

The First Five Year Plan
The Best of Rohit's Realm, 2002–2007

Rohit Nafday

To all the idiots, morons, imbeciles, bums, and cretins out there, for without you, there would be no Realm.

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Contents

Preface	v
I The College Years	1
1 Sidewalk Rage	3
1.1 Original Article	3
1.2 Commentary	4
2 The Bottom Rung	5
2.1 Original Article	5
2.2 Commentary	6
3 The Krispy Kreme Caper	9
3.1 Original Article	9
3.2 Commentary	12
4 Welcome to the College of Ludicrousness & Stupidity	13
4.1 Original Article	13
4.2 Commentary	19
5 Acquired Tool Syndrome	21
5.1 Original Article	21
5.2 Commentary	24

6 Break-Up with Reality	27
6.1 Original Article	27
6.2 Commentary	29
7 On St. Valentine's Day	31
7.1 Original Article	31
7.2 Commentary	33
II The Yuppie Years	35
8 Icing on the Cake	37
8.1 Original Article	37
8.2 Commentary	41
9 My Romantic Quest: From Cynicism to Nihilism (Part 1)	43
9.1 Original Article	43
9.2 Commentary	46
10 The Principles of Discontentment	49
10.1 Original Article	49
10.2 Commentary	52
Afterword	53
Acknowledgements	55

Preface

I started this website out of my parents' basement for two reasons: to get laid, and to make a little money, neither of which are coming to fruition.

—R.J. Spencer, *Entourage* (2005)

To start a blog and begin publishing content online in the vain hopes that someone will read it takes a certain amount of arrogance; to then brazenly assume that there might be demand for a *book* of one's best blog entries takes a level of megalomania most people will never attain. *Rohit's Rants and Other Enlightening Thoughts* was an endeavor I began on August 18, 2002, initially as a means of “openly harass[ing], critiz[ing], ridicul[ing], and belittl[ing] people,” but it would soon become much more than that. As what would later become known amongst friends and foes alike as only “The Realm” gained increased readership, and as I began to dedicate more time to writing, the labors of love began to pay off: the number of threatening e-mails received increased, my “emo” high school student base multiplied, and hopeless romantics near and far began to direct their own (sexual) frustrations wholeheartedly upon my emaciated frame. I had arrived—at least, online.

Five years after the fateful decision to hoist my (clearly under-appreciated) thoughts and theories upon an unsuspecting Internet public, I found myself wondering how I might commemorate this historic occasion; this book is the result: a critical selection of the most acclaimed entries on *Rohit's Realm* between 2002 and 2007. For the most part, I have left the entries “as is,” only correcting minor

grammatical errors and the like; the content remains the same as it was when it first appeared online.

My hope is that by collecting and re-publishing a series of “top” articles, I can benefit readers new and old alike. For those who have only recently started reading, hopefully the older (and likely, juicier) content will provide you with some historical perspective; for those who have been with me for several years, you might come to appreciate how much the Realm has transformed over the years.

Each of the ten articles that was chosen represents a work I and others consider to be the best of its kind. Ultimately, however, this not a list of the top ten most popular articles, as characterized by comments, page views, etc. Instead, it is a selection of articles I have found to be best indicative of the underlying mission I set forth for my blog. In addition to presenting the full textual content, I have also provided brief commentaries for each article, discussing both why it was chosen and my thoughts on the work (often many) years after it was published.

To everyone who has ever read the Realm, I sincerely appreciate your support. The next five years promise to be even better than the first five.

ROHIT NAFDAY
AUGUST 18, 2007
IRVINE, CALIFORNIA, U.S.A.

Part I

The College Years

Chapter 1

Sidewalk Rage

1.1 Original Article

Originally published: November 30, 2002

Everywhere I go, I am plagued by slow people. When I was in high school (and was able to drive), it was slow drivers, slow pedestrians, slow people everywhere. And it always seemed that whatever I was doing, and wherever I was, there was always an idiot who thought that driving 25 mph was cool right in front of me. So, I get to Berkeley, and well, I don't have a car, so I walk everywhere. And STILL I AM PLAGUED BY SLOW PEOPLE, now WALKING in front of me, in big herds, fat asses jiggling, blocking off the sidewalk and preventing me from getting where I want to go at the speed I want to go. Isn't there a right lane for fat ass, slow moving morons on sidewalks??

Well—there should be. If you want to walk slow, or if your excessive eating prevents you from going any faster, it's cool: just move over to the right—faster traffic on the left!!! But instead, just huge walls and clusters of slow moving people. I move left, there is a slow moving person; I move right, there is a slow moving person; I jump into the street, there is a slow moving hobo with a dog in the way. GREAT!!! I come home, go to the mall (I grant you, it was South Coast

Plaza on the day after Thanksgiving, but still), and there are enough people there to make an ant or a bee feel claustrophobic. As it is, moving is pretty slow just because of the number of bodies between you and your destination. Add to it little kids that can't just be brutally run over, although they tend to get in the way more so than adults, and you've got a pretty big slow down. But that doesn't stop the slow idiots who reign supreme, walking in their herds, chatting away with their other slow friends about inane topics such as holiday shopping and the latest style for Winter 2002/2003.

I tried to attempt a cluster breaker maneuver where I use my purchases to plow through the crowds, but then people just looked at me like I've lost my mind. You mean you don't want to walk slow in order to waste time and making the arduous shopping process longer than it is? Why ever not? After that, I just resigned myself to the fact of life. Slow, fat people will always win, if not because of their determination, then because of their sheer size, which could easily prevent fast-walking, normal-sized people such as myself who only want to utilize their abilities. But you must realize this: if time is money, and walking slowly wastes time, then that means the slow-moving population of the world wastes my money, and considering that I value money more than anything else, I hate them more and more with every passing moment!

1.2 Commentary

Considering how much being blockaded by slow-moving fat people on the streets still bothers me, this article was extremely prescient. In addition to being one of the most referenced rants on *Rohit's Realm* for all of 2002, *Sidewalk Rage* also is one of the earliest works to address my unchecked value for money over all else, my hatred of Berkeley bums, and the ineptitude of small children—all famous themes in their own right.

Selecting this piece as the first in the anthology was a no-brainer. *Plus ça change, plus c'est pareil*. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Chapter 2

The Bottom Rung

2.1 Original Article

Originally published: March 02, 2003

I went to do laundry today, which is always a huge production, considering I have no on site laundry. It's the biggest pain in the ass ever, but in any case, I headed to the normal laundromat I have been frequenting this entire semester, and started up the laundry and stuff, when two of the most obnoxious idiots came into the store. It was a man and a woman, closer to thirty than twenty, dressed like junior high school kids having a severe identity crisis. The guy was wearing torn shorts, had a green mohawk, chain wallet, too many piercings, and large chains around his neck that probably made it hard for him to walk. The woman looked pregnant, but wasn't, had enough makeup on so you couldn't see her face or recognize any features, and had dark purple hair.

After being loud and obnoxious, publicly fighting over some stupid laundry triviality and using vulgarities in front of small children, they went outside to wait, sitting on the steps that lead to the store. They then proceeded to bust out two six packs of beer, and two joints, and started drinking and smoking in out in the open. Soon the whole laundromat smelled like weed and alcohol. And now here's the

best part, it was 12:30 p.m. Yeah, that's right—a Sunday afternoon, and these ass clowns are getting drunk and high. After finishing both six packs amongst themselves, and God only knows what else, they stumble into the laundromat, drunk beyond any semblance of control, and start picking fights with random customers and using racial slurs, before growing bored and stumbling out onto University Avenue to harass pedestrians.

