Technosectarianism

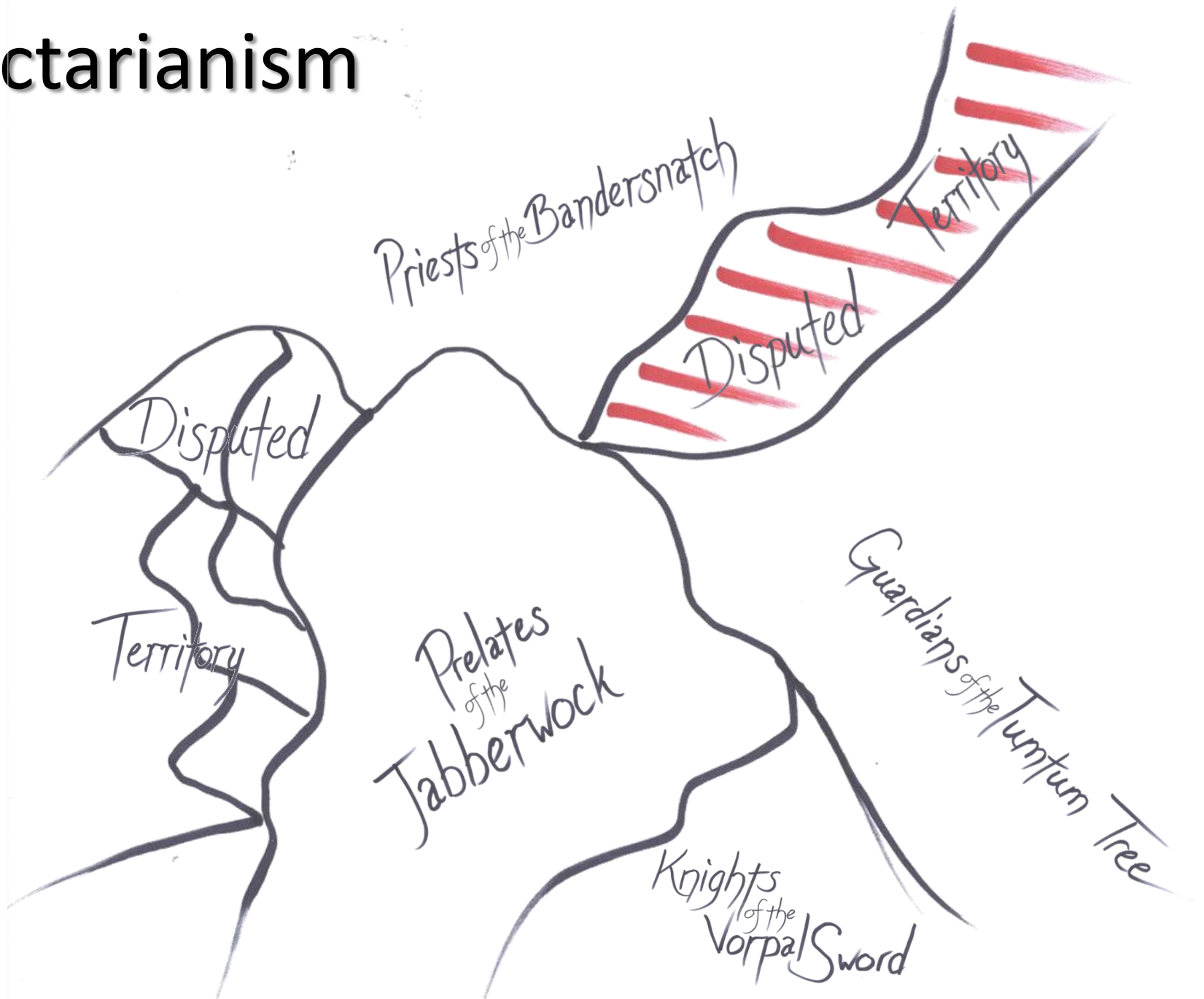## Applying Religious Metaphors to Programming

stephanie stuart mawler

2014-04-04

Goldsmiths University of London, UK

Sectarianism

Priests of the Bandersnatch

Disputed Territory

Disputed

Territory

Prelates of the Jabberwock

Guardians of the Tumtum Tree

Knights of the Vorpal Sword

Orthodoxy

The technology system is an Orthodoxy

a precious thing to be guarded,

a "sacred artifact"

Partisans

willing to

"defend, sacrifice to,

and care for

the sacred artifact"

