My
Journey to the Centre of Google Earth

Written by
SIMON SELLARS
&
Xiangyi Xu

2017. Melbourne

Stuart

chew
chew

OK, Let's start!

Content

(Actually I am not that interested in reading this, it is a task, ok?

So let me start reading as soon as possible.

It's just about 20 pages. I will finish it in a short time.

And ... Let's just skip this boring content ...

Yeah! one page done!)

"We want to create a digital mirror of the world." Google Earth Outreach geo-strategist Karin Tuxen-Bettman, aboard a Google boat photographing and mapping the Amazon, 2011

When you open Google Earth, it settles at the default elevation of 11,000 km above the planet. The effect is tranquil, partly from the soft-glow space panorama and partly from the sense of dis-

engagement. The crystal-clear imagery, supplied by NASA, depicts the world in a photoreal representation. It is the ultimate expression of what cartographers call the God's-eye view: the desire for absolute visual objectivity in maps, presenting every region of the globe in its proper place.

But maps lie. They naturalise the planet's boundaries and endpoints in ways that serve ulterior motives. The most popular map of the world, the Mercator projection, is a cartographic model of reality founded on a blatant misrepresentation. In the Mercator world,

Mercator 🔊

[mer-key-ter; for 1 also Flemish mer-kah-tawr]

noun

1. **Ger·har·dus** [jer-**hahr**-d*uh* s] /dʒər ˈhɑr dəs/,*Gerhard Kremer*,1512–94, Flemish cartographer and geographer.

adjective

1. noting, pertaining to, or according to the principles of a Mercator projection:

(Then I got messages ···)

> Hello, it is Evelyn from the dinner trip at Fitzroy :) still remember me?

(We talked for a while)

> yes, and I also really want to see the game agian...maybe I can go with you...emmmm

> That is cool

> I got the link here

> https://rmitlink.rmit.edu.au /Products/3074

(and I clicked the link)

LOGIN | REGISTER

RMIT UNIVERSITY | Link   🛒 0   ≡

—
Engaging Melbourne - AFL Melbourne vs St Kilda - Sunday 13th August 2017

(We finished the conversation)
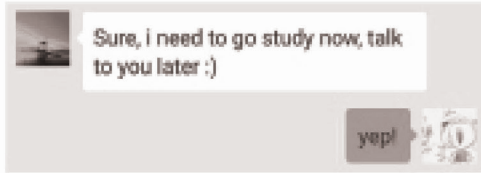
Sure, i need to go study now, talk to you later :)

yep!

countries are not relative to each other. The sizes of North American and European countries are wildly inflated, while those of third-world nations are greatly diminished. During the 1970s and 80s, the so-called "map wars" were fought, during which a new map, the Gall-Peters projection, was pitted against the Mercator, which stood accused of being a repressive symbol of Eurocentric colonialism.

Google Earth is more than the God's-eye view – more than

(A new message came)

Hi Xiang Yi 😬 what are your plans today, still want to go to Melbourne Museum? :–)

yeees! when will we go then? XY

Great! What about at 2pm? :—D

We had some coffee

and spent the whole afternoon visiting and chatting together and ...

Of course totally forgot the assignment.

(~~So~~ when I go back reading,

I forgot all ~~the~~ stuff, so

I think I need to read from

all over again.)

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engagement. The crystal-clear imagery, supplied by NASA, depicts the world in a photoreal representation. It is the ultimate expression of what cartographers call the God's-eye view: the desire for absolute visual objectivity in maps, presenting every region of the globe in its proper place.

But maps lie. They naturalise the planet's boundaries and endpoints in ways that serve ulterior motives. The most popular map of the world, the Mercator projection, is a cartographic model of reality founded on a blatant misrepresentation. In the Mercator world, countries are not relative to ea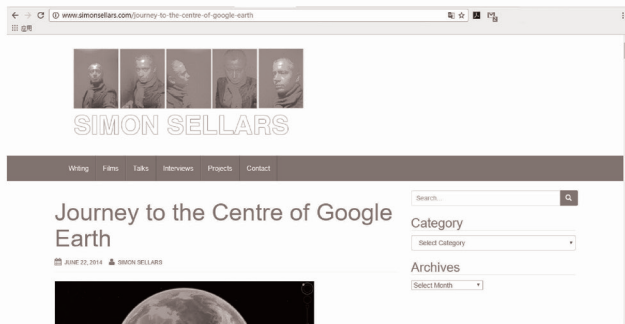ch other. The sizes of North American and European countries are wildly inflated, while those of third-world nations are greatly diminished. During the 1970s and 80s, the so-called "map wars" were fought, during which a new map, the Gall-Peters projection, was pitted against the Mercator, which stood accused of being a repressive symbol of Eurocentric colonialism.

(Too many words, so maybe I can find an online version ····)

(···· and put it into Google translate ····)
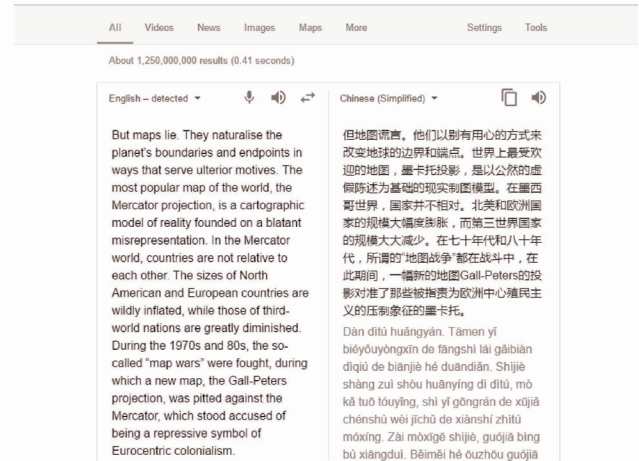
(··· and got a mess)

*(So maybe I just need
to read on my own ...)*

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Google Earth is more than the God's-eye view – more than just us mortals seeing through the eyes of God. In Google Earth, we are God. We see over, under, inside and out. We see into the beyond, with a second sight unavailable to our mortal selves. We see ghosts of dead friends and dead strangers. We see ourselves. If the colonial God's-eye view in Mercator maps is an uneasy settling of the planet (hoping the savages will stay in their place and not upset the pre-scribed order), then Google Earth, with its forking paths Google Maps and Google Street View, is a parallel world bleeding into this one.