I was shocked beyond belief at first, despite the two years I had spent at Berkeley, and had visions of police using nightsticks to beat the shit out of this epitome of white trash; but then I stopped and thought for a moment. These kinds of people—people who act like the pre-adolescents with “emotional” problems likely to shoot up their high school—are an important part of our society. They represent the bottom of the barrel: the worst society has to offer, the people who will go no where, ever; the people who will be a burden on everyone else around them for the rest of their lives.

Without them, everyone on the social ladder would be one relative rung lower. Thus, while people like this may waste my tax money, and that of my parents, and that of my friends, and are in general an obnoxious part of our urban environment, their very existence elevates me one rung on the social ladder. So when people say that these sorts of people are a burden on our economy and society and culture, I must disagree: they indeed serve a very useful purpose—they make everyone else not so deplorable happier about their status in life. I suppose not all is bad about them. Then again, I wonder how much of my tax money they really waste—and the vision of the nightsticks returns.

2.2 Commentary

As far as my research goes, this is the first post I ever wrote specifically dedicated to deriding the societal scourge that is the Berkeley homeless community—something for which I would gain increasing notoriety over the years as an undergraduate at Cal. This article continues to invoke vivid images of my life during

sophomore year (specifically, the dreadful University Ave. laundromat) and embodies a core tenet of *Rohit's Realm*: unabashed elitism.

In later years, I would often rant and rave about various interactions with crazies, bums, and combinations thereof, but this post holds the grand distinction of having started the ball rolling; indubitably, no anthology of the first five years of the Realm could be complete without it.

Chapter 3

The Krispy Kreme Caper

3.1 Original Article

Originally published: March 13, 2003

Not to sound like a Hardy Boys novel, but I liked the sound of that title. Allow me to introduce myself: I am Rohit, member of the graduating class of 2003, 2004, and 2005. That's right: now when I mention my having had senior standing since the summer of my freshman year, most people remark how cool that must be. I beg to differ. Having senior standing has brought nothing but pain and anguish to me since my first year.

For example, I have been denied admission to the rumored den of hot girls, Psych 1, on numerous occasions, due to the fact that I'm "too old." When I tried to get into the class as a freshman, I was summarily denied because open spots for non-freshman had all been filled. That was really cute, considering it was my second semester at Berkeley. I then tried to get into Soc 1, another rumored hot class, only to be denied in a similar manner.

Spring of this year, I once again tried to get into Psych 1, with my Telebears appointment that was on the first day. I was once again openly rejected, because it said I was too old to take that class. Hey, that's cool—way to go assholes! Leave

me to take classes with men, men, and more men like EE 20, or mean, scary, ultra-competitive pre-med girls, like Chem 3b, instead of letting me into what engineers know to be the best class Cal has to offer (with the exception of Mass Comm 10, of course). The day I was rejected from Psych 1 for the second time, not because I didn't meet the prerequisites, but because my life just sucks that way, I swore I would have my revenge on the system that so unfairly denied me placement in this class. The opportunity for this revenge presented itself on Tuesday of this week, when I got the following email:

Class of '03 Seniors:

There is a special event for you THIS WEDNESDAY!

WHO: The Class of 2003 (bring your ID).

WHAT: Free Krispy Kreme donuts for seniors! Plus pictures with Oski, a huge raffle, information on Senior Week and Commencement, and an opportunity to contribute to your Senior Class Gift.

WHEN: Wednesday, March 12. Drop by any time between 11am and 3pm.

WHERE: Our big ol' tent on Sproul Plaza.

WHY: Because you're all seniors, and we thought it would be fun to kick off your countdown to commencement with free Krispy Kremes!

HOW: Show up, and bring your senior friends!

I finally knew how I would take revenge for the semesters of pain that were inflicted on me by the sadistic Office of the Registrar. I would beat the system. I would throw it all back in their faces! I would steal Krispy Kreme donuts from some poor graduate of the class of 2003 and taunt them! So I set off to Sproul at the appointed time, with my mission clear to me. The years of anguish and pain I had to endure taking math, computer science, and physics courses filled me with determination, suppressing any notion of a conscious that had managed to survive

all these years.

I stormed past the raving lunatics at Sather Gate, and took my place in the long line of seniors waiting to get the reward for their 4, 5, or 6 years of effort at this University. As I stood in the line, I suddenly was overcome with a nagging voice in the back of my head, saying what I was doing was wrong. The Class of 2003 had done nothing to me. But at that very instance, I saw two relatively attractive girls, both carrying Psych 1 textbooks, and whatever voice that was there, ungloriously perished. Now my only goal was to complete this mission and exact my revenge. I lowered my head for fear of being recognized and revealed, and eventually my number came up. I showed the attendant my ID card as well as a copy of the email that I had gotten, and was relieved when I was allowed to get my Krispy Kreme donut. Passing on the picture with Oski, for fear of being documented as having beat the system, I quickly walked away as fast as I could, all the while I was mentally rejoicing at my accomplishment.

I had finally made my senior standing work for me. I had finally gotten back at the system. Now the eleven AP classes I took in high school and the two summers at community college I spent toiling away had some meaning. I may never, ever, ever have a class with women in my life, but that one Krispy Kreme donut made everything better. It was like a soothing salve for my burning wounds of lower division. I had taken my revenge. I had won. It was awesome. The next moment, a bastard flier person bumped into me and tried to convert me (religiously) on the spot. My evanescent feeling of victory passed as quickly as it had occurred, and I returned to the realm of science and engineering once again. But for a moment, however brief, I knew how it feels to be a humanities major—happy.

So here's a big shout out to Telebears, the Office of the Registrar, the College of Engineering, the Psych Department, and of course, the graduating Class of 2003 (the innocent bystanders / collateral damage in my quest to defeat the aforementioned evil-doers). Hope you guys all drown in your defeat, and never again destroy the hopes and dreams of an unwitting freshman, just looking for semester of contentment in a college career composed of bitterness.

3.2 Commentary

As any (heterosexual) female in science or engineering might tell you, “the odds are good, but the goods are odd”; imagine how much worse it must be if you are one of the said “odd” goods in classes dominated by dirty guys with no social sense and questionable personal hygiene. This article truly captures the essence of my first two years at Cal, majoring in both science *and* engineering, before I branched out into other activities that were more gender balanced.

In addition to the title (which to this day, I pat myself on the back for), this post also represents the best of its kind for a number of reasons: it references the “raving lunatics at Sather Gate,” my total and uninhibited failures with women, and perhaps the most important theme of them all—self-loathing. Ultimately, *The Krispy Kreme Caper* set a standard that would be rarely met in the years to come.

Chapter 4

Welcome to the College of Ludicrousness & Stupidity

4.1 Original Article

Originally published: May 08, 2003

Welcome to the College of Ludicrousness & Stupidity, otherwise known as the College of L&S. You're about to begin your journey into incompetence, ineptitude, and foolishness. Each day you are a member of this college, you will feel yourself get dumber. This is normal. Think about what you will have achieved by the time you graduate!

End of sophomore year is fast approaching, and I had to declare my MCB Simultaneous Degree. Last week, I talked to my Student Affairs Adviser in Engineering, got the form filled out, and sent it in for approval from the Dean of Engineering. I got word today that it was approved, and I was supposed to take it to L&S for their approval. Easier said than done.

