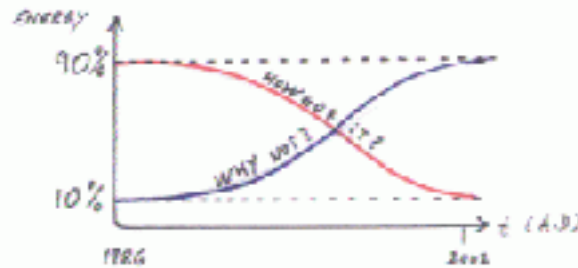


## Howgozit, And Why Not Do It?

The time this author started to study consciousness and the possibility of building a conscious computer can be defined pretty precisely to the year A.D. 1986. The more studies progressed the more he wondered why the issue of building a conscious computer had not been accomplished, yet. In the course of time, the two questions underwent a dynamics as to their relative importance. The "Howgozit?" question diminished, while the "Whynot?" question grew. The final stadium of a complete exchange in relative importance was reached in A.D. 2002. Then, the Whynot question merged into the 90% level, from which the Howgozit question had departed in 1986.



Voltaire already concluded that in history everything happens late, if at all. The 19th century German cartoonist Wilhelm Busch put this into his insight that the difficulty is usually trifle, the problem is not to be distracted from the task: "Die Schwierigkeit ist immer klein, man muss nur nicht verhindert sein."

While the Howgozit question poses a merely technical problem, the Whynot question is the much deeper one of the couple. It applies to such a vast variety of issues that it can be considered a hallmark of modern times in general. Usually we are under the impression of a world structured by possibilities of technology come true. But this impression is superficial. Why don't we effect population zero growth? Why don't we fly to and settle on Mars? Because, the will to do such things is lacking. The change brought about by these and comparable accomplishments would be too great. A will greater than the one at our disposal will be needed for these tasks, although it will be us earthlings who will carry out that will and do the task - a job we could as well do right away.

The Whynot question is a beautiful illustration of the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer. We can't but regress to Heracleitos' consolation that it is Ares (war) who does to "things" what the stork does to babies: pick them from the sweet pond of unconscious possibility and drop them in the lap of reality. ("War is the father of all things...") This insight reached, it appears a question of strategic (military) relevance if and when artificial human consciousness materializes.

While waiting for the inevitable war to bring about conscious computers, musing about future applications is all we can do. For this discussion we need the concept of a "conscious avatar," which is explained in the appropriate article. From there the least that should become clear is that psychology as such cannot acquire the status of a science without artificial consciousness to experiment with.