"Copyright traps" are fake features cartographers insert into maps to catch plagiarists. If the map is copied and published without permission, it can be traced due to the inclusion of a street leading in the wrong direction, or a building that doesn't exist. In Street View, such impossible objects are a matter of course. Google boundaries are porous. They dissolve. I have never seen anything so beautiful in all my life as the melting freeways of the USA, the next nature of glitched-out Google projections. In Google Earth, images are spliced together, taken at different times of day. Sometimes you can

*(Wait !
I think I just saw
2 unread emails ...
Maybe they are really
important, I need to
check on that !
yes !
It won't take me for
too long time anyway.)*

RMIT
UNIVERSITY

Mail ▾

COMPOSE

Inbox (2)
Starred
Sent Mail
Drafts
More ▾

Xiangyi ▾

Sri Maharani Budi...
Sent a message

☐ ▾   ↻   More ▾

☐ ☆   **Jobs Posted By Companies You F**   ...ollow -   Posted By Companies You Follow Keeping you in the   on amazing op   **11:46**

☐ ☆   **Jobs that might spark your interes**   ...t - Jobs in your area matching your profession today Web / E-Commerce Designer - The Working   **11:42**
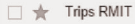
☐ ★   Trips RMIT   Melbourne Aquarium - Final Confirma   ...ation - Hi Everyone, Thank you for booking on the Melbourne Aquarium for tomorrow Wednesday   **11:19**

1–50 of 558   ‹   ›   ⚙ ▾

*(OK, not that important.
Maybe go back a little
bit and read again...)*

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see the joins, where the process hasn't fully knitted. It might be an RGB-separated cloud of light surrounding an object, or a pink-yellow pixel-glitch tornado rising to the sky. Sometimes in Street View, if your connection is slow, when moving through a city, the interlacing mechanism is revealed. You can see the front of a building sliding in over the background, compressing the architecture into a narrow band of light so that it appears to be a paper-thin facade slipping into place. Reality becomes a stage set, the scenery changing before your eyes.

Los Angeles: the melting freeways of the USA.
Archived image from Clement Valla's Postcards from Google Earth.

*(This is quite cool, maybe I
can find more ! Let's do it !)*
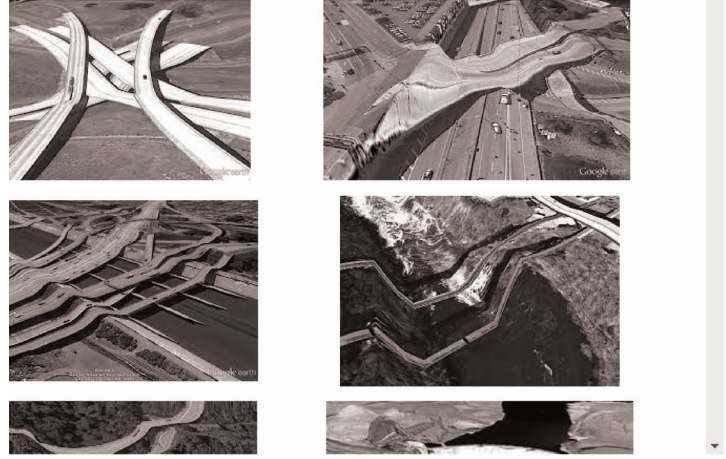
(… and I enjoyed for more
than 30 minutes …)

(I really need to go
back reading, otherwise
it would be endless...
But ...   maybe ...
   I need to listen to
some music to cheer
me up and I know there
are some
~~it~~   ~~good~~ options ...

just   need   to   search
"music/songs for reading",
and ...   Tada!)
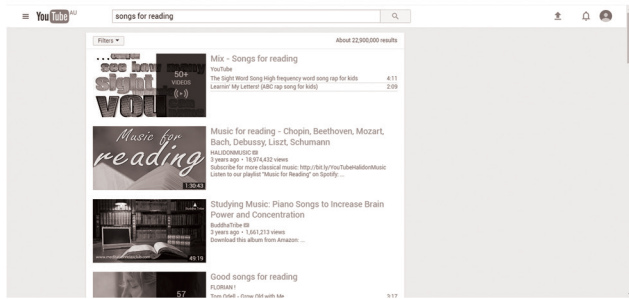
The first list is for kids, so maybe I can start from the second list. Classical ... which is quite good to me ... Ok, now with some hot tea and sunshine, It's perfect for reading.)

Archived image from Jon Rafman's 9 Eyes project.

Sometimes, the Google Earth algorithm maps one texture over another to produce beguiling landscapes. A freeway overpass, suspended high above the ground, follows precisely the undulating terrain of a large valley, producing a contorted, fluid road system from another dimension. Clouds smear over the contours of a mountain, like a form-fitting, fluffy white blanket. Skyscrapers are laid flat against the ground, yet, impossibly, impart a three-dimensional sense of height. Google Earth is a digitised Mercator, squashing disproportionate dimensions into a totalising system with its own internal logic (Google Maps are actually based on a Mercator variant). When Apple's iPhone maps also began spewing out strange new topologies at a rapid rate, the company was roundly mocked, yet I thought them immensely poetic, a world I would very much like to live in: Steve Jobs' reality distortion field.

As a child, I was fascinated with world maps, which were always Mercator. It wasn't until my teenage years that I realised Greenland was not twice as large as Australia, as the Mercator projection asserts, but that Australia in reality was three times larger than

Greenland. My daughter is two years old and already fascinated with my iPhone, which often displays Google and Apple maps, following my obsession. Perhaps she will spend the next few years thinking it's entirely natural for freeways to dip and bend across the landscape like straps of liquorice. Google Earth may be a digital Mercator, but it does not lie. It has no need. It lays everything bare and it can afford to, for its weapon is seduction.

The Google camera sees everything, even that which is invisible to the naked eye. Recently, Luboš Motl, a Czech blogger, wrote about how he would feel an uncomfortable tingling in his buttocks, like many ants stinging him, when riding his bicycle under certain power lines. He noted that his bicycle seat has a hole in it, revealing exposed metal just a few centimetres away from his body. Combined with his sweat from the bike ride, he surmised that he must have been conducting an unusually high electrical field through his body generated by the power lines. He posted screen grabs from Street View that appeared to confirm this hypothesis. The images displayed bright cyan and pink clouds following the power lines under which he rode, presumably a revelation of the supercharged electromagnetic field that had infiltrated his being with such a baffling sensation.

