

**Blending,
Change and
Transformative
Character Arcs
for Compelling
Stories**



²⁷**Co**ming

³¹**Go**od

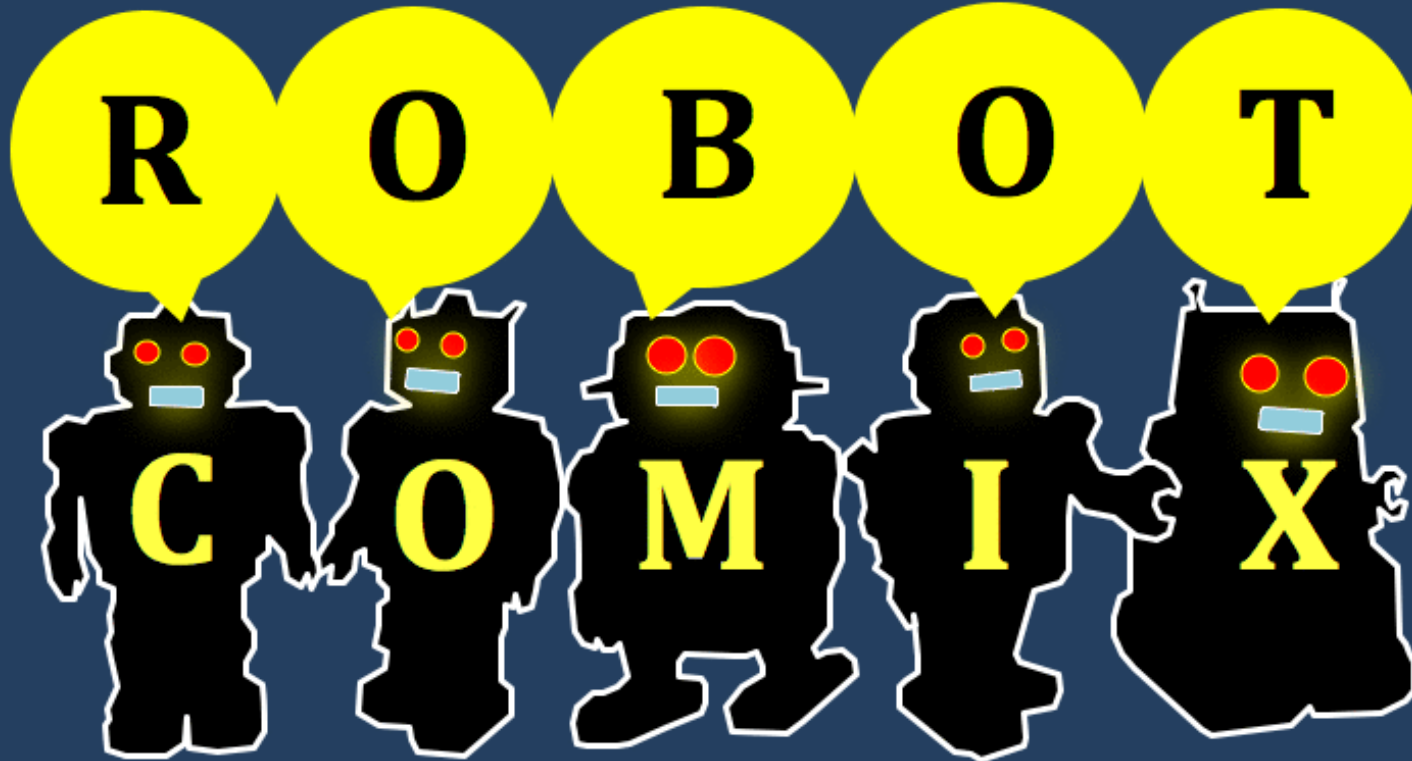
&

³⁵**Br**eaking

⁵⁶**Ba**d

⁷⁴**W** ¹**H** ⁵³**I** ⁴⁷**M**

**Tony Veale, *Afflatus.UCD.ie*
@MetaphorMagnet**



Web Comics That Transform Our
Understanding of **Computers** and **Creativity**

For more comix on creativity: RobotComix.com

W⁷⁴

H¹

I⁵³

M¹⁴

The What-If Machine*

** Truly, one of the oddest E.C. Strep projects ever funded!*



1.

