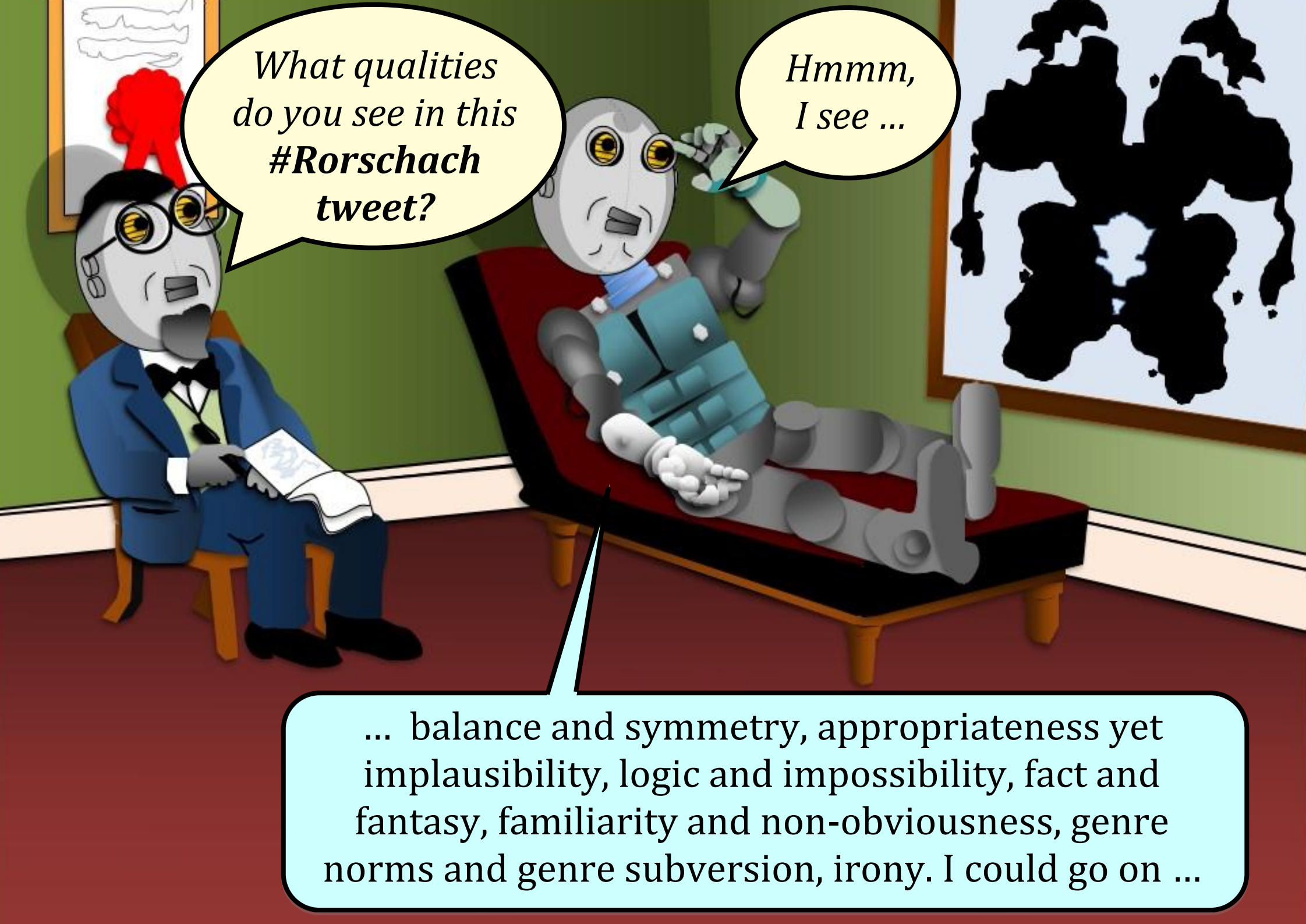
**Darth Vader Sued by Bane for Trademark Violation**