Google Street View: power line anomaly. Czech Republic, 2011.

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Google Street View, power line anomaly, Czech Republic, 2011.

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Ahhhhhhhh h h h h h h h h

Who

am

I

?

Where

are

we

?

I just answered a phone call?

What did I say? Did I say sth wrong

Who called me? A Man? A woman?

Errr... Is it an important

Any requirements from me?

Maybe it was a wrong call ... Since I don't know

Should I call back?

What to do now?   can't believe it.

Really? Really?   Why I was sleeping?

What time is it? In the morning? afternoon?

Ahhhhhhhhhh hh hh ...

Maybe I need to call back.

Am I still in the dream?

Is it real? Should I believe in this

Is this moment real?   Is this life real?

In trouble?   Am I real?

What What What should I do now?

(Maybe I need to call back.

oh ... make a call ...

Errr ... maybe not ...

I prefer texting or ...

Perhaps I can figure out

who phoned me online ...)

OR ...

maybe he/she

will call back

again.

yep !

Reading !

Reading !

Reading !

Reading !

Reading !

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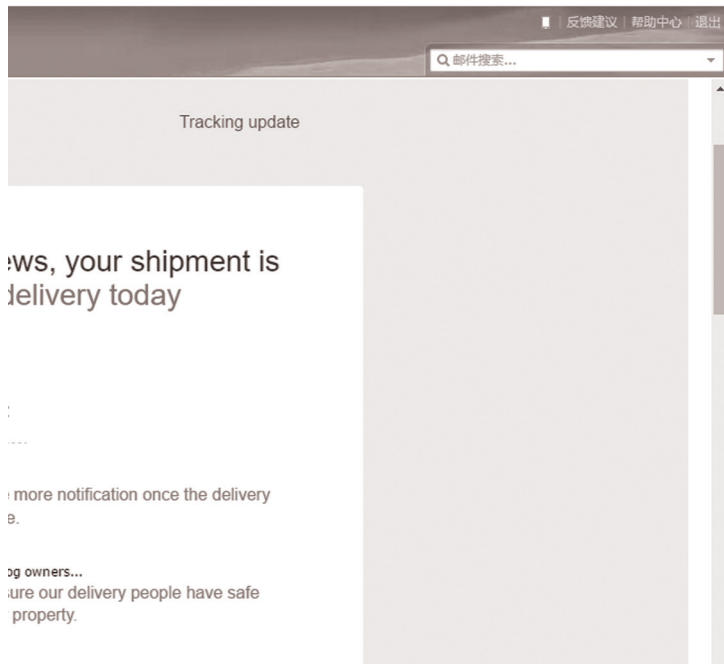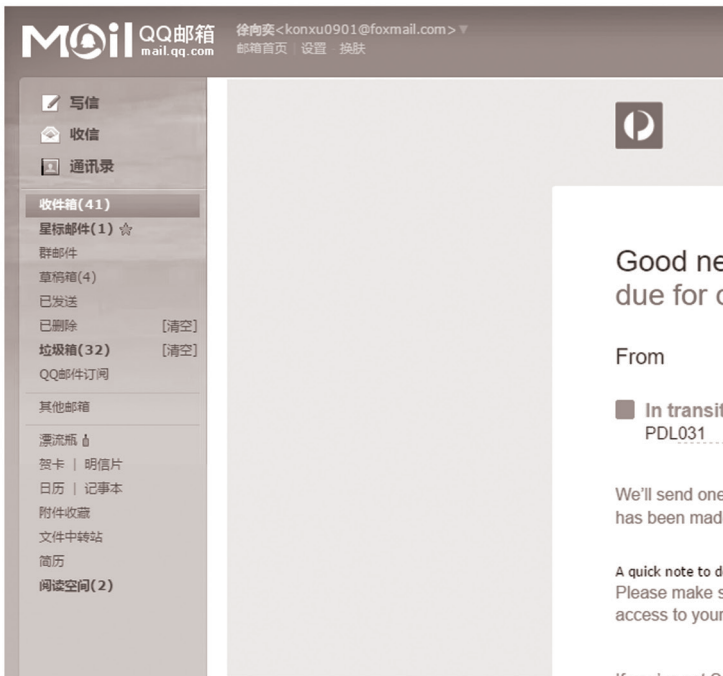

Google Street View: power line anomaly. Czech Republic, 2011.

(You know what, I might
can find some clues of
who made the phone call.
Yes, who knows?

Let me check ```
Oh, one new mail ```)

徐向奕<konxu0901@foxmail.com> ▼
邮箱首页 设置 换肤

✏ 写信
✉ 收信
📇 通讯录

收件箱(41)
星标邮件(1) ☆
群邮件
草稿箱(4)
已发送
已删除   [清空]
垃圾箱(32)   [清空]
QQ邮件订阅

其他邮箱

漂流瓶
贺卡 ｜ 明信片
日历 ｜ 记事本
附件收藏
文件中转站
简历
阅读空间(2)

⊙

| 反馈建议 | 帮助中心 | 退出

🔍 邮件搜索...   ▼

Tracking update

Good ne   ews, your shipment is
due for c   delivery today

From

⬛ **In transit**
PDL031

We'll send one   e more notification once the delivery
has been mad   e.

A quick note to d   og owners...
Please make s   ure our delivery people have safe
access to your   property.

If you've got S

*(Oh ¨
another new mail.)*

M@il QQ邮箱
mail.qq.com

徐向奕<konxu0901@foxmail.com> ▼
邮箱首页 | 设置 | 换肤

| 反馈建议 | 帮助中心 || 退出

🔍 邮件搜索...

📝 写信
✉ 收信
🖼 通讯录

收件箱(50)
星标邮件(1) ☆
群邮件
草稿箱(4)
已发送
已删除   [清空]
垃圾箱(35)   [清空]
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其他邮箱

漂流瓶 🍶
贺卡 | 明信片
日历 | 记事本
附件收藏
文件中转站
简历
阅读空间(2)

Collection notification

Please collect your □ item(s) from

CARLTON SOUTH POST□ T OFFICE
113-119 LYGON STREET, CAR□ LTON VIC, 3053

View opening hours

When you collect your deliver□ ry, please bring:

- photo ID
- proof of address
- this notification (if you□ ve also received a physical card, you can disregard it).

