

Surely the tree story has been left over from April 1st? Nature has already devised a fairly efficient device for extracting carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and producing something useful—it is called “Life”. So why waste effort on trying to produce an artificial version? I can understand the invention of e.g. the heart-lung machine, that takes over vital bodily functions during operations, and all credit to the clever folk who developed that artificial simulation of Nature. But artificial trees??

On the other hand, the notion of artificial substitutes for natural life forms does of course offer some intriguing further developments. How about artificial politicians? They could be introduced onto the public stage, having lived no useful previous existence; they could be programmed to talk nonsense as efficiently and pointlessly as their human counterparts; they could be devoid of conscience, honour, or common sense. But of course I realise we have such unreal creatures already—“Sir” John Major, the Miliband Brothers, “Lord” Mandelson, the painfully defective PM-machine called Gordon Brown

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