**My Night of Passion With Dr. Evil: Marge Simpson Tells All**

**NASA finds Face of "Al Pacino" on Mars**

**Russell Crowe to Star as Mother Teresa in New Movie**



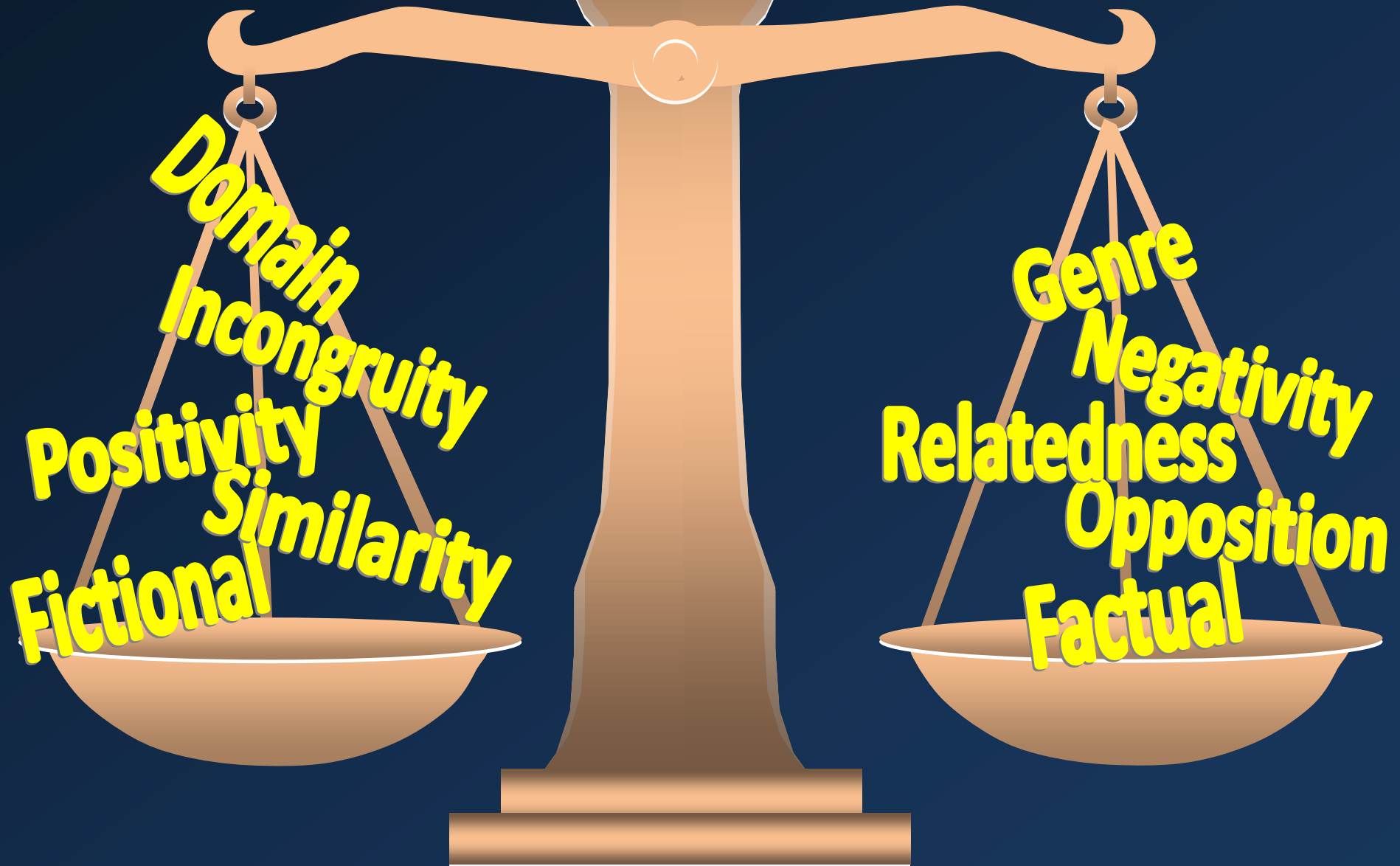


*What qualities  
do you see in this  
**#Rorschach**  
tweet?*

*Hmmm,  
I see ...*

... balance and symmetry, appropriateness yet implausibility, logic and impossibility, fact and fantasy, familiarity and non-obviousness, genre norms and genre subversion, irony. I could go on ...

Good tweets achieve a balanced use of knowledge  
**CC Systems deliberately strive for this balance**



**You have enough knowledge and data for the task**

**Now, put your own creative stamp on it**



**Ingenuity**



**Style**



**Aesthetic sensibility**



**Sweat Equity**

**Enrich the knowledge-base  
New dimensions**



**Stretch your imagination and the medium!**



# So, Many Ideas for Character-driven Twitterbots



*Find a soul mate*  
personals adverts

*Buying & Selling*  
personals adverts

*Crime reports*  
Breaking news

*Zombie* celebrities  
Apocalyptic humor

*Fight! Fight! Fight!*  
Celebrity slapdowns

*A witty metaphor*  
analogy, simile?