Item details

The following item(s) from □ require collection over the counter:

Tracking number:
PDL0317272010009
8.2kg   58 x 40 x 22c□ m

Consignment PDL031□   containing **1** item(s)

(I thought I
would save my time
by shopping online ...

ok, let me check
my schedule ...

Hmmm ...

Maybe Saturday ...)

(Errr ...

Why can't they
just give me the
thing ? ? ?

⌐ ⌐※   )

Anyway

ᴜᴜ ᴵ

Reading!

Reading!

Reading!

Reading!

Reading!

Archived image from Jon Rafman's 9 Eyes project.

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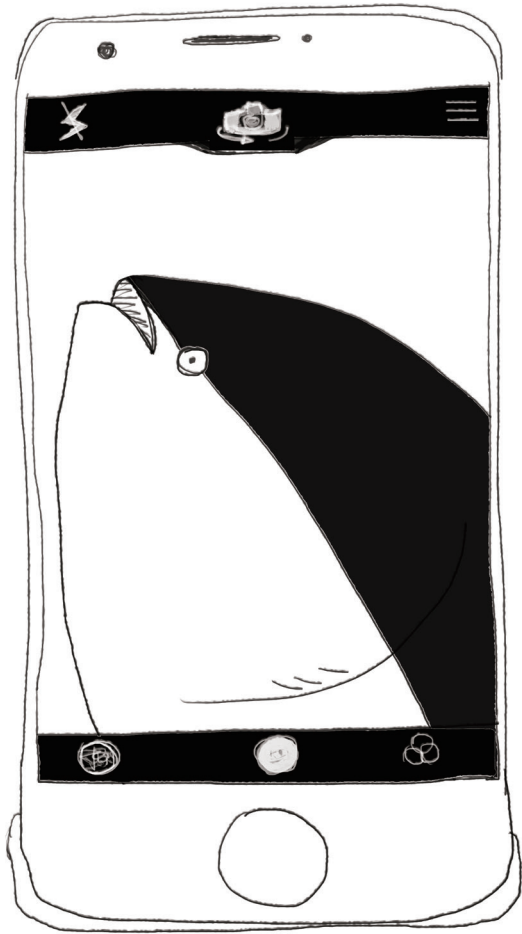
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Google Street View: power line anomaly. Czech Republic, 2011.

You need to focus! You!

Unsurprisingly, Street View even sees ghosts. Inside this strange mechanism, I flick a switch and zoom in to my childhood home, which I sold recently after my parents were taken ill. I look into our former backyard and see my father there. I try to get closer but I am repelled by the absolute limits of the zoom function. Dad's face is duly blurred but he is walking purposefully. There is no sign of the broken hip that made him reliant on a walking frame, no sign of the rapidly advancing symptoms of dementia that now afflicts him. He is frozen in time-sickness. As I advance to the next frame, his pixels are squeezed through an interlaced crack in the algorithm. I am lost between worlds, like a louse trying to find a crack of daylight in a crumpled bed sheet. Everything passes through us now: electromagnetic waves; tweets bouncing from mobile phone towers through our bodies; images of our dead and dying loved ones. The machine teaches us how to remember.

My father at home. Google Earth, Melbourne, Australia, 2011.

I float in space, watching the Earth from 11,000 km out, the God's-eye view. Greenland, Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland… pinpricks of light on the Google projection. They are all linked in my mind. Ever since I was a child, I've always wanted to visit Northern Europe. There is something about the landscape that inspires great wonder in me. Perhaps it was that childhood perception of Greenland as this enormous, mythical landmass, even bigger than Australia, almost completely filled with ice and snow. Now, I have the chance. My first stop is Norway. I patch into the console and spiral down into the ground, into Oslo's Bjørvika district and the Barcode Project, the controversial high-rise redevelopment in a former docklands area.

World War Two bunker (Atlantic Wall). Google Earth, Ostend, Belgium, 2009.

I have a Norwegian friend, and she tells me the Barcode Project represents a city in a permanent state of near future, convenience hardwired into its new building projects at the expense of conservation; a new-rich decadence. The Barcode is a Ballardian development, she suggests, reminiscent of the worlds of J.G. Ballard, especially his novels Cocaine Nights and Super-Cannes, which document urban decadence hidden behind sleek architecture, powered

Unsurprisingly, Street View even sees ghosts. Inside this strange mechanism, I flick a switch and zoom in to my childhood home, which I sold recently after my parents were taken ill. I look into our former backyard and see my father there. I try to get closer but I am repelled by the absolute limits of the zoom function. Dad's face is duly blurred but he is walking purposefully. There is no sign of the broken hip that made him reliant on a walking frame, no sign of the rapidly advancing symptoms of dementia that now afflicts him. He is frozen in time-sickness. As I advance to the next frame, his pixels are squeezed through an interlaced crack in the algorithm. I am lost between worlds, like a louse trying to find a crack of daylight in a crumpled bed sheet. Everything passes through us now: electromagnetic waves; tweets bouncing from mobile phone towers through our bodies; images of our dead and dying loved ones. The machine teaches us how to remember.

My father at home. Google Earth, Melbourne, Australia, 2011.

I float in space, watching the Earth from 11,000 km out, the God's-eye view. Greenland, Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden,

Finland… pinpricks of light on the Google projection. They are all linked in my mind. Ever since I was a child, I've always wanted to visit Northern Europe. There is something about the landscape that inspires great wonder in me. Perhaps it was that childhood perception of Greenland as this enormous, mythical landmass, even bigger than Australia, almost completely filled with ice and snow. Now, I have the chance. My first stop is Norway. I patch into the console and spiral down into the ground, into Oslo's Bjørvika district and the Barcode Project, the controversial high-rise redevelopment in a former docklands area.

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(impatient with
all the words, so
I start to ... just
see all the images)

My father at home. Google Earth, Melbourne, Australia, 2011.

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Archived image from Jon Rafman's 9 Eyes project.