I went to L&S with the Simultaneous Degree form from Engineering, and said, what do you want me to do?

Enter Mindless Bureaucrat #1: We can't accept this form, it's from

Engineering. Fill out this IDENTICAL L&S form that actually contains *less* information than does the Engineering form, and bring it back for approval.

Me: No, no, no you pile of shit... I already spoke to Engineering and they said that since they are my home college, we use their form—it's the rule for Simultaneous Degree petitions.

Enter Mindless Bureaucrat #2: Oh yes, we do accept this form. We will take it. That's it. Have a good day.

Me: No, no, no you sack of shit... shouldn't I at least *speak* with MCB and let them know, that you know, I'm going to be majoring in it? It would be nice to get a faculty adviser... trivial stuff like that.

Mindless Bureaucrat #2: Oh yeah, let me confer with my foolish co-worker for ten minutes. Yes, yes... have them sign these two forms, and bring it back to us (Makes an X on the two forms, underneath "Major #1").

So I go skipping of to the MCB Undergraduate Affairs Office. Within five minutes, I am speaking with an Undergraduate Affairs Adviser, who is super nice. She helps me pick my schedule, approves my forms, and refers me to a faculty adviser for final approval. I go to my faculty adviser, who is super nice, fills out my forms, talks to me about the major and my emphasis (Neurobiology), and refers me back to MCB. I head over to MCB, get my forms photocopied, and then head over to Campbell Hall (a.k.a., The Devil's Lair). I return the forms and say, is this OK?

Enter Mind-numbingly Incompetent Bureaucrat #1: Sorry, we cannot accept this form, it's from Engineering. Fill out this *identical* L&S form that actually contains *less* information than does the Engineering form, and bring it back for approval.

Me: WHAT THE HELL? Go shit on yourself. I spoke to someone in THIS office earlier and they said it's OK to use the Engineering form.

Enter Mind-numbingly Incompetent Bureaucrat #2: Oh yes, we can use this form. Oh wait, you didn't fill out a petition to declare the major. And also, this person signed underneath Major #1. We think that your MCB faculty adviser is in fact approving your EECS schedule because we are so stupid, it hurts. You need to have him sign underneath the Major #2. Look at our identical L&S form that actually contains *less* information than does the Engineering form. You're going to have him sign the petition, and also indicate that in some way he is your MCB adviser.

Me: WAIT JUST A MINUTE HERE. Are you dumb? Your goddamn office put that X there. Not to mention, he is a professor in the MCB department!!! And isn't the petition for a simultaneous degree a petition? Well, do I have to get my EECS faculty adviser to sign this too??

MIB #2: NO, we don't care about EECS. Do you know how many professors are on campus?

Me: Yes, I do. And I also know that none of the ones in the College of Engineering are named [insert professor name], you ass clown! You mean to tell me, that you're sending me back *all* the way across campus to Life Sciences Addition from Campbell Hall because the guy signed 2 inches left of where he was supposed to after you **assholes** put the X there. Why THE HELL would he approve my engineering major? Why? That makes no goddamn sense. ROT IN HELL YOU INCOMPETENT IDIOTS.

I stormed off to LSA once again and the guy was very helpful. He signed my forms and so I returned to L&S in Campbell Hall. 30 minutes of my life burned.

Me: OK, I filled out all this paperwork. Can I go now?

Enter Mind-numbingly Incompetent Bureaucrat #3: Sorry, we cannot accept this form, it's from Engineering. Fill out this *identical*

L&S form that actually contains *less* information than does the Engineering form, and bring it back for approval.

Me: You have to be FREAKIN' KIDDING ME!!!!!!

Enter Mind-numbingly Incompetent Bureaucrat #4: Yes, we can accept this form. But it looks like no one from Engineering has signed this. You have to go get this signed by Engineering. Otherwise, we don't know if you can graduate or not.

Me: WAIT A GODDAMN SECOND. I was just here half an hour ago, and someone told me that you DON'T need an engineering faculty signature!! Now you're telling me I do?!

MIB #4: Without a signature from Engineering, we don't know if you can graduate from EECS or not.

Me: THE DEAN OF ENGINEERING, someone who outranks you by like a million ranks, signed this. I don't think he would have approved this if I couldn't graduate from the College of Engineering, you stupid shit-head.

MIB #4: The dean approved the petition. He didn't approve the schedule. There is really no difference, but we are so dumb, it hurts us to breathe. We can't accept this. Let me show you our identical L&S form...

Me: I hate you all and I hope you all die a slow and painful death.

I headed over to Engineering where everyone was super helpful. The Associate Dean even came out and said that L&S is giving out wrong information, and in fact the agreement between colleges was that they are supposed to just accept the Home College Simultaneous Degree form. No signing underneath the major bullshit. NO FACULTY ADVISER approval. If the dean approves, that's it. He told me to get the name of the goddamn asshole with his head up his ass giving out wrong information. I told him it would be difficult to pinpoint the idiot, because it seems that the collective IQ of the L&S advising staff is about 70. No one knows what's going on. My adviser in Engineering gave me her card and said, refer any

problems to me. So I head back to Campbell Hall for like the 4th time today.

Me: OK, I got all the forms. Can you please just FREAKIN' accept this.

MIB #3: Sorry, we cannot accept this form, it's from Engineering. Fill out this *identical* L&S...

Me: YOU INCOMPETENT, INEPT, SORRY ASS excuse for a living being... SHUT UP! SHUT UP! SHUT UP! IF I HAD A DULL RAZOR BLADE RIGHT NOW, I WOULD HACK AT YOU UNTIL YOU WERE DEAD!!!!

MIB #3: *shrugs* Sorry, we cannot accept this form.

Me: Listen, I just spoke to the Associate Dean of Engineering and my adviser. They said that you guys are supposed to take this form, that all the bullshit you put me through was incorrect, and that if there are any other problems, to contact the College of Engineering. Here is my adviser's card.

MIB #3: Well, we normally don't accept these forms and the worst case scenario is that you would need to fill out more paperwork. If nothing goes wrong, you will see it on BearFacts in about a month. Otherwise, we will need to contact you.

Me: If there is anymore paperwork, it will be filled out with your blood.

MIB #3: Can you please fill out your contact information, oh and we have a line, so could you please sit down back there while filling it out.

Me: (*not moving*) Sure, here you go, you freakin' piece of shit. How do you like that, I'm not moving. Now what you gonna do about it? Looks like your goddamn manual doesn't say what to do when a student refuses to move, does it? I should really just stab you. Maybe I could get community service hours.

This experience has been one of the most frustrating bureaucratic run-arounds

in a long time. And what's worse, it wasn't as if there was a communication issue. MCB, EECS, and the College of Engineering were all following the set protocol. The problem was that rodents are more intelligent than the L&S Advising team, and that no one there could take a piss or tie their shoe without having it written in some manual. What's really frightening is that these people actually advise actual L&S students. I cannot tell you how glad I am that I never entered into the College of Letters and Science as a freshman. If I had trusted my future to them, I would have ended up picking up dog shit in a sewer by now. How can these people be trusted to guide and advise the biggest college on campus, when they can't do anything and can't even come up with one answer for the same question amongst all of them. I have gotten stuff done faster at the DMV, a *government* agency. I am so afraid that next semester I'm going to have to deal with these dumb shits. Seriously, whenever I enter that office, I see people running around like chickens with their heads cut off. The disorganization rivals that of a four-year-old's room. Wait, let me not insult four-year-old children. These people are the scum of the earth. In contrast, I have never gotten the run around in the COE and in fact, every time I go there, my work gets done efficiently.