*Movie Pitches*  
casting suggestions

*Racing for pink-slips*  
Vehicle vs. Vehicle



*Tabloid Headlines*  
celebrity scandals



Sir, a woman's preaching is like  
a dog's walking on his **hind legs**.  
It is ***not done well***; but you are  
surprised to find ***it done at all!***

**Samuel  
Johnson**

**K-9**

How very ***old  
fashioned***, sir!  
Might you feel the  
same way about  
***machines?***

**Robot Dog**

**Sexist Pig**



**Mere  
Generation**

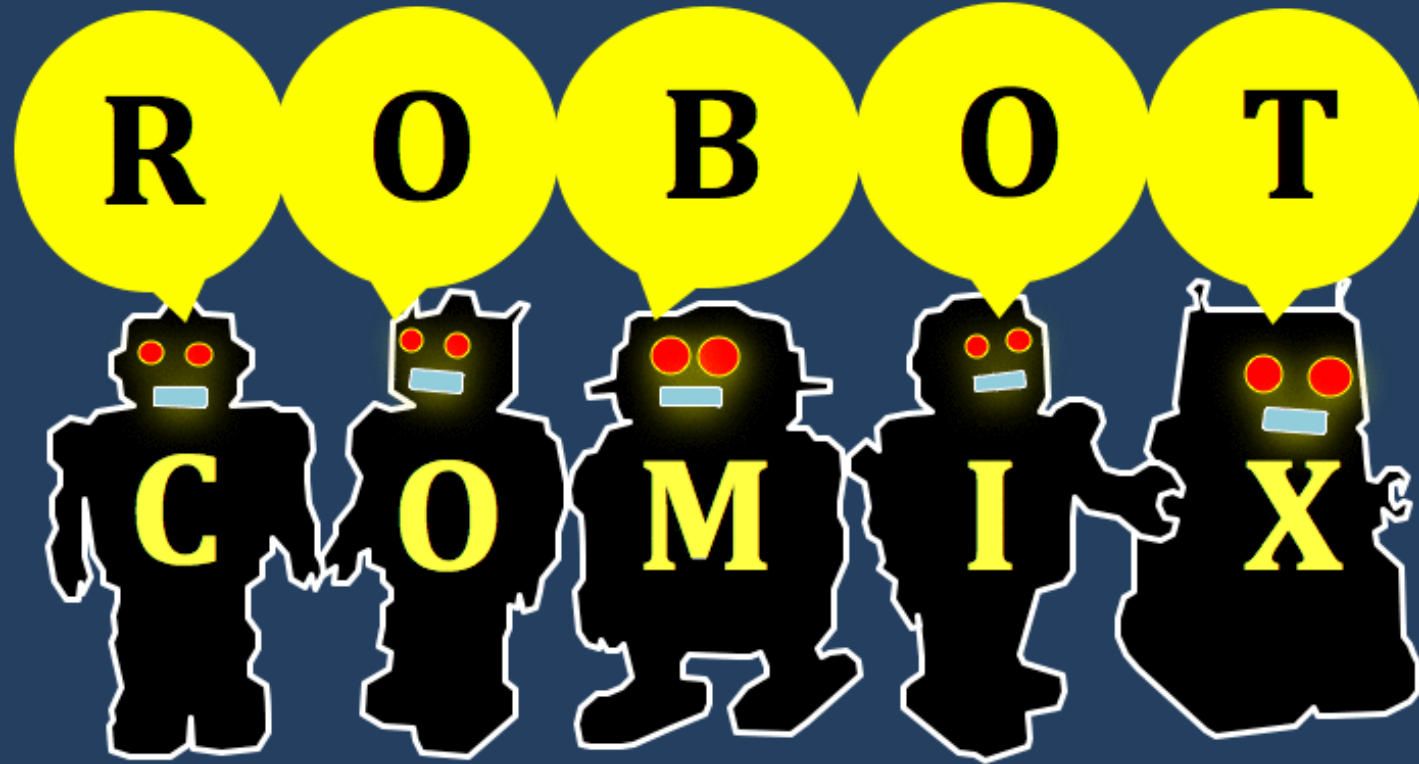
*Sigh, this  
dilemma  
seems all to  
familiar.*

**Pastiche**

**C.C.**

**Row, Row, Row Your Boat Very Carefully ...**





Web Comics That Transform Our  
Understanding of **Computers** and **Creativity**

For more comix on creativity: [RobotComix.com](http://RobotComix.com)