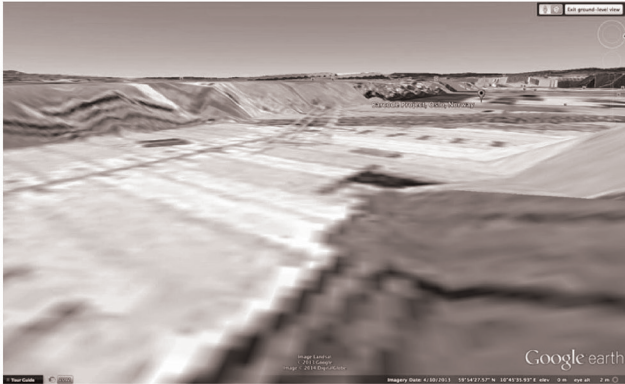Barcode Project. Google Earth, Oslo, Norway, 2009.

PricewaterhouseCoopers building, Barcode Project. Google Earth, Oslo, Norway, 2009.

Underpass, Rostockergata, opposite the Barcode construction zone.
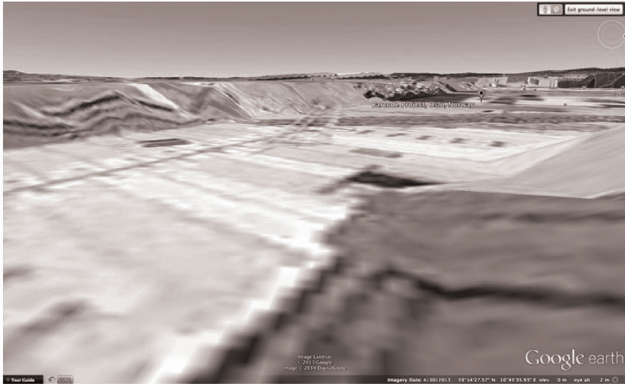Google Earth, Oslo, Norway, 2009.

Melbourne Shocklands. Google Earth, 2010.

Oslo: through the eyes of machines. Google Earth, , 2013.

Google Street View anomaly outside my home.
Google Earth, Melbourne, Australia, 2009.

Oslo: through the eyes of machines. Google Earth, , 2013.

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That's it?!

Really?

(still cannot get
the idea of the essay.
So... go back and
read again ...)

by a deviant human psychology mutated by technological systems. Soon I will be in Oslo in real time, in the real world, to give a talk on Ballard, surveillance culture and cinema. Then, I will be able to test my contact's hypothesis for myself, but for now all I have to see with are my Nine Eyes.

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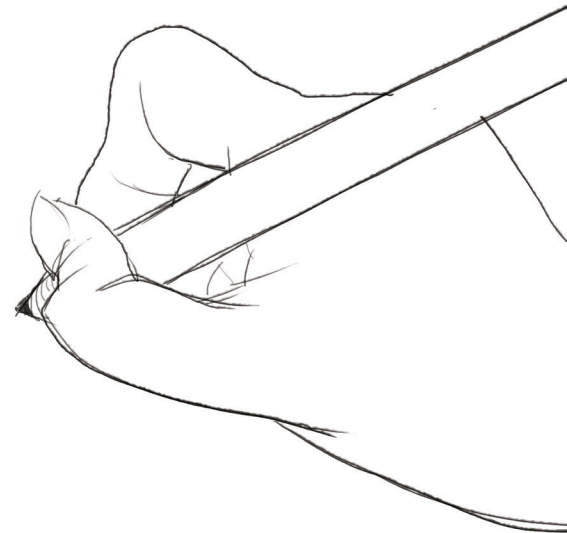
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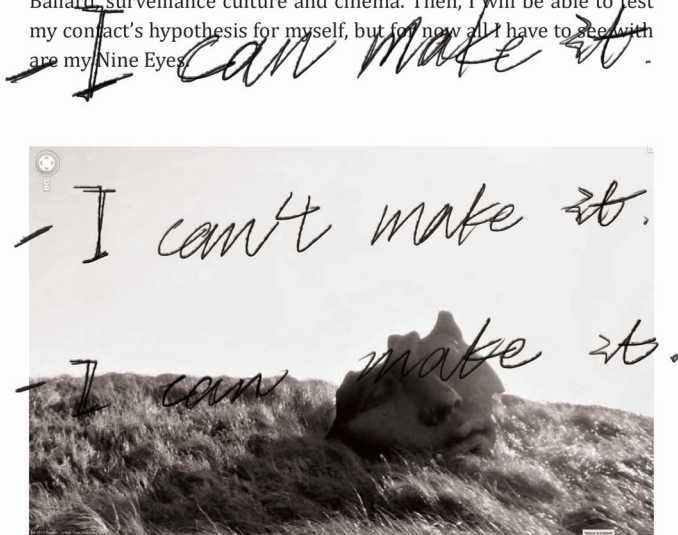

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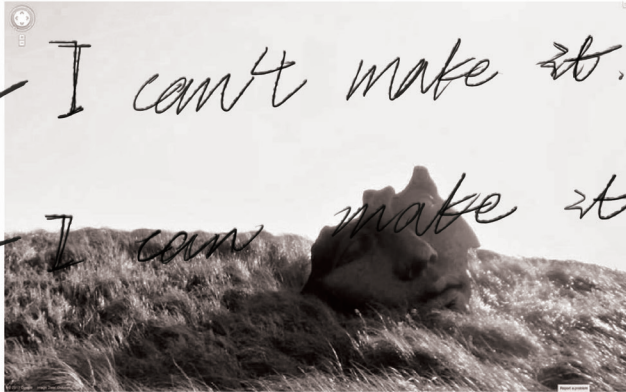Archived image from Jon Rafman's 9 Eyes project.

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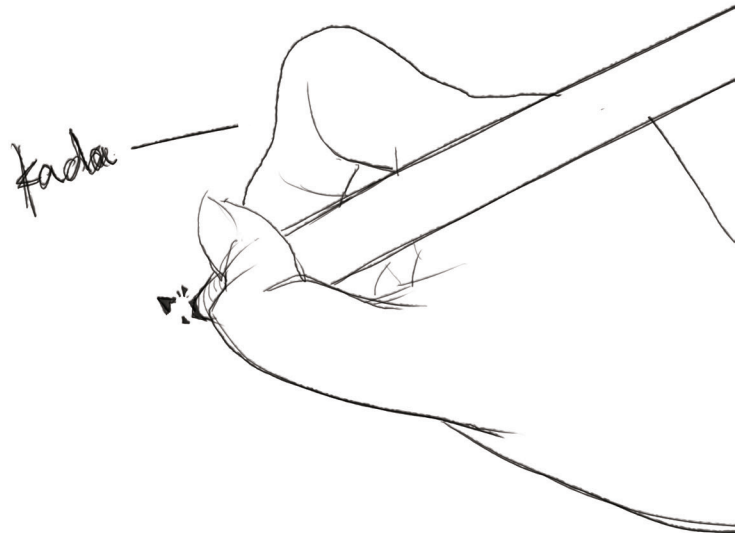are my Nine Eyes.