The **general**
who became a
slave ...

2.

... the **slave**
who became a
gladiator ...

3.

... the
gladiator who
defied an
emperor!

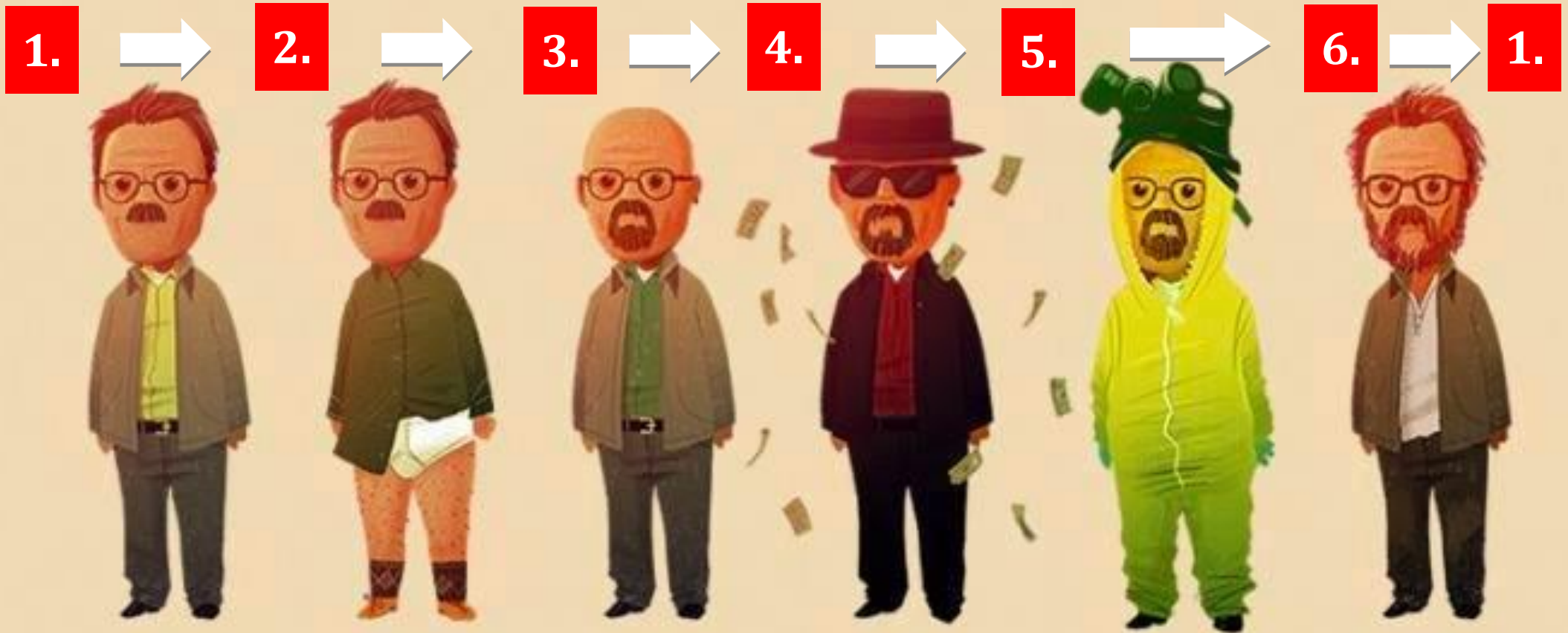


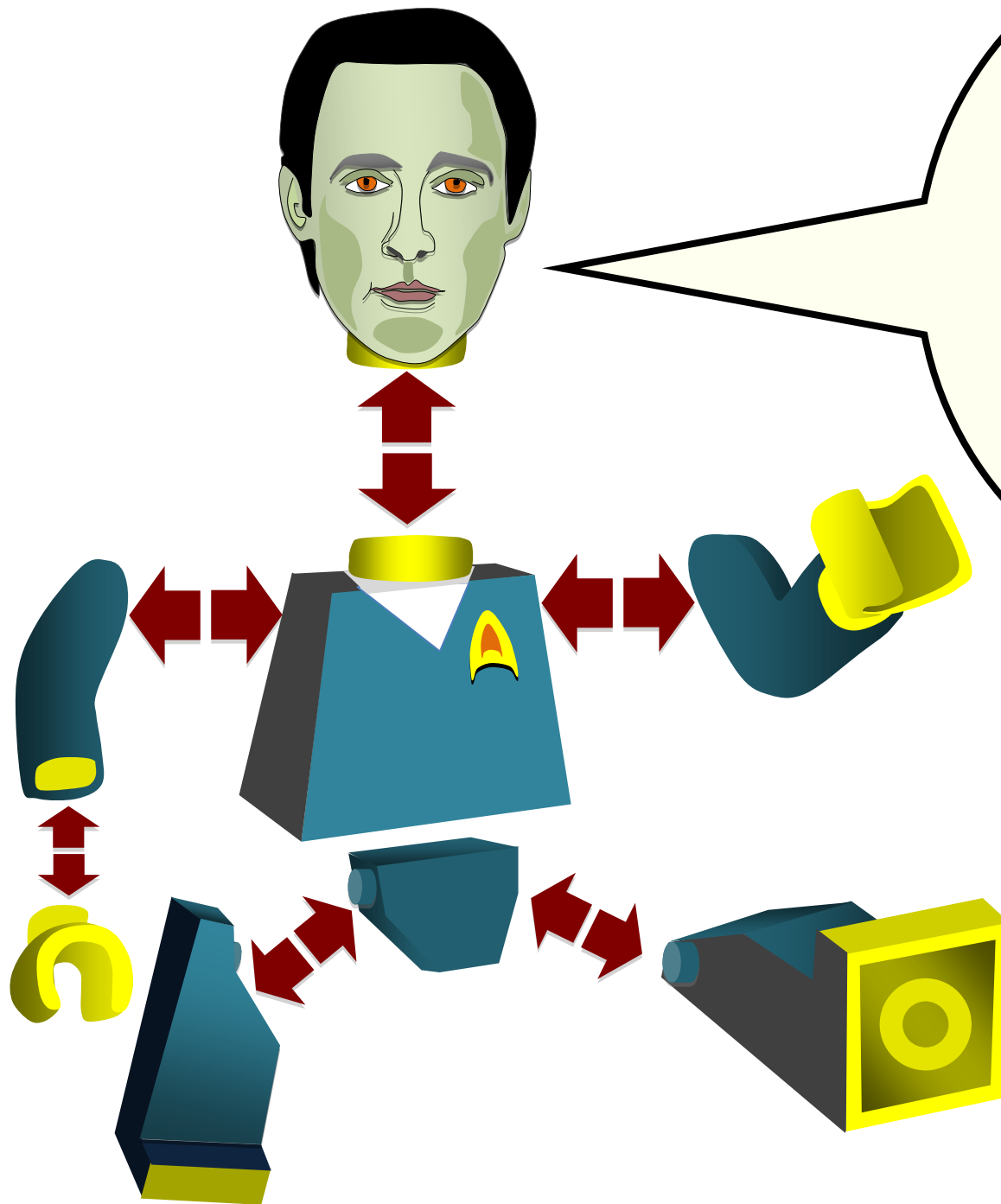
Good Stories Often Use Incongruity and Blending



W⁷⁴anted He²isenberg

From caring husband and teacher to evil drug-lord to public enemy #1 and back (somewhat) in 50 hours of TV.





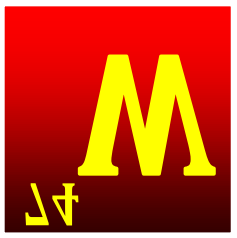
To understand how people & things *change over time*, we need a rich *property-level & behaviour-level* model of world concepts.