Heretics

as an Orthodoxy
gathers adherents

Heretics rise

decrying Orthodoxy as

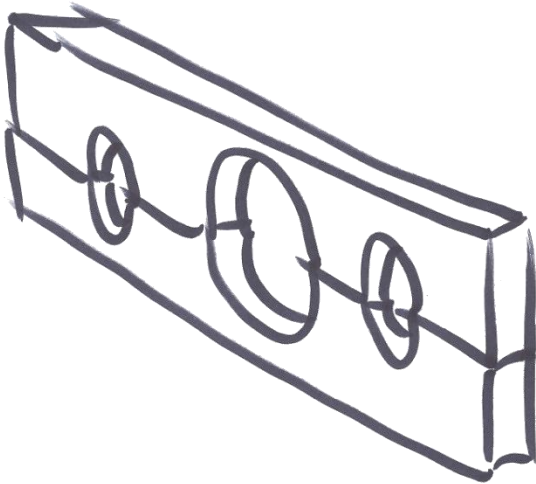invalid or unclean

a thing worth fighting

Apostates

followers of the Orthodoxy

eventually question
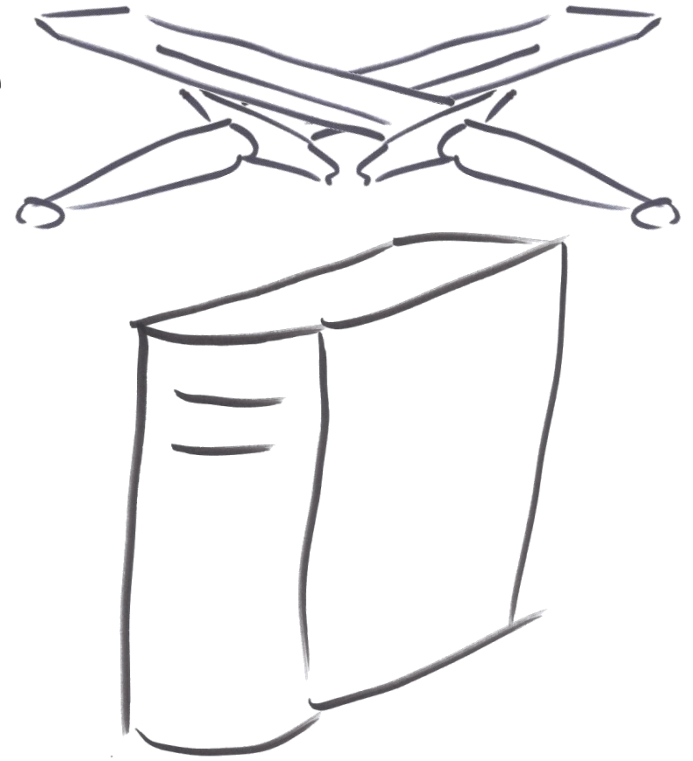