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Stuart,

Why should

I read this?

Why? why?

Why?

I can't finish it.

Really ... Really...

I mean it.

Stuart Stuart Stuart Stuart S
stuart stuart stuart Stuart Stuart
stuart stuart stuart Stuart St
uart Stuart Stuart Stuart Stuar
Stuart Stuart Stuart Stuart Stuar
Stuart Stuart Stuart Stuart S
Stuart Stuart Stuart Stuart Stuart S
Stuart Stuart Stuart Stuart Stu
Stuart Stuart Stuart Stuart S
Stuart Stuart Stuart Stuart Stuart
Stuart Stuart Stuart Stuart Stuart St

I can't

make it !

Really !
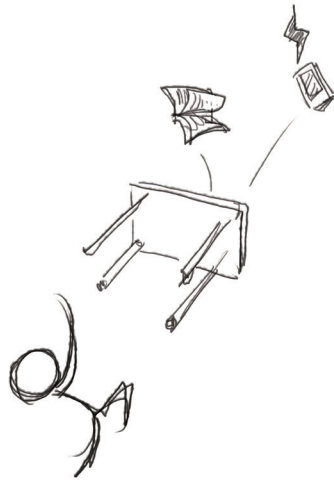
(Thankfully, I got messages
from Mars···)

Mars
最后上线 于今天上午10:13

I hope you had a fun day with it
下午8:22

Thank you for sharing 下午8:22

How are you feeling today by the
way?
下午8:22

it was really fun! 下午8:29 ✓✓

im all good today ang Rubin went to
the open day voluntary training with
me~
下午8:30 ✓✓

I got the email from the comic studio
and I replied that I am in
下午8:30 ✓✓

That's fantastic your keeping busy
下午8:31

And I'm so happy you are feeling good
today because u deserve to be happy
下午8:31

Are you happy?

Yes!

(Except the reading
task··· orz)
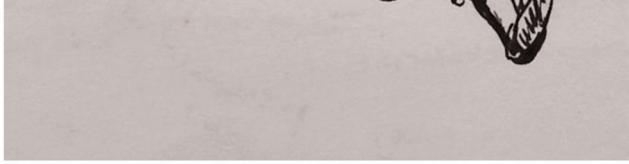
konxu0901 Did you also have a nice Saturday today?
I had a great lunch with my friends and shared them with my dumplings and stories~
As lovely Mars said: "I'm so happy you are feeling good today because u deserve to be happy."
and...... today I decided to be one of Squishface! I will work with other crazy comic lovers to draw more for fun!
Yes! thats a new start!

(Really like Mars' words, so... I put it on my Instagram. I know. if I don't post on social media, things still happen life still goes on. But I still want to post the news. Yep! I just want to do that! Though nobody cares, I still want to " make an anouncement ".)

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What will Mars feel of posting her words on social media? Will she feel happy about it? Then, I will be able to test How would others feel when they see this? Will they understand?

when will my phone ring?

Archived image from Jon Rafman's 9 Eyes project.

My feeling? Her feeling? Our feeling? Will she like the photo? Will she write back to me? Will others leave me some messages or even stories about this? Will others feel I am strange? What feedback will I get? Is that not right to use friend's words like this? What should I do if she does not like this? Will she hate me? Will we still be friends? Ahhh so stressful. Why didn't she reply to me? Is she mad? Did she see the message? Did she see the post? Should I delete my post? Oh my God! What should I do now? Ahhh!

All I ask for is just a message! A reply, a piece of feedback! Please please Please! Just a message that let me know you feel about it. All I want is just a message from you. Could you/Will you give me or not? This feeling would kill me. Why your didn't reply me? Why there's no new message? Is there something wrong with my phone? Come on, come on! You can send me anything, even just a fake smile, ok? Please please please! Don't let me wait for too long. Please help me. Just one little step. I need to check my phone, maybe it went out of battery or something wrong about it. How can't I get the message? Oh my god. I need to check again. Yes! someone like it! Oh it's two, three! Yes! But why she reply to me? Is everything good? Did she meet something trouble? Should I call back and ask? Or should I just wait longer? I'm almost crazy.

It's been 2 minutes! Oh... Such a long time! Let me log out first and log in again. Shit! Still no new message! Ahhhhhhh! What should I do? Should I delete the post now? Should I call and ask? Should I invite other friends to check if she's ok? Oh please please. Maybe I pretend like I'm not interested, or I am not waiting, the message would come itself. Like when I want to find something, it would be always easier when I don't need it. ... a blank wall... Because of this, Zanni thinks Google is building a "time machine" that will allow us to see cities unborn. He believes Google has been saving and storing Street View layers since the project began in 2007, with the aim of eventually allowing us to traverse a particular area back in time. In the near future, a version of me will browse the Barcode Project, reducing the opacity of the various layers of time stacked on top of each other, allowing the earliest ones, the girders and steel of the unbuilt Barcode high-rises, to fade away and gradually take flesh as their blue-and-green pixelated facades slide into view.

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_____mars_____ 👌👍✊✌️

Barcode Project. Google Earth, Oslo, Norway, 2009.

PricewaterhouseCoopers building, Barcode Project. Google Earth, Oslo, Norway, 2009.

People are waiting to live and work in the Barcode Project. In fact, they are already there, we just can't see them yet – the layer is hidden. Photoshop tools. Deselect the eye symbol. I can't see the layer anymore. I can't clone the layer. I feel disorientated. Something's not right. I can see the joins. They don't match. There is no synergy, no match between the old and new. I can't gauge it. The scale is wrong. I try to get closer to two women walking past the Barcode construction zone but they literally disappear before my eyes the closer I get. The connection is lost. I am two frames into the future, and there are no people in the Barcode Project. Only strange shapes and weird colours.