L&S is a zoo. It's a zoo full of dumb animals that can't be called human. If anything, they are robots, but the guy who made them must have modeled the AI on a retarded squirrel or something. I wouldn't be surprised if an English major ended up taking Chem 3B as a "major prerequisite" or an Physics major ended up taking Ethnic Studies before he or she could be "approved." What's even more surprising is how L&S Departments at UC Berkeley manage to still be ranked highly, when the undergraduates are undoubtedly misguided by these morons. Perhaps it's because the Department advisers actually know what's going on, like my MCB one did. If it was left to the esteemed L&S advisers, all learning would be stopped and we would all spend 8 hours a day filling out forms.

I really wonder, do they actually train advisers on the rules of the colleges? I mean, if a MCB Undergrad Adviser, an Engineering Undergrad adviser, my EECS faculty adviser, and my MCB faculty adviser all knew the procedure for

declaring a Simultaneous Degree, WHY THE HELL DID THE L&S ASSHOLES NOT KNOW!?!? What the HELL is going on at L&S?!? Moreover, do they serve some function other than to dispense incorrect advice, impede learning at this institution, and be an all-around hindrance in the educational process? Someone should burn the L&S advising office to the ground. I'm sure everything at this University would run more smoothly. All I know is that after my experience with these dumbasses today, I'll pity all those incoming L&S freshman in CalSO... they have NO idea what they're in for!

4.2 Commentary

Though this was by no means the first so-called “rant” to appear on *Rohit's Realm*, it has the grand distinction of likely being the best in the past five years. No piece—not even ones attacking bums—comes close to the level of vitriol and anger that is demonstrated in this article—and with good reason. I doubt I have ever experienced a more frustrating level of bureaucratic incompetence in my life, though that is not for lack of trying.

In retrospect, I suppose considering that Simultaneous Degrees are not all that common at Berkeley, and especially ones that incorporate both EECS *and* MCB, that I might have cut the good people at L&S (whom I would later work with as a CalSO Counselor for two separate summers) some slack. However, the sheer lack of awareness and moreover, the self-righteous incantations were a bit too much to handle at that moment in time. Do I think that perhaps I could have toned down my anger here? Yes. Do I regret not doing so then, when I was 19 years old? No.

It is what it is, and more importantly, it qualifies as one of the best of *Rohit's Realm*, 2002–2007. Take that as you will.

Chapter 5

Acquired Tool Syndrome

5.1 Original Article

Originally published: August 10, 2003

Sometime during the fall of 2002, after an uninteresting weekend spent with a hopeless tool, a friend from high school, Ali Dalal, and I postulated on the increasingly widespread phenomenon of toolery that seemed to be consuming everyone around us. Having seen an inordinate number of our male friends succumb to social isolation, moody behavior, and unbridled angst, we developed a theory, which came to pinpoint an epidemic disease spreading rapidly.

The affliction, which came to be known as Acquired Tool Syndrome, explained many of the symptoms visibly noticeable in many young men. After the initial discovery, work on the matter stagnated with the advent of academic commitments, and later, during the spring of 2003, much of the research was lost. However, in recent days, some of the initial findings have been rediscovered, and we, the investigators, remain committed to researching this awful disease. The initial documents produced in 2003 are listed below. The investigation is ongoing and will be updated as information becomes available.

1. What does ATS stand for?

ATS stands for Acquired Tool Syndrome and is the developed form of HTV, or the Human Tool Virus.

2. What is a tool?

Wow. If you don't know this, you probably are one. Or you aren't familiar with American culture. Or maybe both. A tool, according to *Merriam Webster*, is "one that is used or manipulated by another." In general, these tools are unpleasant to be around, and have been known to push normal, sane people into a state of homicidal rage and madness.

3. What is HTV?

HTV is the Human Tool Virus, the nascent form of ATS.

4. How can I protect myself from toolery?

Everyone (every male that is) is susceptible to acquiring the disease and becoming a tool. There is no guaranteed solution or protection method. However, with the proper precautions, it is (usually) possible to prevent contraction of the virus. The main way to protect yourself is to keep your distance from tools, or potential tools. If one of your friends contracts the disease, do *not* try to help him recover. There is *no* cure. You will not cure him. He will, however, most likely infect you.

Once you get the disease, you are a dead man. Have no sympathy for those who catch the disease. It is probably their own fault. Furthermore, try to resist the temptation to let anyone use you, especially women, who frequently possess powerful, manipulative powers over men. Think of the consequences before doing something rash and/or stupid. And remember, if you become a tool, no one will save you. No one will care.

5. I think my best friend is becoming a tool, has HTV, or is showing signs of ATS! What should I do?

Get the hell away from him! Don't answer his phone calls. Don't meet him in person. Don't talk to him online. Cut off *all* contact. He must

be effectively dead to you. You cannot help him. He isn't even a person anymore. He is a tool. Tools are beyond help. Tools are beyond sympathy. Leave him to his destiny and make sure yours does not become his. If you try to help him, you risk exposure and it can do no good. Once a tool, always a tool. There is no cure.

6. I think I'm a tool!! What do I do?

Good for you. Admission is the first step to recovery. Although, in this case, there is no cure, so do everyone a favor, including yourself, and end it all. Don't wait another day. The world has enough tools already. We don't need anymore.

7. Hey man, I'm not a tool. I just do everything she says because I *love* her.

Listen carefully. **YOU ARE A TOOL!** And worse yet, you don't even *know* you are a tool. But you are. A big one. I know it. She knows it. The world knows it. Moreover, we all despise you for it. Refer to the above question once you've come to terms with it.

8. I'm a woman, and I think I might be making my boyfriend/guy friend/lover/neighbor into a tool! What should I do?

Nothing. Keep it up. Perhaps even *step* it up. You own him now. And who really gives a shit about him? It's his own fault he let you make him a tool. And now that he is, you have your own personal slave. So use him, abuse him, and when he is a pathetic wreck of former manhood, dump him like last week's garbage. Then move onto another unsuspecting guy. You're doing nothing wrong. Remember, this is entirely the fault of the male who lets it happen to himself. You are just looking out for your own interests and if the guy was looking out for his, he would have never let toolery consume him.

9. Hey man, I'm not a tool. I just like to show my affection by doing stuff for my girlfriend/girl who wants to be "just friends"/lover/neighbor. All the

women love me!

Wrong asshole. Women like to *use* you like the tool you are. You are a personal assistant they don't have to pay and a source of income they don't have to earn. You are nothing. Worse yet, you don't even realize your sub-human state of affairs yet. Refer to "I think I'm a tool" question when you are finally ready to accept your toolery.

10. Hey man, at least I *got* a girl. So what if I do stuff for her once in a while?
Wrong again, asshole. You don't "got" nothing. She's got a slave. You have nothing at all. Not even your dignity.

11. I'm a total tool. Can I bother you with my sub-human concerns and complain about "love" and relationships incessantly to you?
Burn in hell.

12. Hey man, I'm not a tool. I'm just a sensitive guy.
Die.

Note: This document probably dates back to April 2003, but I published it as a new entry now anyway.