the Orthodoxy

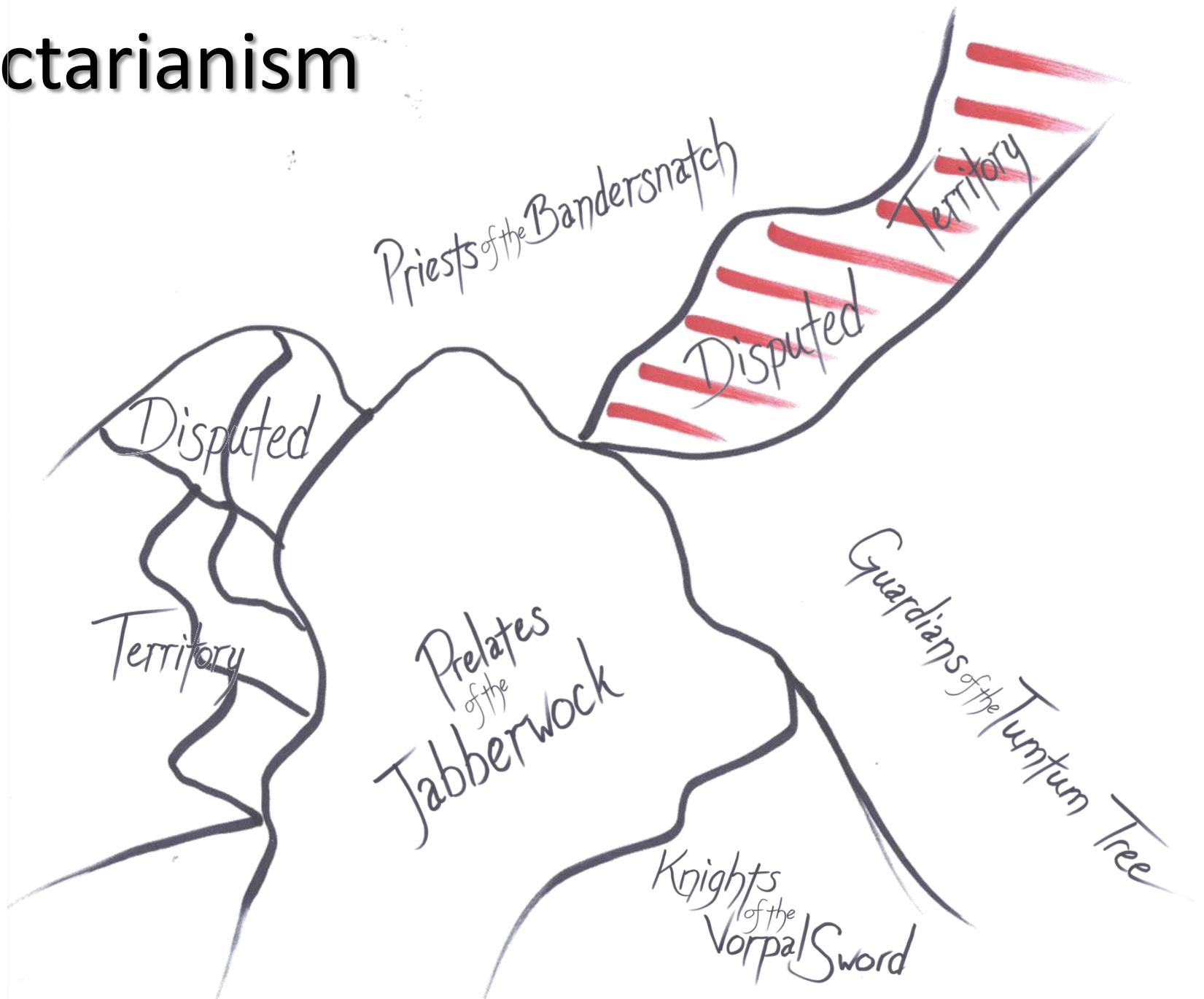in large and small ways

Technosectarianism

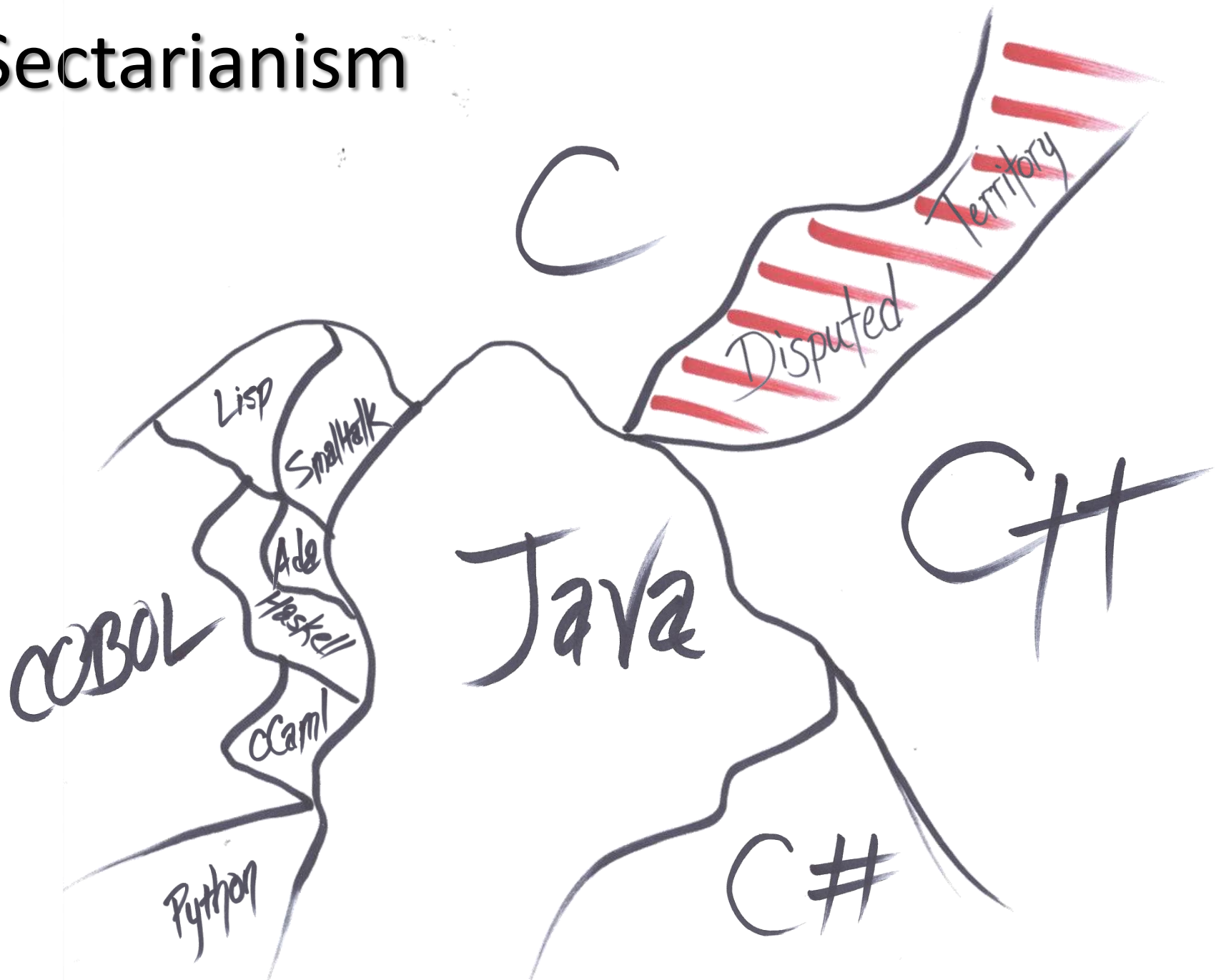boundary maintenance in programming-related communities oriented around a technology system