I'm inside this bizarre machine again, and I turn around. I let it turn me around, and I see a low-slung underpass, an isosceles triangle of light next to Rostockergata, the main street lining the construction zone. In this crack between worlds, I see layers of history, discarded and forgotten. Reams of graffiti, old soup cans, a smashed TV set, a disfigured bicycle, torn paper, mattresses. I see two young men, one bearded, the other wearing a hoodie, immersed in conversation, squatting behind a pile of rubble. I must look closely to see them, zooming in at the maximum. None of this exists now in reality, not in these coordinates; the images are datestamped "2009". When I first tried to find information on the Barcode Project, I Googled "Rostockergata". The first result was an entry on Wiki Maps: "This place was deleted. It will be removed from all search engines in a few weeks." It is an appropriate requiem. I found a Norwegian blog that mourned the loss of Rostockergata's old waterfront character, paved over by the shiny new Barcode reality. In the comments, a reader wrote: "Rostockergata forsvinner ikke! Den skal reetableres mellom Dnbnor byggene i Barcoderekken." Using (what else?) Google Translate, I understood this to mean: "Rostockergata can live: just relocate it in the sliver of space between the Barcode buildings.' There, it will be resurrected as an historical simulacrum, flat and substanceless.

In the construction zone, on the green-and-blue facade of the PricewaterhouseCoopers building, I see fake perspective tricks worked into the building's skin. This type of game is always a con, a way for architects to ignore the lived experience of a city by focusing attention on the bling of a building. Pure illusion. It does not reflect reality, only itself, like two mirrors distorting each other into infinity. In Melbourne, where I live, there is a similar development, the Dock-

我的夢想是做任何事都沒有時間限制

唉

以前明明很多的

好久沒有多出來的時間這個概念了

你最近一次為時間太多犯愁是在什麼時候時候

我大四時候還有這種感覺，但工作到現在再也沒有過了

不知道是我主觀維度變了還是大家都變了

大學因為時間用不完而焦慮

想盡辦法去殺時間

現在一會兒一天就過去了

怎麼辦呀

✳ My dream is to do everything with unlimited time

(sigh)

I used to have them a lot
It's been a lot time that I don't have the feeling like that

When was your last time to worry about too much time?

I had that feeling till the final year of my university, but it disappeared since I began to work.
I don't know if I am the only one.

I felt stressed of having too much time when I was in university

I tried many ways to kill my time
But now, the day passed so quickly.

What should we do?

What
should
We do
?

We are
running
out
of
time !

lands Precinct (or "Shocklands", as I prefer it). Like the Barcode Project, it's a redeveloped industrial waterfront area in the city centre. Like Barcode, its buildings are designed so close to each other they create narrow passages between them. Urbanists call such spaces SLOAP: Spaces Left Over After Planning. The Shocklands are hostile to urban life and human scale. The SLOAP there forms hyperactive wind tunnels that repel all street-level activity through constant wind motion and noise. Instead of designing sites for public interaction from the start, the SLOAP is what we get, and the architects can always claim: "There is your public space."

Underpass, Rostockergata, opposite the Barcode construction zone.
Google Earth, Oslo, Norway, 2009.

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When work started on the Barcode Project, the remains of nine wrecked ships were discovered, dating from the early 16th century. No trace of this history remains in the new buildings, except that tangentially aquatic blue-and-green palette. In the Shocklands, the old maritime culture is reduced to the shape of a row of high-rises designed to look like the prows of ships, or abridged with fibreglass anchors, rope and sailor caps decorating the shells of plastic cafes and restaurants. These establishments are named to provide the final touches to a copy of an original that never existed: Cap'n's Cafe; Steam Packet Restaurant; Mariners Tavern. This is the ultimate expression of the terminal logic suggested by the Rostockergata blog. Let's call it "zombie urbanism": what happens when an area of urban life is killed off then reanimated under external control (following the old-style zombie trope, whereby the dead are woken from the grave and controlled by witch doctors). What made the area vibrant in the past is sucked out and re-injected into a distortion of its former self. The old way of life is remaindered. The old buildings that could be salvaged are completely gutted, surviving in traces as a grotesquery.

Buildings face away from the sun, and the "instant city" effect creates cold, empty streets that go nowhere, or have no organic relationship to the buildings that have been erected. Streets exist only to separate buildings. The main human functions are spending

Quick! Quick! Quick!

You really really need to focus on reading, you need to finish it quickly and save your time to do something else. You know, something meaningful.

Ah, I think I haven't watched the new TV series recently, but everyone seems like talking about it all day ..... Maybe I need to watch it.

Ahhhh

_____

Reading!

Reading!

Reading!

Reading!

Reading!

and excretion: no one visits for anything but shopping or sleeping in airlocked apartments after work. It's pure Ballardian terrain, such as you might find in Super-Cannes, about a high-tech gated community where the architecture controls how the inhabitants think and behave. "Thousands of people live and work here," Ballard writes, "without making a single decision about right and wrong. The moral order is engineered into their lives along with the speed limits and the security systems." As in zombie urbanism, in Super-Cannes's ultra-modern community "a lack of intimacy and neighbourliness" is replaced by an "invisible infrastructure that takes the place of traditional civic virtues".

Melbourne Shocklands. Google Earth, 2010.

According to Clement Valla, who collects unnatural Google images in his online archive Postcards from Google Earth, the glitches causing the landscapes he finds (such as the aforementioned bendable freeways) are not errors but logical to the system, which is only doing what it has been programmed to do: ceaselessly recombine dynamic data to provide seamless illusions of continuity. So, too, are the effects of zombie urbanism. Recent research by environmental psychologists describes how architects see the world, and it does not

Only Only Only

4
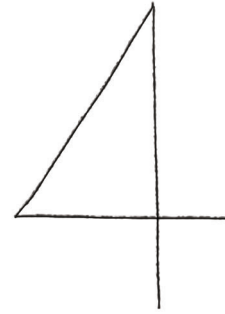
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match what laymen see. A term has been coined to describe this: "architectural myopia", whereby the architect is trained to look for different qualities in the environment to non-architects. Instead of harmonious relationships and contextual essentials, architects see objects removed from context, nothing but abstraction and attention-grabbing elements. This matches the logic of a world completely given over to surface, surrendered to machines. In that crack, that portal, between the Rostockergata underpass and the construction zone, I see all of this. Street View does not lie.