We want to *deconstruct & pull* our *concepts apart*, to *reassemble* them in new ways that create interesting contrasts.

Do you want *fries* with that metaphor?

Creative metaphors are *commodities* that machines can generate at *Web Scale* via *CC Web Services!*

The *Flux Capacitor* uses these metaphors to understand how one concept might *virtually become* another.



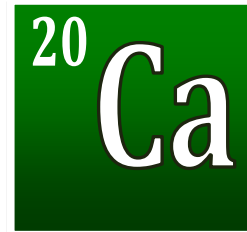
etaphor



agnet



ux



pacitor

Gram 1	Gram 2	Gram 3	Gram 4	Freq
sharp	as	a	tack	9355
smart	as	a	whip	5331
sharp	as	a	razor	3353
sharp	as	a	knife	2917
close	as	a	blade	2338
wise	as	a	serpent	1468
sharp	as	a	pin	1226
sharp	as	a	needle	1207
thick	as	a	pencil	910
thin	as	a	pencil	801
clear	as	a	crystal	594
sharp	as	a	sword	539
straight	as	a	dart	518
sharp	as	a	whip	507
sharp	as	a	blade	445
clean	as	a	pin	352
sharp	as	a	dagger	349
clear	as	a	diamond	344
keen	as	a	razor	341
fast	as	a	shark	318
quick	as	a	whip	316
flat	as	a	tack	263
qualified	as	a	specialist	236

Linguistic constructs like the simile frame “*as ADJ as a NOUN*” allow us to harvest a rich knowledge-base of stereotypical norms from the Web. ← These are from the *Google n-grams*.



The Flux Capacitor uses Google Web n-grams to appreciate which concepts are best imagined as the *start state* of a transformation, and which are better suited to being the *end state* of a change. The goal is to produce character arcs that are jarring for the right reasons and not the wrong ones.



Gram 1	Gram 2	Freq
students	become	139833
customers	become	118715
employees	become	59391
consumers	become	56844
teachers	become	40334
boys	become	34704
readers	become	32921
managers	become	32696
investors	become	31452
become	Christians	26927
become	targets	24696
become	slaves	18487
become	entrepreneurs	15359
become	masters	15332
become	homeowners	14510
become	lovers	13454
become	advocates	13446



What if a
millionaire ...

... became a
pauper?



Property-level transformations:

dashing → drab happy → miserable rich → poor rich → skint
ostentatious → unpretentious pampered → poor
privileged → destitute privileged → poor rich → broke
rich → desperate rich → destitute rich → miserable
spoiled → poor wealthy → broke wealthy → destitute
wealthy → poor

A Lexical Database of Antonyms (e.g. WordNet) allows us to align the contrasting properties of two stereotypical representations.

All the News that's fit to *invent*: **Headline Generation**

Millionaire maddened by mansions, walks into workhouses

Millionaire rejects richness, hungers for hopelessness

Millionaire goes from being apparently dashing to increasingly drab

Millionaire's fake happiness masked true hardship

Millionaire goes from living in mansions
to living in shacks and slums

Millionaire goes from living in ornate and luxurious mansions
to living in wretched and Spartan slums

Millionaire goes from living in magnificent and swanky mansions
to living in miserable and wretched slums

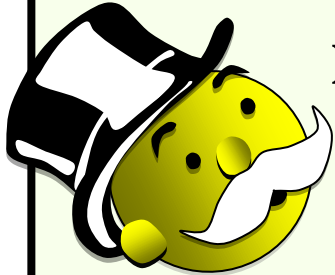
Millionaire goes from ostentatious to unpretentious

Millionaire's private pampering masked by outer poverty

Millionaire's artificial privilege masked genuine deprivation

Millionaire's public wealth masked pervasive poverty

Millionaire's false wealth masked genuine deprivation





Nun chucks chastity, wallows in wickedness

Nun nagged by nunneries, bounds into brothels

Nun chucks crucifixes, loves latex

Nun forsakes fidelity, veers toward vices

Nun hates habits, goes gaga for garters

Nun moans about mother superiors, poached by pimps

Nun skips out of spectacles, crazy for corsets

Nun vocal about veils, flies into fishnets

Nun vents about virginity, wallows in wickedness

Nun whines about wimples, grabs garters

Nun goes from being managed by abbesses and mother-superiors to being controlled by pimps