Sectarianism
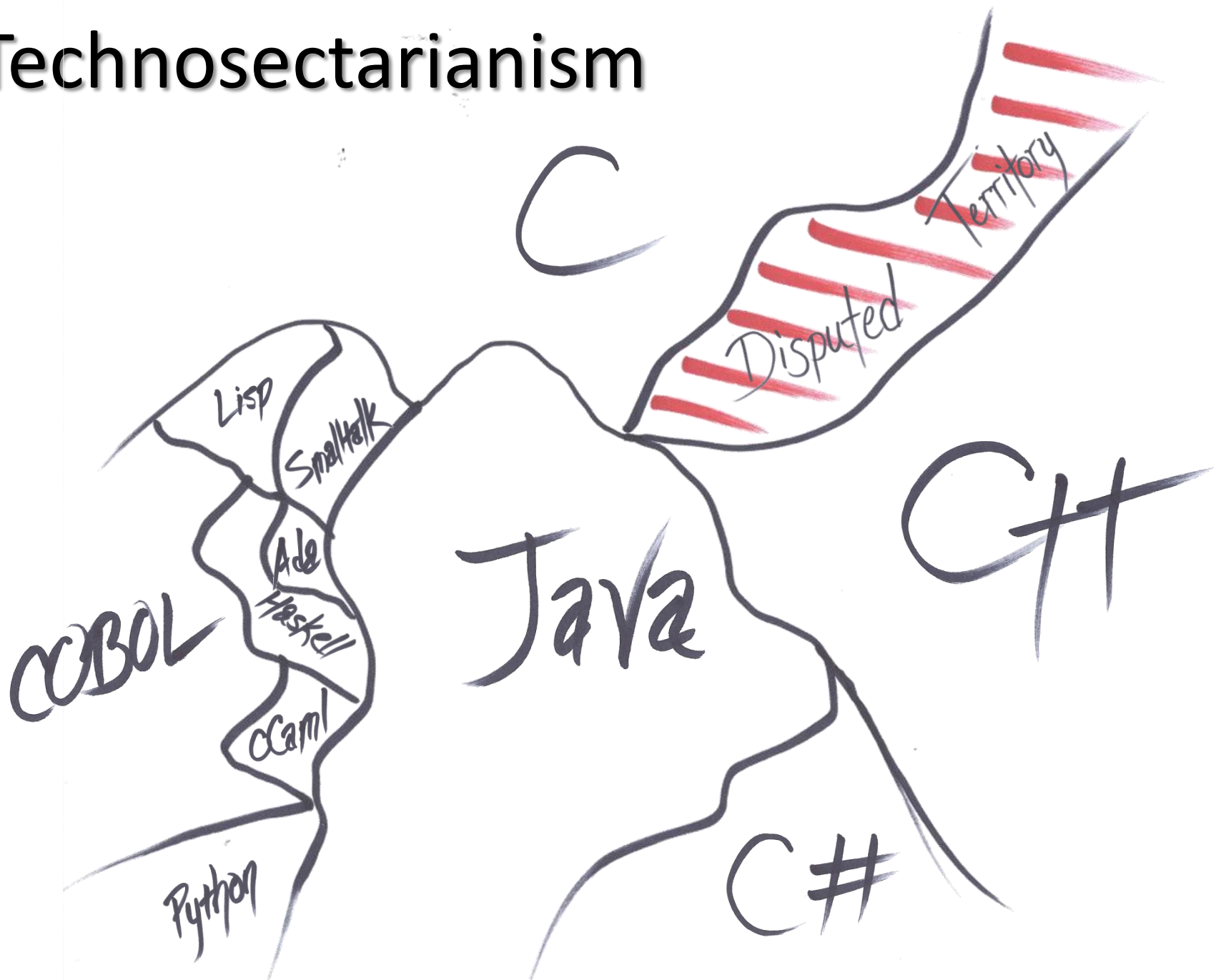
Sectarianism

Technosectarianism
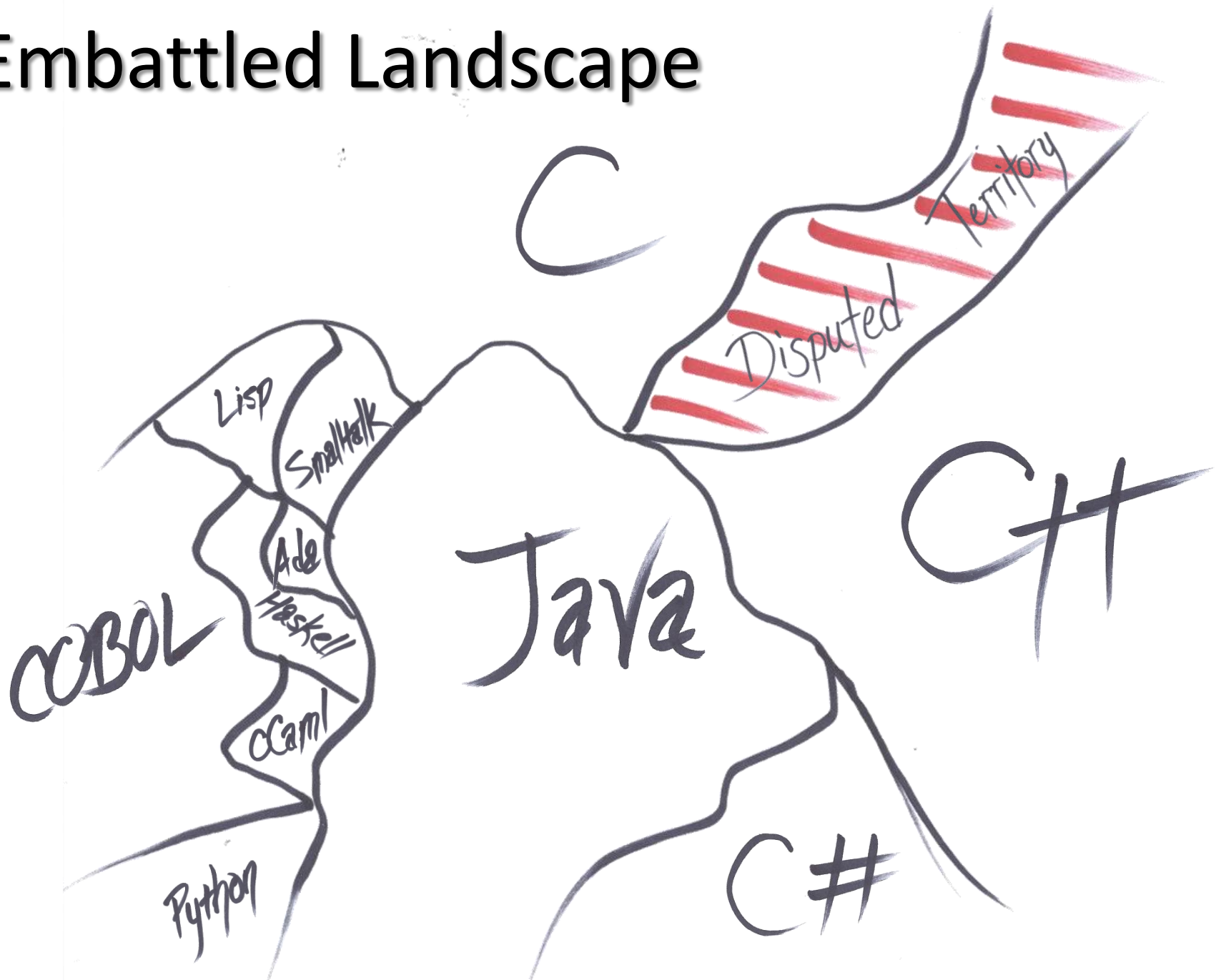
Embattled Landscape

Embattled Landscape
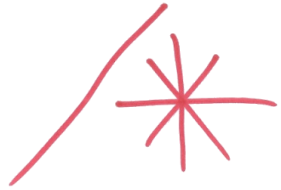
Technosectarianism

plays out within

the key artifacts of

the technology system
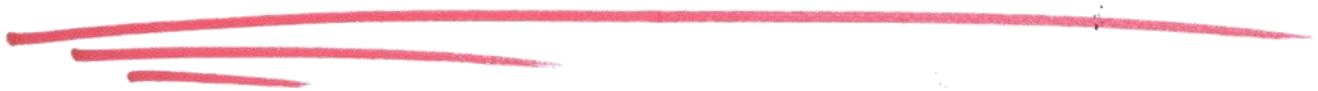
Written Interactions

Identity Neutral…

"Just the facts ma'am."