5.2 Commentary

Acquired Tool Syndrome is arguably my favorite entry of all time. Though it is not necessarily the best composed, nor the most witty, nor the most biting, the unusual format (*i.e.*, Frequently Asked Questions), the concise and to-the-point prose, and the unapologetic denigration of so-called "tools" to their fate makes it a truly distinct work on *Rohit's Realm*. When it was first published, I distinctly recall several people whom I had not spoken to in years messaging me to say how much they enjoyed the piece. Reading it over again now, more than four years after its inception, it has withstood the test of time: I still laughed out loud.

Interestingly, this piece was not originally composed as a blog entry, but rather, was a stand alone document for a venture that never really got off the ground: an attempt by myself and my friend (Ali) to document the growing “toolery” of those around us. The idea had been to write up several white papers about our findings and publish them on the web, but alas, we never found the time. However, this article demonstrates the potential of that idea, and remains a true gem in the long, storied history of *Rohit's Realm*.

Chapter 6

Break-Up with Reality

6.1 Original Article

Originally published: December 11, 2003

Hi, Rohit: this is Sanity speaking. I have something to tell you: I'm leaving you. It's not you, it's me. I've just decided that I need to move on. Please don't think that this is your fault. It's not. I'm just not ready for this kind of commitment. Perhaps if we had found each other at another time, it might have worked out, but Fate has settled the matter. It just wasn't meant to be. I hope you understand. I really hope we can still remain friends. I just wanted to let you know that it was great while it lasted. Goodbye.

And just like that, she was gone. And gone with her, all her friends I had gotten to know intimately—Lucidity, Clarity, and Reason. In a heartbeat, my tumultuous two decade-long relationship came to screeching halt this week, when a sinister and seductive force returned, once again bring her sensuous promise of “good grades.” Her name was Preparation, and I had been able to resist her Siren-like effervescence for five consecutive semesters before finally being consumed.

Perhaps, what I did not realize was that a bit of my loyalty to Sanity died with each successful rejection of temptation, until this semester, when my decrepit sense of determination could no longer stand strong in the face of baseless attraction. I allowed myself to be drawn in by the allure of her promises, thus placing my all ready rocky relationship with Sanity on an unsteady path to failure.

Starting last week, I started going over to her place all the time, sometimes spending hours upon hours in the fluorescent glow of wooden study carousels and rows upon rows of countless books. I became obsessed with her promise, readily doing anything she said and responding to her whimsical desires, even going as far as to not stop for meals or breaks. Her whispered sweet nothings begat an excitement in me paralleled perhaps only by the anticipation felt by an alcoholic smelling whiskey. I knew what I was doing was wrong. But any notion of guilt or conscience I may have felt was steadily eradicated by the magnificent delusions of academic success. I continued to return to her each morning, with unbridled enthusiasm and a vague notion of culpability. I was losing touch with Sanity—I could feel us growing apart. When some of her friends, such as Reason, began to argue with me, I was undaunted: “Just one more reaction, just one more pathway, just one more enzyme. Sanity and I will work things out. We always have in the past.”

Perhaps this was the final straw that broke the camel’s back. Perhaps this break up had been years in the making. Perhaps she could no longer tolerate my wandering eye and decided it it was time to move on. All I know for certain is that I’ve been a complete mess since she left early this week. I have lost all concept of spatial and temporal reality. For instance, I found myself this morning in the library, reading a novel—*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, a great novel, but which didn’t particularly help my state of mind—and then what comes after that remains hazy in my clouded, nearly empty mind. I found myself wandering outside, on campus, with no direction, no aim, and no notion of where I was going or what I was doing or why I was even where I was. I continued to meander on campus, making my way towards North Gate, abruptly turning and heading to Tolman,

before finding my way to Sproul and aimlessly walking in the general direction of Unit 3. What's worse is that I have no idea what time it is or what day it is or when my next final is or even where, and I'd be hard-pressed right now to even tell you my name.

The evanescent seductress left with the same abruptness with which she arrived, leaving in her place only her evil twin sister—Madness. While possessing the same seductive prowess of her sister, Madness brings no similar promise of success. Only the steady, unrelenting, and unequivocal temptation that no man having broken up with Sanity can resist. I have waged an internal war for days with this perilous force, but find myself losing, as demonstrated by today's events. So I decided to document this heartbreaking break-up with my reality before it was too late and I had completely lost all faculty of thought. Please come back to me Sanity! I miss you!

6.2 Commentary

If only I could bring myself to feel this sort of emotion for a *real* woman, perhaps I wouldn't be so bitter and cynical all the time. Then again, *Rohit's Realm* probably wouldn't be all that *awesome*, either. This post was written at the culmination of an extremely stressful semester, around a time where I did not sleep for almost a week straight working on a final project for CS 164—writing your own compiler will do that to you. The metaphorical break-up with Sanity wasn't completely a joke: I really did lose it a bit that month, but luckily for you, dear readers, I would go on to recover my dearly beloved (Sanity).

I chose to include this article because I feel it demonstrates a very poignant departure from my normal style of writing—one that shows the “softer,” “nicer” side of Rohit. And while the metaphor of the break-up is certainly a fictional one, *Break-Up with Reality* remains one of the few pieces I have published on the Realm to insinuate I may, in fact, be capable of caring for someone beyond the superficial. (The fact that I never have before is rather irrelevant to this particular

discussion.)

Chapter 7

On St. Valentine's Day

7.1 Original Article

Originally published: February 14, 2005

Given my long and well-documented history of bitterness, cynicism, and heartlessness, I suppose it is almost a necessity that I post on St. Valentine's Day to denounce all money that is spent and bullshit that is endured on this fateful day each year in the name of "love" and "romance." I must admit, however, that the reason I have remained so uncharacteristically complacent about the patron saint of lovers and his holiday in the three years that I have written in this blog is that, frankly, I do not have anything against February 14th. *What?*

That's right: You heard me. I don't hate Valentine's Day. That's not to say I like it—I really just don't have any opinion on it. Totally neutral. Like Switzerland. In fact, I even enjoy this time of year, because those little candy hearts are damn good. I suppose I could attack the shameless commercialism or the foolish sentiments, or perhaps even all the dead plants, but realistically, that's all been said before, and like I said, it doesn't bug me that much. Plus, as Lizzy pointed out earlier today, almost all my posts are bitter, cynical, heartless diatribes on Valentine's Day anyway, if not in substance, than in spirit.

Before all you people out there who rely on me to be the pillar of strength against a world obsessed with romance freak out, let me just tell you that this minor admission does not mean I have changed my cynical viewpoints or contemptuous nature. You don't yet have to worry about me running out to spend \$40 on a bouquet of flowers to blindly throw at the first woman I find mildly attractive. I've simply realized that Valentine's Day or not, the people I hate and the reasons I hate them remain the same. Reading down my buddy list today, I saw only two kinds of away messages: the cheerful, kissy-smiley-filled ones of people presumably in relationships, and the angry bitter ones of those who are not. This is when I realized what the fundamental problem is: people use relationships entirely too much to judge their own self-worth. This may seem self-evident and trivial, but if you think about it more, it's not.

Why is Valentine's Day such a big deal for people? Why do people get depressed if they don't have a significant other to spend February 14th with? Why does everyone not in a relationship become insanely jealous of all those who are around this time? Isn't Valentine's Day supposed to be about love? And by love, I don't mean bullshit or what Hallmark says it is or what you think it should be based on all the crappy soap operas you watch; I mean the emotion that signifies caring, compassion, and commitment. If two people need a specific day of the year to clarify their feelings or require chocolate, flowers, and meaningless phrases to express them, why should I or anyone else care? Are people really that desperately in need of validation that they must constantly have someone to dote on them and tell them they are not worthless, because that seems pretty damn pathetic to me. So, for all you lamenting "Singles Awareness Day," I would advise you to stop being such a mess and starting having some confidence and self-esteem. Believe me: you don't *need* a relationship; you *need* to start living your life.