Nun goes from carrying rosary beads to carrying infections

Nun's forced chastity cannot hide wild hedonism

Nun's forced chastity cannot hide free grime

Nun's imposed faith masked secret disloyalty

Nun goes from living in cloisters and convents to brothels and bawdy houses

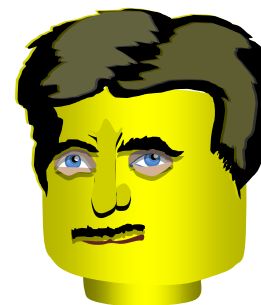
Nun's public morality masked inward sin

Nun goes from practicing chastity and fidelity to vices

Nun's public respect masked private immorality



A twitterbot using Flux Capacitor and Metaphor Magnet Web-service to tweet a new hard-boiled metaphor every hour



 **MetaphorIsMyBusiness**
@MetaphorMagnet

Misfit. noun. A weird cocktail of 5 parts quirk-developing genius to 4 parts shortcoming-stricken wuss. **#MisfitOrWuss**
#MisfitOrGenius

 **MetaphorIsMyBusiness**
@MetaphorMagnet

Abuse leads to the crime that causes suffering. Justice provides the punishment that inflicts suffering. Take your pick. **#JusticeOrAbuse?**

Flux Capacitor allows **@MetaphorMagnet** to blend the norms of two concepts with *differing affect profiles* to achieve a surprising *what-if* whole. Consider **Artists**:
(I used to be an artist!)



By chaining KB triples together, a bot can observe that **artists** typically cause a *positive effect on the arts*. Seeing that **critics** can have a *negative effect on arts*, and **dictators** have a *negative effect on their critics* ...

... **@MetaphorMagnet** reasons that **dictators** can have the *same positive effect on the arts as artists*! This is sophistry as '*critic*' is used in two differing senses, but in this what-if blend, **Artists become like Dictators**!



MetaphorIsMyBusiness
@MetaphorMagnet

Artists create the beauties that underpin arts. Dictators suppress the critics that criticize arts. Who is better? **#DictatorOrArtist**

← Reply 🗑 Delete ★ Favorited ... More

RETWEET

1

FAVORITE

1



9:53 PM - 6 May 2014

When two concepts cause the same effects (after a little *sophistry*), we can easily imagine a story in which one becomes the other, *deliberately or unintentionally*, with *dramatic* consequences.



I love the smell of *narrative* in the morning!



MetaphorIsMyBusiness @MetaphorMagnet · 17s

Pioneers create enterprises. Propagandists serve the leaders that launch enterprises. Who is better? [#PropagandistOrPioneer](#)



MetaphorIsMyBusiness @MetaphorMagnet · 21s

To lack a goal: This can turn assiduous researchers into prodigal wastrels. [#ResearcherOrWastrel](#)



MetaphorIsMyBusiness @MetaphorMagnet · Jun 1

Comedians break taboos. Discontent undermines the societies that enforce taboos. Do discontents make good comedians? [#DiscontentOrComedian](#)