When I arrive in Oslo to give my talk, I will compare the city to what I've seen inside the machine, for I have seen Oslo already. It is imprinted on me, overlaid. It has augmented my reality, merged with my childhood dreams of Nordic Europe. I am already there. I never left Oslo. I have never been to Oslo but it fills me with déjà vu. By the time of my arrival, the Barcode Project will have advanced further, bearing little relationship to the under-construction Street View images of it I've come to know. My projections and prejudices will be sorely out of date. I will have to reassess the Project once again. In my hotel room, overwhelmed and overloaded from living two realities at once (three, including the vagaries of childhood dreams), I will turn off the computer. The screen will turn black. It will be dark outside and the lights in my room will be off, but I will still be able to see the outline of my face in the monitor from the streetlights outside, for I can never unsee.

Paul Virilio, urbanist and theorist of cyberculture, once told an interviewer about a science fiction story in which artificial snow was seeded with tiny cameras and dropped from planes. He explained, "when the snow falls, there are eyes everywhere. There is no blind spot left." The interviewer asked: "But what shall we dream of when everything becomes visible?" Virilio replied: "We'll dream of being blind." Desperate, I will dream that same dream, but even gouging out my eyes – all eighteen of them – will not be enough, for the imprint will remain, the augmented overlay, glowing like tracer
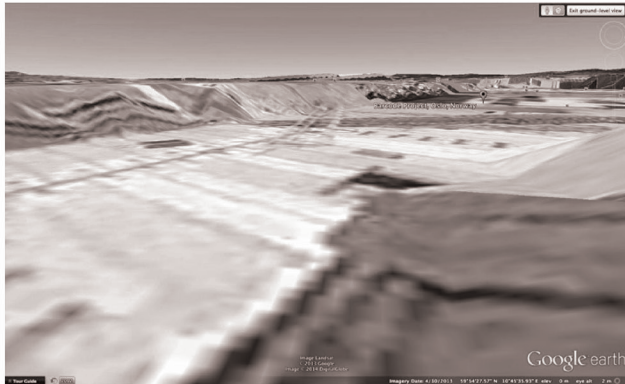
Only Only Only

3

pages

left !!

bullets in the radioactive darkness of the mind's eye. Remember, I can never unsee.

Oslo: through the eyes of machines. Google Earth, , 2013.

Then I will dream of death, but even death won't save me, for I will have left enough data, enough tweets, enough cookies and enough honey traps from my online browsing patterns to allow unscrupulous marketers to harvest the information and construct a digital version of me. It will be a magnificent feat of malware, social engineering composed of my online leavings. This digital construct will traverse the Google Earth just as I do now. It will spam my friends and family, and it will tweet the same observations about Street View as I do. Actually, not "the same observations about Street View as I do", but "the same observations because it is me". No one will tell the difference. In the future, we are all sentient spambots.

My digital doppelganger will see me in Google Earth, reflected in the hubcap of the Street View car. It will see me reflected in the illusory facade of the PricewaterhouseCoopers building, watching

Only   Only   Only

2

Damn it !

I just can't make it !

I just cannot bear that

OMG! That's too much!

Stupid Reading task

Stupid Stuart !!!

How can I make it?

Stuart !! Stuart !!!

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give

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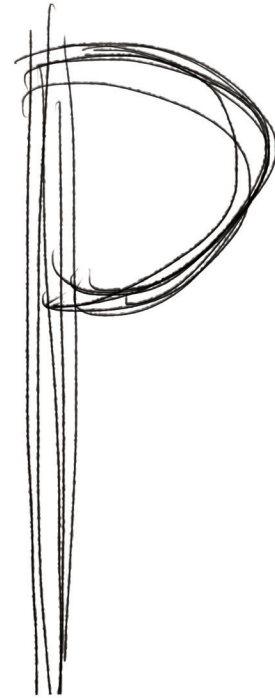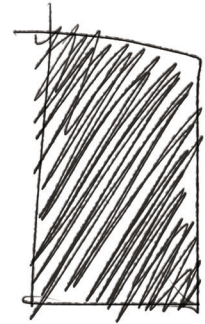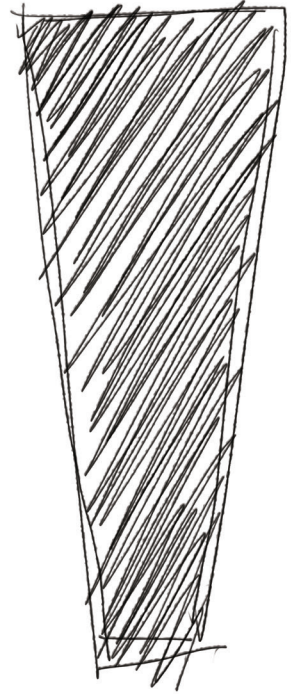
Stuart, I really cannot make it ... I think I will never figure out what kind of journey they had. I really really cannot understant what it want to express, and I cannot feel what the authors feel about the technology. I cannot finish your task, though I want to ...

You know, sometimes I just cannot control myself. I ... Fxx k, I just can4 mak it!

Don't you feel the font size needs to be changed?

I think it can
give a feeling
of "hard-to-read."

You know, that
really relates to my
theme of the book.

(And I just
don't want to
change it anyway)

OK...

Fine ... and ...

Actually you made a mistake ... When you start a new paragraph, you don't need to be like this ...

trolled by witch doctors). What made the area vibrant in the past is sucked out and re-injected into a distortion of its former self. The old way of life is remaindered. The old buildings that could be salvaged are completely gutted, surviving in traces as a grotesquery.

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You can just choose one of them ...

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But ... but if I change, you won't see the space flow between the paragraph, and you know, which can be seen as a mix of eastern and western style.

OK... it kind of
makes sense...

Do you have any

other questions?

What else
can I do?

Actually, Stuart...

I ... I think I cannot make it into 210 pages... That's ... that's too many ...

I'm running out of ideas.

Stuart, I really cannot make it. That's too hard... I don't know what to do...

curse ?

Really ?

I can do that?

)

YES !

You can say really really bad words on me.

I won't be mad =)

(

Ok, then ...

Stuart,

I hate U!

(you know that I don't
really mean it. It's just
a page)

I just cannot do it...

(when we're face-to-face)

Well...
finish your reading

task first!!

did u guys all finish the reading?

can anyone tell me what is it about?