

Douglas Hofstadter

Quotes

Science, Self, Brain, Thinking, Believe, Soul, Want, People, Levels, Trying, Truth, Perception, Dream, Lying, Long, Sentences, Evil, Numbers, New York, Mind

It turns out that an eerie type of chaos can lurk just behind a facade of order - and yet, deep inside the chaos lurks an even eerier type of order.

~Douglas Hofstadter

Hofstadter's Law: It always takes longer than you expect, even when you take into account Hofstadter's Law

~Douglas Hofstadter

Irrationality is the square root of all evil.

~Douglas Hofstadter

It is perhaps wrong to say that the enemy of enlightenment is logic; rather, it is dualistic, verbal thinking. In fact, it is even more basic than that: it is perception.

~Douglas Hofstadter

In the end, we self-perceiving, self-inventing, locked-in mirages are little miracles of self-reference.

~Douglas Hofstadter

If a mosquito has a soul, it is mostly evil. So I don't have too many qualms about putting a mosquito out of its misery. I'm a little more respectful of ants.

~Douglas Hofstadter

There has to be a common sense cutoff for craziness, and when that threshold is exceeded, then the criteria for publication should get far, far more stringent.

~Douglas Hofstadter

You can never represent yourself totally to seek self -knowledge is to embark on a journey which ... will always be incomplete, cannot be charted on a map, will never halt, cannot be described.

~Douglas Hofstadter

In fact, a sense of essence is, in essence, the essence of sense, in effect.

~Douglas Hofstadter

. . . all meaning comes from analogies.

~Douglas Hofstadter

Meaning lies as much in the mind of the reader as in the Haiku.

~Douglas Hofstadter

Many people believe that our lives end not when we die but when the very last person who knew us dies. Memory is part of it, yes, but I think it's much more than memory.

~Douglas Hofstadter

Below Every Tangled Hierarchy Lies An Inviolable Level

~Douglas Hofstadter

The following sentence is false. The preceding sentence is true.

~Douglas Hofstadter

We don't want to focus on the trees (or their leaves) at the expense of the forest.

~Douglas Hofstadter

No reference is truly direct – every reference depends on some kind of coding scheme. It's just a question of how implicit it is.

~Douglas Hofstadter

Reductionism is merciless.

~Douglas Hofstadter

The entire effort of artificial intelligence is essentially a fight against computers' rigidity.

~Douglas Hofstadter

Some of us, perhaps all of us, believe that it is legitimate to kill enemy soldiers in a war, as if war were a special circumstance that shrinks the sizes of enemy souls.

~Douglas Hofstadter

I would like to understand things better, but I don't want to understand them perfectly.

~Douglas Hofstadter

The nice thing about having a brain is that one can learn, that ignorance can be supplanted by knowledge, and that small bits of knowledge can gradually pile up into substantial heaps.

~Douglas Hofstadter

You make decisions, take actions, affect the world, receive feedback from the world, incorporate it into yourself, then the updated 'you' makes more decisions, and so forth, 'round and 'round.

~Douglas Hofstadter

The Strange Loop phenomenon occurs whenever, by moving upwards (or downwards) through levels of some hierarchial system, we unexpectedly find ourselves right back where we started.

~Douglas Hofstadter

It is an inherent property of intelligence that it can jump out of a task which it is performing and survey what it has done.

~Douglas Hofstadter

Sometimes it seems as though each new step towards AI, rather than producing something which everyone agrees is real intelligence, merely

reveals what real intelligence is not.

~Douglas Hofstadter

I don't feel I have the right to snuff the lives of chicken and fish.

~Douglas Hofstadter

This idea that there is generality in the specific is of far-reaching importance.

~Douglas Hofstadter

The paraphrase of Gödel's Theorem says that for any record player, there are records which it cannot play because they will cause its indirect self-destruction.

~Douglas Hofstadter

I am the thought you are now thinking.

~Douglas Hofstadter

This sentence contradicts itself - no actually it doesn't.

~Douglas Hofstadter

The strange flavour of AI work is that people try to put together long sets of rules in strict formalisms which tell inflexible machines how to be flexible.

~Douglas Hofstadter

No matter what verbal space you try to enclose Zen in, it resists, and spills over... the Zen attitude is that words and truth are incompatible, or at least that no words can capture truth.

~Douglas Hofstadter

One of the most important and fascinating of all computer languages is Lisp (standing for "List Processing"), which was invented by John McCarthy around the time Algol was invented.

~Douglas Hofstadter

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