Foci

comments

newsgroup

threads

A Thought World

Programming languages

limit

what

can

be

thought

COBOL

large

mainframe

processing
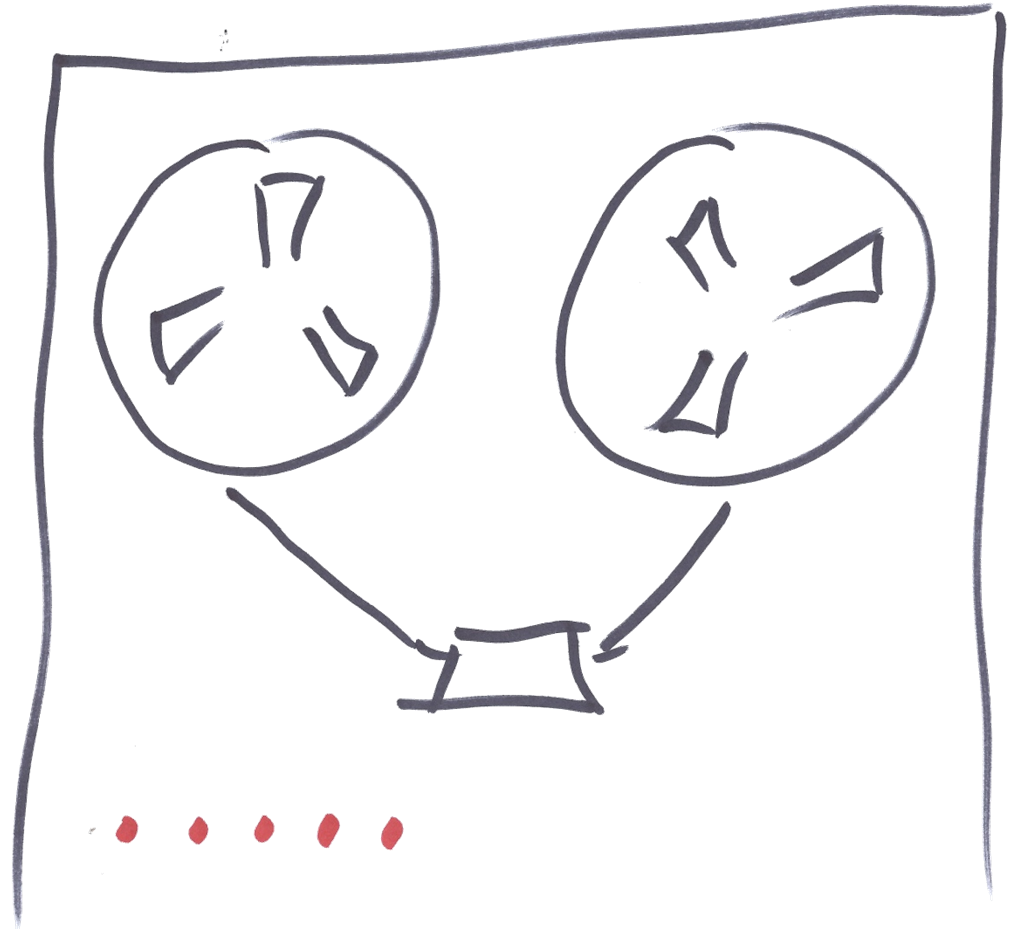
FORTRAN

formulas

$$\left(\frac{314\ 602\ 271 + 299\ 792\ 458\ 252}{8\ 088\ 486\ 768\ 192} \right) \sqrt{x}$$

algorithms

numbers

Java

cowboy

all-nighter

Making, Dividing, Stratifying

unwashed
masses

user
interfaces

operating systems

Priests
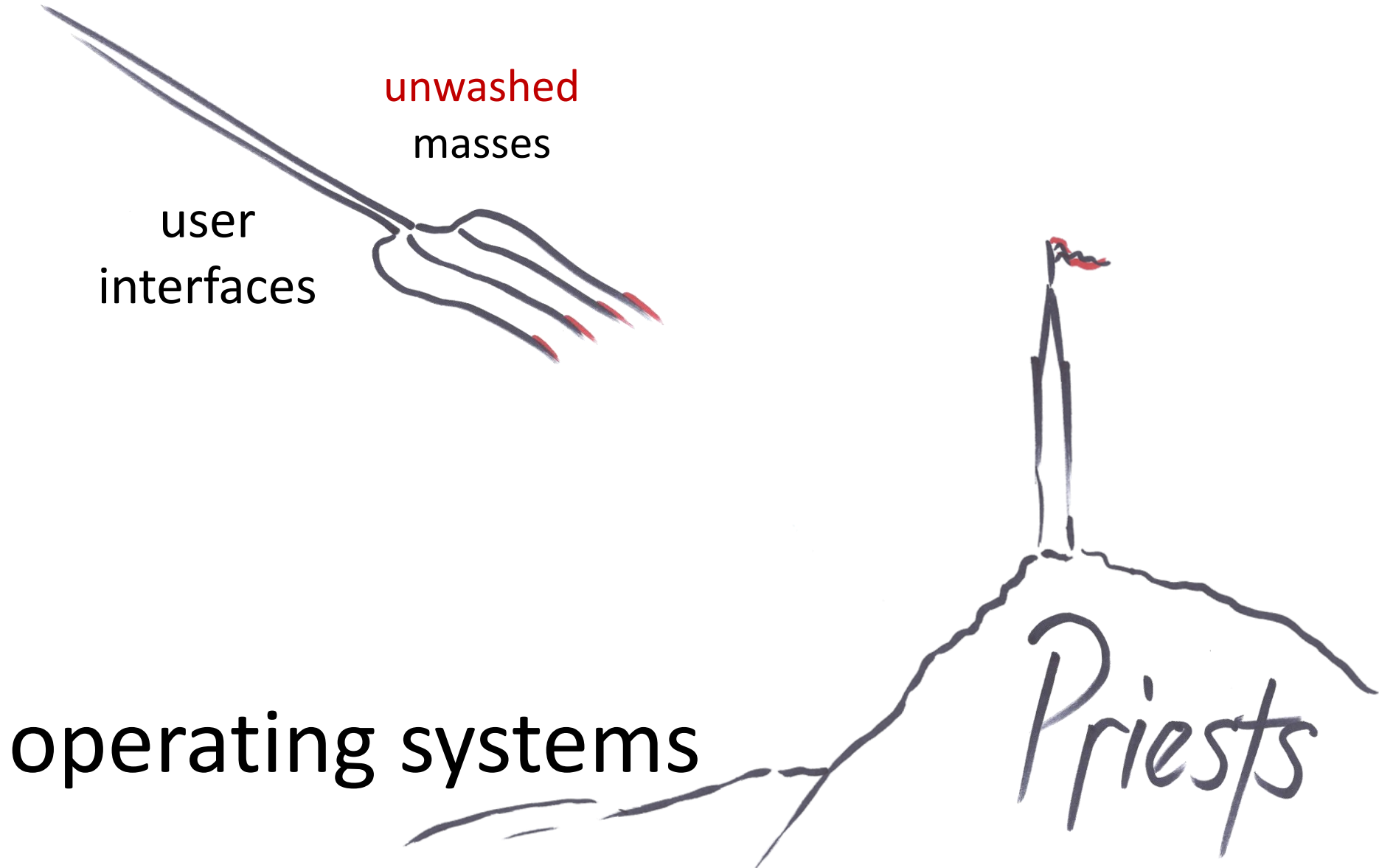
/*comments*/

Explain the code

comments

Exegesis

λίνυξ

"linux"

