

Teetering on the edge

RMS – EINSTEIN'S HAIRDO AND BRITNEY'S BRAINS – NOT VICE VERSA

We've all encountered the problem: This talk on C++11 is really well prepared, just a bit ordinary. This artwork is really creative and unique – it just doesn't hold up to closer scrutiny. What makes true greatness?

Disclaimer: As always, the author is a layman. Any approximation of reality using only two factors is going to be flawed — please interpret this only as the simplest of concepts, not the best.

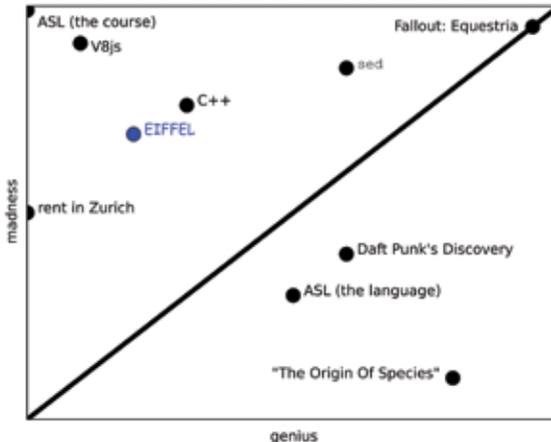
guages or towards functional programming, everyone should have a certain degree of respect towards the genius and madness behind the most mind-boggling of inventions.

Introduction

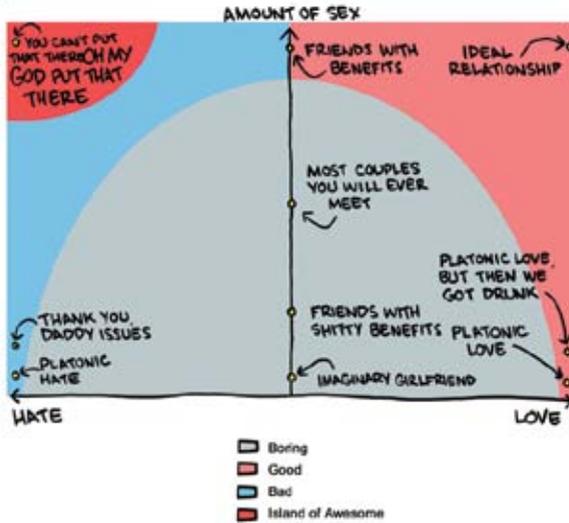
There are some things which should never have to be discussed — most of all, of course, matters of taste: after all, *de gustibus non est disputandum*. However, it doesn't matter if you have a predisposition towards curly-braced lan-

Madness and genius

To get right into the fray of it: Things don't need to be great to be awesome. They just need to be just mad enough to make sense in some way. Robots from outer space that transform into trucks? Sure.



RELATIONSHIPS: A GUIDE



A homicidal llama in a hat? Why not.

But besides these jokey concepts, everything else can easily be reduced to the 2-dimensional space of madness and genius:

Be aware that Pareto optimality does not hold here. Isolines in terms of awesomeness don't lie on concentric circles around the origin, but instead on isolines around (1,1) in Manhattan-norm. Or, expressed more intuitively, a point in the plane is only as valuable as $\min(x,y)$: One must not aim to maximize one of the factors, but have them approach each other while keeping their sum (i.e. the expenditure to create them) constant.

Madness and Genius (for real this time)

This even applies to humans insofar as mental health and genius seem to have some degree of anti-correlation. You might be surprised to find how many of the funniest and smartest comedians out there have struggled with bipolar disorder alone: As explored by Stephen Fry (himself a sufferer) in his highly recommendable documentary «The Secret Life of the Manic Depressive», many see the mania they experience as the source of their impetus in the first place.

To show you the extent to which this illness can take hold of a person, I will highlight the case of one performer very dear to my heart: Paul Merton is known for his dark, surreal humour and improvisational talent, most prominently featured in the UK version of «Whose

Line Is It Anyway» and the still running «Have I Got News For You».

But beside those appearances, he has also produced his own sketch show «Paul Merton: The Series», during a time when he showed such strong signs of paranoia and insomnia that he checked himself into a psychiatric ward for six weeks. This makes sense if you watch the series, which I can definitely recommend: Madness and genius go hand in hand with very British, post-pythonesque humour.

Finally, if you are interested in the topic, feel free to peruse the additional reading material listed below: Kay Redfield Jameson's first-hand experiences make for a fascinating read^{[1][2]}.

Love and Sex

Due to a lack of experimental data (and volunteers amongst our readership), we refer you to the following graph, with special thanks to our friends at SMBC^[3].



[1] Kay Redfield Jameson: «Touched With Fire: Manic-depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament»

[2] Kay Redfield Jameson: «An Unquiet Mind: A Memoir of Moods and Madness»

[3] www.smbc-comics.com

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