

Mentor's Introduction

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mentor's introduction

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Doctoral candidates, like normal human beings or Heinz products, come in many varieties. Paul fits into the Alice-in-Wonderland category rather well although this British subject is neither female, pre-adolescent, nor blond. He has, nevertheless, the same sort of perky curiosity, persistence to get on with things, and understanding of the fundamental common sensical character of life. With the questions generated by a double decade of classroom teaching he fell down the OSU rabbit hole and engaged in a series of academic adventures whilst confronting a cast of campus characters to rival some of Alice's.

Being of humble origins and a citizen in a monarchy, it took some time for him to cast off the spiritual cloak of subservience to authority, to challenge the many modern myths of our field, particularly those that insist on raising some artifacts to regal heights. Thus, he wondered, what if we were to turn our full gaze, were to open our minds and hearts to a lowly commoner in the pecking order of designed objects and were to ask it all sorts of questions about its history, anatomy, bloodline, relatives, etc.? Already outfitted for such speculation by the evolutionary art/design education curriculum of his native England, Paul brought a fresh honesty to his study and has created an attractive story, perhaps even an allegory which should stimulate the perceptive reader to ask similar questions of our entrenched dogmas. Whom does our current art curriculum serve? Should we look elsewhere for our paradigms? Paul's study has been, for me, a sort of intellectual mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. After forty years in the business, the machinations of its participants seemed moribund to me. Working with him and being infected by his wide-eyed and witty enthusiasm has breathed a bit of life into my jaded perspective. I suggest that his study may do the same for you.