λίνυξ
"linux"
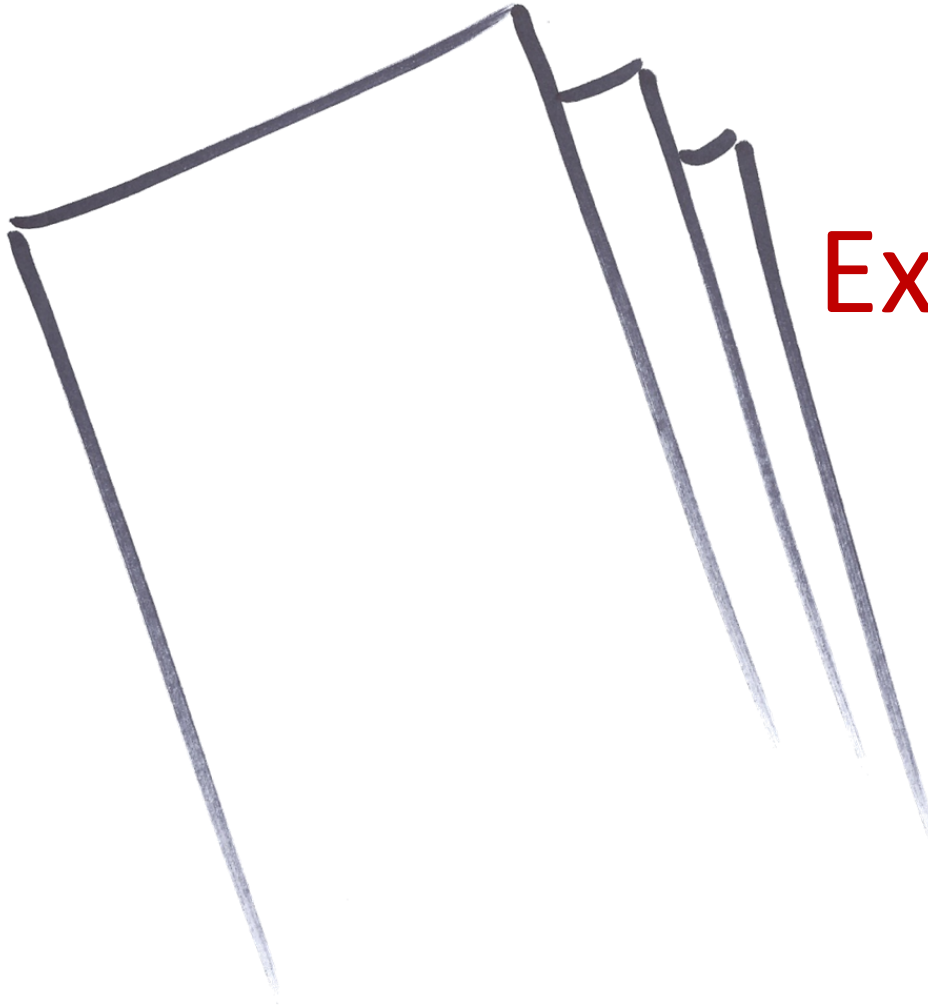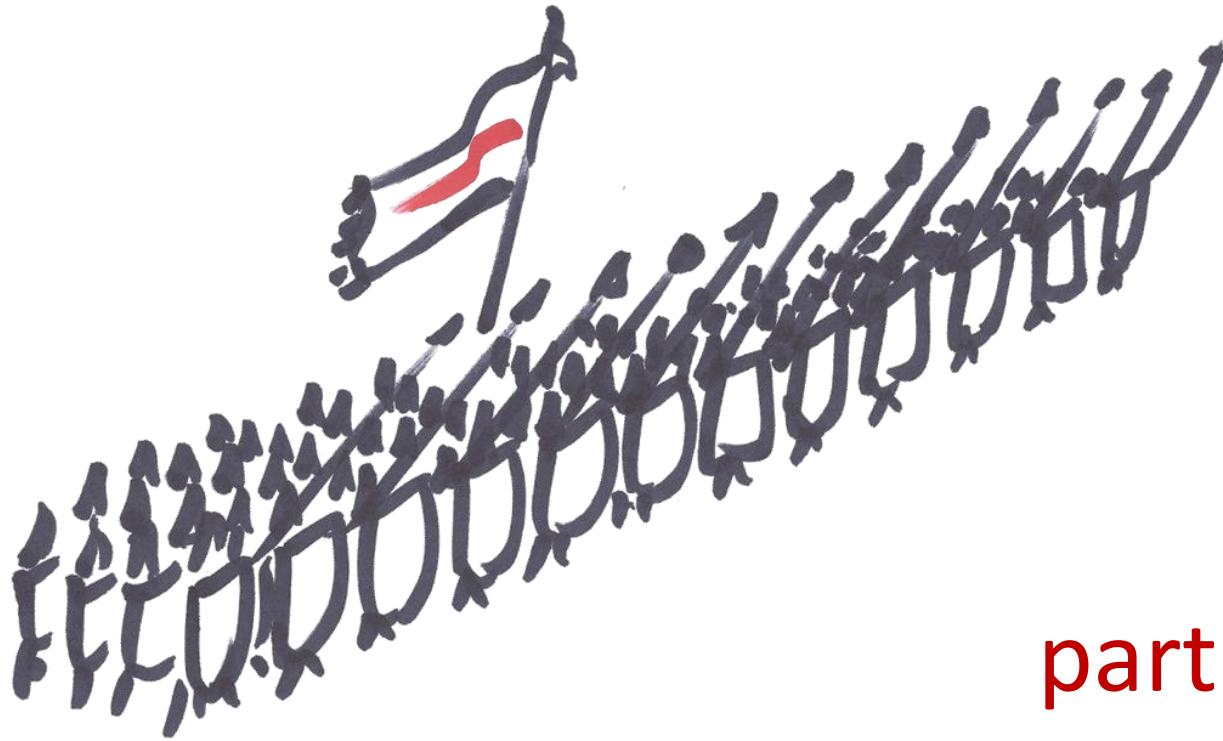
partisan