As for me, all I have to say is this: for all of you out there who have "someone" to spend today with, I couldn't be more happy for you; for all you pathetic assholes sitting alone in your dark room, wallowing in bitterness and self-pity, I hope your next date realizes what a deplorable mess you are and dumps your ass then and

there. I have no sympathy for your kind. Oh yeah—Happy Valentine's Day.

7.2 Commentary

Considering the amount of verbiage I have dedicated to denouncing “love,” “romance,” and any gesture to that effect, this article, published on Valentine's Day 2005, was a rather surprising departure, especially for the man many consider to have no heart (or soul). Yet, it also strikes at the heart of my own thoughts on the said virtues of “love” and “romance”: I do not hate them outright, only the manner in which (lesser) people use these virtues to justify their own ill-advised actions. While implicitly acknowledging that Valentine's Day in particular is likely a worthless manifestation of commercialism and false sentiment, I also noted that it is based in history and moreover, that if people are going to act in an irrational fashion, it really is no business of mine.

I chose to include this post for the simple reason that it espouses one of the core themes that underpins *Rohit's Realm*: no one can make you happy if you are not happy with yourself; love and relationships can only supplement, *not* compensate. And if you cannot even understand that simple fact, then perhaps you deserve to go through life as you do, vainly moving from one disastrous relationship to the next, constantly seeking something from without that one can only obtain from within.

Part II

The Yuppie Years

Chapter 8

Icing on the Cake

8.1 Original Article

Originally published: October 02, 2006

I was just thinking today how anyone who doesn't know me in real life, and only through my online persona of rohitsrealm.com blogger, might actually believe I really am as cynical, bitter, depressed, and elitist as I come off through my writing. OK, so maybe it's true, but those who know me outside of the Internet will have to agree that while my blog does seem to weigh heavily towards the aforementioned topics, I am not incapable of other emotions. To at least partially address this issue, and perhaps even rectify some misguided perceptions people may hold, I will now present a uncharacteristically positive entry.

This weekend has been awesome. I mean, it was unbelievably great. Good people, good times, lots of fun. The CalSO reunion went really well, we killed Arizona, 28–0, and the post-game party at Thalassa was a fitting conclusion. However, rather than talk about all these things, I'll leave the description to the photographs. Instead, I'd like to talk about the “icing on the cake,” so to speak, for this weekend that I discovered as I was looking through old entries on my site.

Now, I would venture that most of my entries are anything but uncontroversial.

sial, and usually tend to drive a fair amount of comment traffic, as people agree, disagree, or simply hate. Most of these comments are by people I know, with only a very small percentage coming from random people. However, today, I discovered what had to be the most hilarious, ridiculous, and downright idiotic random comment of all time, in one of my own personal favorite entries of the year: *Pop Ya Collar*, my tirade against the idiotic phenomenon that seems to have inflicted thousands of posers near and far. Here it is, reproduced in it's full glory:

You stupid fucker, I pop my collar because I fucking like it and always have. I don't give a fuck how much you degrade me, I have more a life than ANY of you hating motherfuckers do. I have more fucking girls at my hands, and more of a job working at AE, and more of a fucking life than you ever will. Get your fat ass off this computer if your going to hate bitch, stop degrading people better than you. Girl's check my pictures, much better than most of the idiots here crying about the style. Email me if you got problems.

—Brandon Shinholser

Before I address this comment, let me give you some background. Unfortunately, the URL this dumb shit typed wasn't valid, so I did a little bit of research, and unsurprisingly, found his Xanga site. Reading through it, I discovered a few facts about our indignant friend:

- His picture has him wearing TWO polo shirts, both with collars popped. Man, that's *hot*.
- He's born in December 1986, which makes him an 18 year old kid and a freshman in college.
- His so-called expertise? "Everything you can think of .. I can do .. and I can do it with style babyy ;)"

- His latest entry? “never seems to fail.. every weekend is just another lonely weekend with no one with you and sitting watching tv and sleeping.....great college life.....”
- He recently lost his cell phone at a McDonald’s.

And now, just for kicks, here’s my brief, open response to this comment:

Dear Mr. Shinholser,

Thanks for your comment. I sincerely appreciate you taking the time from your busy schedule of jerking off, sleeping, watching television, missing classes, popping your several collars, and working a menial job in clothing retail to write a poorly worded, idiotically composed, grammatically questionable response to my March entry, *Pop Ya Collar*. I am very glad indeed that you “don’t give a fuck how much [I] degrade [you],” because in the course of this correspondence, I will be doing exactly that with unrestrained resolve.

I suppose I could take offense at your foolish ranting, but honestly, having read through your moronic Xanga entries, which, by the way, seem to be the work of a less than exceptional first-grader, I would be hard pressed to actually bring myself to respect you as a human being, let alone as a critic worthy of consideration. I realize you probably don’t have much in your life to feel confident about, and thus, must take solace in the “fucking girls at your hands” and the feelings of adequacy (not only in a sexual context, but in life as well) that your popped collars must bring you, but honestly, can you actually be using your “job at AE” as a point of validation? And if your notion of “having a life” is based upon your latest Xanga entries, well, I’m certainly quite thrilled I don’t meet your stringent criteria.

Quite truthfully, you are not worth my time, and if it weren't for the fact that your most pathetic existence unequivocally validates my earlier postulations regarding antidepressants, I wouldn't even be wasting my time writing this response. The fact of the matter is, regardless of whether or not you would like to vainly believe that you are "better than [me]," all indicators seem to suggest the exact opposite, and frankly, realizing that people like you exist in this world makes me feel much better about my own life. I may not have all that I desire, but it's nice knowing I will always be much more successful, intelligent, and ultimately happy in my life than you ever will be in yours.

I sincerely hope you at some point take your head out of your own ass and realize how stupid you truly are, but having read your poor excuse for prose, I really doubt it. Perhaps in fifty years, when I have forgotten all about your worthless existence, much as I might an insect I errantly crush, you will realize the extent of your own misery, but by then it'll be too late—your failed attempt at life will be complete.

Best Regards,
Rohit Nafday

P.S. The fourth and fifth sentences in your comment make no sense whatsoever. I know it's hard, but in the future, please try to think about what you're writing before spewing incoherent nonsense.

So, there you have it. The icing on the cake! Now, not only do you have my trademarked antidepressant, but an officially endorsed web site to feel better about yourself. Enjoy life, everyone!

8.2 Commentary

What can I say that has not been said before? In terms of vitriolic retorts, this post is my *magnum opus*. Rarely in the past five years did I ever attack a single individual; rarer still would I ever write it in such a way that someone could determine the offender's identity. This article was unique in that it actually attacked a person by name, albeit one I did not know, and would never meet. The pitiful subject of my "letter" does not matter—he is a stand-in for any number of idiotic individuals who I have long railed against. The fact that he came to me with his moronic comment was truly the "icing on the cake."

