



## Welcome to a Work in Progress June, 2008

We used to play a game at home, my children and I. The sum of it was that they pointed to some book on a wall full of volumes and, naming the title, asked me to name the author. Or vice-versa. I scored pretty well, actually, either way, for the books—even those yet unread—were my friends. And the kids giggled as they went from book to book, enjoying the process, the sum of which was really just a game on our way to becoming friends.

I had learned the game in my father's considerable library, fascinated by interesting combinations of titles and authors that stick with me to this day. Imagine my delight, for example, in asking my father what that book titled "Religion" was about by an author named ""Bull" (my childish pronunciation of something like "Buehl"). He laughed, and so did I.

If friendship—call it bonding--be the sum of that game, can that be also the substance? Perhaps in part, for the substance of life is rooted in relationships. Yet surely there is more, too, which cannot be fully developed apart from the content that covers of books only portend. In older age now, I long more than ever for content, not only for myself but also for everyone around me--loved ones, friends, and foes alike.

When all the books and people who authored them are named, we have only begun the more substantive journey that awaits us in absorbing their content. Friendship, to grow deeper, must learn also to dialogue on substance. May the sum of things offered you here lead us there together!

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