programmers

setuid() – The Facts

```
/*
 * setuid() is implemented
 * like SysV with SAVED_IDS
 */
```

setuid() – The Story

```
/*
 * setuid() is implemented like SysV with SAVED_IDS
 *
 * Note that SAVED_ID's is deficient in that a setuid root program
 * like sendmail, for example, cannot set its uid to be a normal
 * user and then switch back, because if you're root, setuid() sets
 * the saved uid too.  If you don't like this, blame the bright people
 * in the POSIX committee and/or USG.  Note that the BSD-style setreuid()
 * will allow a root program to temporarily drop privileges and be able to
 * regain them by swapping the real and effective uid.
 */
```

setuid() – The Story

SAVED_ID's is deficient

```
/*
 * setuid() is implemented like this with SAVED_
 *
 * Note that SAVED_ID's is deficient in that a setuid root program
 * like sendmail, for example, cannot set its uid to be a normal
 * user and then slip back to being root later. If you don't like
 * the saved uid too. If you don't like this, blame the bright people
 * in the POSIX committee and/or USG.  Note that the BSD-style setreuid()
 * will allow a root program to temporarily drop privileges and be able to
 * regain them by setting the saved effective uid.
 */
```

If you don't like this,

blame the bright people

in the POSIX committee

and/or USG.

the BSD-style setreuid()...

setuid() – A Story?

```
/*
 * setuid() is implemented like SysV with SAVED_IDS
 *
 * Note that SAVED_ID's is deficient in that a setuid root program
 * like sendmail, for example, cannot set its uid to be a normal
 * user and then switch back, because if you're root, setuid() sets
 * the saved uid too.  If you don't like this, blame the bright people
 * in the POSIX committee and/or USG.  Note that the BSD-style setreuid()
 * will allow a root program to temporarily drop privileges and be able to
 * regain them by swapping the real and effective uid.
 */
```

explaining

the

code?

newsgroup
threads

"I'm here for the
newbies"

$$\lambda \acute{\iota} o \pi$$

"lisp"

λιοπ
"lisp"

Artificial Intelligence
‾origins

Academic

Flexible

Elegant

Assault from Within

Since i'm writing... n i wrote a lot in the past on diverse issues scattered in various essays... i'll sum

some
fundamental problems
of **lisp**.

Redemption

one slight
hope for Lisp

and that is
emacs lisp.

Priesthood

the **Common** Lispers,
and **Scheme** Lispers,

sneer at emacs lisp

while the

emacs priests,

want to coffin

emacs **perpetually**

Unclean

comp.lang.lisp
is a group for
Common Lisp.

Some of us need
to get work done

and have no time

to **wine** over

minor improvements.

Go Elsewhere

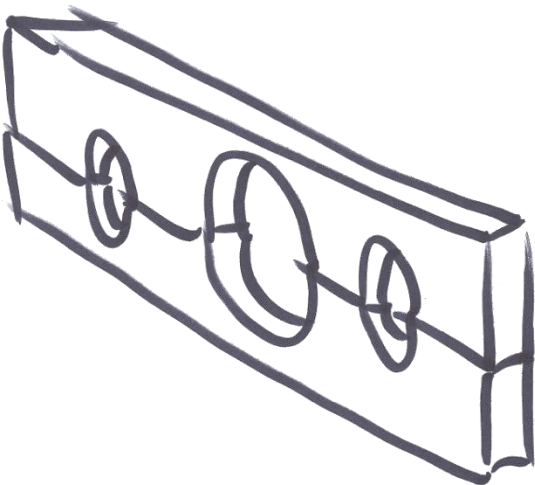**Maybe**

use

Mathematica

instead?

What Are These Interactions?

the

foundations

of

the

work

itself

programs   teaching

Expressions of a World

interactions are not just tools they represent commitment to the technology system

What's at Stake?

programmer work is not just work

identity and world view

are on the table with

every project

A More Efficient Project?

can programmers

benefit

by changing normative

understanding

of their tools?

Finally...

if the
technology system
is the basis
of belief...

is

Technosectarianism

metaphorical?