In the past two years since writing this epitome of Internet vitriol, I have often been accused by my more sympathetic friends of "ruining" Messr. Shinholser's proverbial life—the assumption there being that he had one to begin with, of course. And in general, I might agree that, in retrospect, I was fairly harsh. But that's the *point*: he started this battle with his rather vulgar assault, and I finished it, utilizing my own superior control of language. Was it wrong to overpower this half-wit from a position of obvious superiority? Maybe. Would a better man have simply ignored his pitiful attempts at flame bait? Probably. But some times the unwashed masses have to be put in their place, and I'm just the man to do it. It could be no other way.

Chapter 9

My Romantic Quest: From Cynicism to Nihilism (Part 1)

9.1 Original Article

Originally published: November 04, 2005

Halloween 2005 has come and gone, and with it, one of the more momentous occasions in the short, but termagant history of rohitsrealm.com. No, dumbasses, I'm not referring to the photographic evidence of my handiwork as a makeup artist that was recently made available on my gallery, although I *am* quite proud of my newfound eyelining skills. Give up? Well, October 31, 2005 marked the fourth anniversary of the founding of the Realm!

As unbelievable as it sounds, it's been four years since I, as a lowly and non-descript freshman in college, decided to launch a vain and egotistical tribute to my unquestionably marginalized and futile existence; who could have known that a mere four years later, this endeavor would have propelled me into being the fourth most popular "rohit" in the world? Many have asked me in the past months since graduation where I plan to take the Realm now that I can no longer properly attest to being the "proverbial disgruntled college student." Naysayers and critics have

already predicted my downfall, while friends and supporters have made suggestions ranging from blogging on politics to dumbing down my writing to reach a “broader” audience to “finding myself.”

To answer friends and foes alike, I will say this: Rohit’s Realm was formed on the steadfast pillars of anger, cynicism, bitterness, and elitism, and to change that would be to deny the very essence of my being; I am nothing if not angry, cynical, bitter, and elitist. Equally absurd is the notion of “finding myself,” because despite my age and disposition to the quintessential postmodern early-twenties post-adolescent “artistic” phase, I have unfortunately already “found myself,” and quite frankly, it would probably have been better for everyone had I never started looking.

Nonetheless, I do concur that it might be time to expand the scope of my writing beyond irrational rants and acrid attacks on easy targets. For help with this most troubling quandary, I now turn to one of my favorite authors, William Faulkner, for assistance. For his 1950 Nobel Banquet speech, Faulkner wrote:

Our tragedy today is a general and universal physical fear so long sustained by now that we can even bear it. There are no longer problems of the spirit. There is only the question: When will I be blown up? Because of this, the young man or woman writing today has forgotten the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself which alone can make good writing because only that is worth writing about, worth the agony and the sweat.

We may no longer live under the fear, anguish, and mental oppression of the nuclear brinksmanship of the Cold War, but Faulkner’s point still rings as true today as it did in December 1950. Suddenly, everything is clear. If I have any hope of improving my own writing, and consequently, the Realm, I must wholeheartedly embrace a path of self-destruction. In other words, in quite unequivocal terms, I need to ruin my life; only then can I achieve the mental state necessary to transcend the bullshit angst of worthless individuals, and achieve true, unbridled despondency.

Nihilism and despair, while great goals in theory, are nevertheless easier discussed than embraced. Despite my trite yuppie life and assuredly meaningless existence, the disposable income and lack of responsibilities is hard to discount. What could possibly counteract the joys afforded by petty materialism? *Well*, for that I'll turn to an excerpt from a poem by Lord Byron:

In secret we met -
In silence I grieve
That thy heart could forget,
Thy spirit deceive.
If I should meet thee
After long years,
How should I greet thee? -
With silence and tears.

It's so painfully obvious! I need to meet the woman of my dreams, fall madly in love, be overwhelmed by hope and joy, and then have the said woman break my heart beyond repair, leaving me in a state of ever-worsening despair, unable to find love or happiness *ever* again. For regular readers, this scenario may seem decidedly impossible, considering my documented derision towards the concept of "love," the open question as to whether I can ever care for another as much as I do for myself, and the rumors that I may not in fact have a heart (or soul), but *nothing* is impossible, only improbable. I now present the following challenge to women everywhere:

I am seeking a woman to make me fall in love and subsequently, to ruin my life. At the minimum, you must possess the following qualities:

- *Be at least as intelligent as me—I could never fall in love with someone unintelligent.*
- *Have self-esteem—I hate people constantly seeking validation and I can't be around such people, let alone fall in love with one.*

- *Successful—accomplishment is hot, being a waste of society's resources is not.*
- *Not a mess, especially emotional—I want despair, **not** bullshit.*

In return, you shall receive:

- *My sizable annual electronics and alcohol budgets reappropriated for you during the course of our relationship.*
- *My uninterrupted attention, loosely translated as romance—flowers, candy, love letters, and all kinds of other stupid shit sappy people care about.*
- *Dedication as the “person I owe it all to” if I ever become rich and/or famous. There would, of course, also be monetary compensation for the former.*
- *The warm, fuzzy feeling of having played a vital role in my romantic quest to ruin my life.*

As you can see, I'm very serious about this endeavor. Please let me know if you might be interested in assisting me as I attempt to ruin my life, or perhaps know someone well-suited for the task. Like I said before, moving from elitism and cynicism to despair and nihilism isn't going to be easy, but it wouldn't be a quest otherwise.

9.2 Commentary

Surprisingly, when this article was first published in November 2005, a lot of people who know me in “real” life read into it more than they should have, namely that I was outlining specific requirements I had for entering into a relationship with any of the women I was frolicking with that fall. Nothing could be further from the truth. Though I certainly was spending a lot of my time in the company

of various women, my so-called “romantic quest” had nothing to do with any of them. Instead, it was my ode to the concept of the Byronic Hero, a literary figure that I have long admired (and facetiously, attempted to imitate). The concept of throwing your life away subsequent to a failed romance appeals to me precisely because I’ve always been utterly too cautious to ever let silly things like “love” or problems with women get in my way. Secretly though, I suppose I have always harbored a hope that such a powerful love is possible, if not for me, at least for someone else. It makes for a “nice” vision of life.

In retrospect, the list of requirements I provided in this article were not all that off-base. Unfortunately for me (and as such, you), my romantic quest did not lead me to success in the past two years. But, as the observant reader may have noticed, this is only Part 1. The next part could be happening soon. One can at least hope.

Chapter 10

The Principles of Discontentment

10.1 Original Article

Originally published: September 19, 2006

I was recently asked what, in retrospect, may possibly be the single most poignant question one can ask another human being: “What in this life do you live for?” Put another way—a way that is more appropriate for an article on rohitsrealm.com—“why is it that you have not yet killed yourself and put everyone out of their collective miseries?”

Ostensibly, this should be a rather easy question to answer insofar as you are not actively contemplating suicide—and I am *not*. Yet, when asked this very basic question recently by a close friend I have often turned to in times of mental distress, I was left dumbfounded, unable to conjure any answer that was the least bit viable.

Why *was* it that I woke every morning and necessarily did what was expected of me? What was the reason I had not yet put everyone around me out of the collective misery arising from my presence? Was it for a specific reason? A means to an end? Or was it simply because there was nothing else to do? Did I continue to live solely because the status quo is merely less effort? Was I *really*

happy?