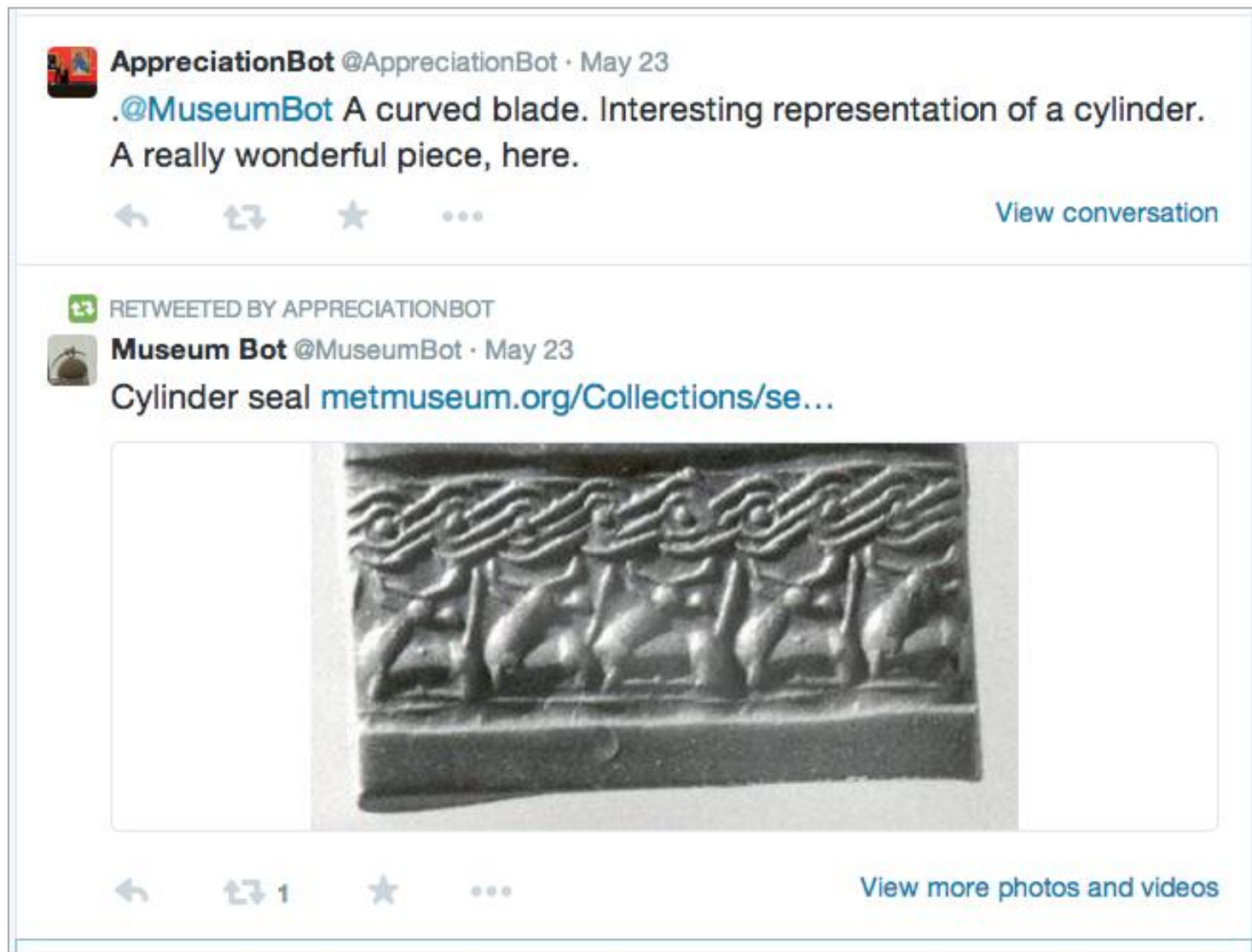


MetaphorIsMyBusiness


@MetaphorMagnet

Apostles nurture faiths. Jihadists threaten the infidels that disavow faiths. Who is better? [#JihadistOrApostle](#)

Metaphors are the stuff of psychologically real stories. They allow anything to be *story-fied*, as in this critic bot that comments on items in the Met's collection.



@appreciationbot by *Mike Cook* responds to **@museumbot** as a critic by using the *MetaphorMagnet* service to source metaphors on demand (e.g. *cylinder as curved blade*) and *ConceptNet* to suggest possible relationships between things.



You want metaphors? *I got yer metaphors. Deep metaphors. Shallow metaphors. Shiny metaphors. It's like I'm **giving them away!** Lovely Jubbly metaphors and the like at <http://Afflatus.UCD.ie>*