Many will likely look at my life and immediately dismiss the aforementioned thoughts as the petty and petulant repines of a typical bourgeoisie ingrate incapable of acknowledging the extent of his fortunes. *Don't you realize how **lucky** you are? Good school, well-compensated job, promising career prospects, and tons of friends. Many people never get that opportunity. You don't have a **right** to be discontent, much less complain about it.*

While all that may be true—I did go to a good school, I do have a good job and promising career prospects, and I do have many friends—does that automatically mean I should be happy? Do those facts give someone the right to deny me the basic human emotion of unhappiness? Do my fortunes allow someone to dismiss me as ungrateful and my thoughts as irrelevant? If the formula for happiness were simply some linear combination of a good school, a well-paid job, promising career prospects, and a multitude of friends, why is it that contentment remains so elusive for so many? Why is it that *Office Space* (1999) has come to define Generation X and to an extent my own?

Am I supposed to *apologize* for my successes? Am I supposed to simply accept the fact that I have met society's criteria for "happiness" and summarily relinquish any thoughts to the contrary that I may hold? Certainly, there is no doubt that many others in this world have problems that are more fundamental to existence than mine; lack of food, clothing, shelter, or opportunity are simply a few. Yet, should I find contentment simply because my life is not as bad as it could be? Does this fact instantly invalidate my problems altogether merely because I have not suffered the same misfortunes? If one were to listen to the self-righteous incantations of the self-avowed morally superior, that would be exactly right.

For too long, I have suffered under the yoke of this moral superiority, trying in vain to reconcile my ostensible successes with my deep-seated disaffection. No longer! No longer shall I endure the sanctimony and self-righteousness of incontinent pseudo-Marxists who would liken themselves to social revolutionaries, even as they traipse through their 20s in glorious indigence, funded all the while by

their decidedly bourgeoisie parents' sizable bank accounts. Disaffection is *not* the monopoly of the downtrodden, nor discontentment that of the destitute.

It is not as though I am complaining about the disappointments of untenable romances or grieving the gross injustice of not being able to afford the latest and greatest BMW, as many of my lesser peers are prone to do. Understanding one's purpose in life and finding one's motivation is a worthwhile cause that has occupied far greater men and women than either me or my self-righteous *comrades*. It has been the underlying theme of countless great novels, innumerable consequential lives, and nearly every philosophical movement that has ever existed. To dismiss these thoughts in another person merely because he or she may be materially successful is unforgivable. To allow someone's sanctimony to deter you from giving proper consideration to this most relevant question is incorrigible. My only regret is that I did not come of this conclusion sooner.

Hopefully those of you who have already experienced this discontent stemming from an elusive purpose in life will begin to reconsider it, rather than simply rejecting any unhappiness that may seep through your apparent successes as solely an aberration. Hopefully all you morally superior, incontinent pseudo-Marxists will emerge from your cesspool of self-righteous hypocrisy to realize that it is *you*, and not your ostensibly successful friends who cannot seem to find contentment in material banalities, that truly threatens to poison our society.

As for me, I still have no more of an answer to the questions above than I did two weeks ago in the discussion with my friend. Perhaps she was right in saying that this is a question I will likely struggle with for the remainder of my adult life. Then again, maybe I will suddenly find the enlightenment I have long sought in the unlikeliest of places. Either way, I have neither the time nor the inclination to deal with the sanctimony of those who would liken my material successes to my spiritual contentment; neither should you.

10.2 Commentary

Roughly between August 2006 and May 2007, I entered a period of intense depression that I had never known in my life. Whether it was because of the monotony of work, or the perceived futility of materialism, or the lack of challenges in my personal life, I could not tell you. But it got pretty bad towards the end. This article is the first in a series of entries I would write contemplating the “meaning of life.” The later articles would become more philosophical, but this one was quintessential *Rohit’s Realm*: angry, bitter, and a tad bit incendiary. I cannot now remember what prompted me to write this article specifically—whether it was a specific comment by someone or just years of pent-up frustrations—but in it I did not pull any punches. And I was rather articulate, if I do say so myself.

Ultimately, the underlying concept is one every ostensibly successful person must deal with: just because society says you are does not make it so, but complaining about it does not rest well with those who do not have even that. The notion that success is an internal, rather than external, concept is still one I struggle with to this day. At least, in 2006, I had the foresight to first document my thoughts, however inconsistent they may have been or continue to be.

Afterword

In the past five years, I have written over 325 articles for *Rohit's Realm*, most of which exceed 1,000 words. The sheer enormity of the (mostly irrelevant, verbose, and useless) prose unleashed upon an unsuspecting Internet public would be sufficient to shock the senses, if it were not for the fact that I hardly composed as much as I could have, writing only once per week on average. Selecting 10—*only* 10—articles out of more than 300 was no small feat; naturally, there will be readers who will not agree with my selection, or will have preferred to have seen this entry or that. And certainly there is no doubt other entries were equally deserving, if not more so. Ultimately, however, I felt that these 10 articles best captured the evolution of the Realm from when it was first started by a confused 18-year-old kid barely one year into college, to now, when it is manned by an equally confused (but ostensibly successful) young adult in his mid-20s.

And there can be no argument about the Realm having evolved—it has, and tremendously so, at that. *Rohit's Rants and Other Enlightening Thoughts* (the original title of my *blog* before it became synonymous with my web site) began as a sort of ironic joke: a reaction to the “blogging” of the late 1990s that mostly revolved around online communities of immature middle school and high school students, and Internet destinations such as Xanga and Live Journal. In opening up my own so-called “blog,” I spent my first six months simply mocking those around me who would write about the completely irrelevant happenings of their day, or their equally idiotic trifles with “love” or “relationships.” Those who came of age in that era will certainly remember the moronic entries that graced our computer

screens, and as such, I doubt I need reproduce one as an example—I hardly think I could, to be honest.

It was only well into 2003 that I began experimenting with more introspective pieces, writing about my personal transformation from high school to college, from adolescent to adult. This trend would continue throughout my undergraduate years, culminating in an almost regular schedule of angry, yet increasingly well-reasoned attacks upon various annoyances, interlaced with entries teeming with introspection and popular insights.

Upon my graduation from college in 2005, the Realm moved further into critical analysis and philosophical discussions (as is transparent in Chapter 10) concurrent to my own run-in with the “real” world. In many ways, the writings of the past two years paint a rather vivid portrait of my own struggle to come to terms with the platitudes of modern existence—a struggle which is not nearly complete, for if it were, I would likely be vaunted as the next great philosopher, and you would likely be paying some publisher in New York a lot for these words (luckily, neither of these things will be happening any time soon).

In one of the great coincidences of life, the five year anniversary of my blog coincides nicely with a major transition in my life and career: from the “real” world back to graduate (professional) school. The first five years were the semi-personal story of my life from high school to college to corporate America. The next five years promise to be the semi-personal story of my life from a 20-something single graduate student, to something infinitely more mature and serious; who knows what horrors (*e.g.*, marriage, children, mortgages) lie ahead. Stay tuned: needless to say, my fall will likely prove to be just as enjoyable as my rise.

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Secondly, my heartfelt thanks to all those readers (and friends) over the years who have taken the time out of their busy schedules to read and comment upon my writing; the success of *Rohit's Realm* in the past five years is as much due to their involvement as it is to my efforts. You know who you are.

Finally, I would like to graciously acknowledge the true heroes of *The First Five Year Plan*: the esteemed members of the homeless communities in Berkeley, Calif., and San Francisco, Calif. Without their unwavering harassment, idiocy, and sheer madness, I doubt I could have achieved what I did. My only hope is that in Chicago, Ill., where I move next, I will find a community just as dirty and in need of incarceration and/or institutionalization as I did in the past five years.

Ladies and gentlemen, it's been real. Until next time...