

The Sensationalist: #1

9/14/22

"We must find the locus of attention!"



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Symmetry (A short film script)

Henry Levitt

[Nighttime on top of a terrace with satellites on the building below. Color is slightly washed out like the filter on a bad sci Fi movie. Two silhouettes are seen near the edge. Muttering is heard. Crickets audible. Shot jumps to the conversation between the two figures. Their clothing is now seen. They are wearing bright sneakers, black pants, tucked white button down, and a black windbreaker. Their hair is done like the founding fathers.]

Cornelius: I don't think the method is a reliable indicator. It's like forcing Toucan Sam to taste chili peppers. [Turns to look Claudius in the eye] Birds can't taste spice, Claudius!

Claudius: [Laughing heartily] You're being too exact, Cornelius. [Puts firm hand on Cornelius' shoulder in a way that suggests a close friendship.] I'm not looking for causation because [drops bag of red flowers and becomes inaudible]

[Hooded figure with cape sprints by jumping the stairs silently to make the trip shorter. Camera now follows the figure but audio stays with two men as quick banjo music begins.]

Cornelius: That was strange.

Claudius: [Now standing up again, bag of red flowers in hand.] What was?

Cornelius: That figure that was running? Didn't you see it?

Claudius: No, I must have missed it.

[Banjo and fiddle music becomes louder as the figure runs faster and faster. Camera follows from behind. Shot cuts to her running into the building and sitting down in a chair out of breath. After a few seconds she pulls a handwritten note out of her pocket. It looks like an ingredient list except the letters are not the Latin alphabet. She puts the list on her lap, her fingers shaking, and pulls out the corner of a plastic bag quickly hiding it back in her pocket. She folds the list and puts it back in her pocket.]

[Claudius and Cornelius walking along highway smoking cigarettes.]

Cornelius: Look, I'm not saying that your method isn't generating results, I'm just asking whether it's actually able to measure the thing you claim it does.

Claudius: it obviously can't and that was never the point! It's like saying that fate has a cause and effect. If everything is already determined, then how could one action affect another?

Cornelius: I see your point then. So this could either be groundbreaking or utter bullshit? [Looks at Claudius smiling in a friendly way.]

Claudius: I guess you could say that [The two walk in silence for a few moments]...but it's not about the measurement method! The real discovery is the interpretation algorithm.

[Scene cut to Woman inside building. She is looking at her watch. This time displays 10:18.]

Sumitra: [Angrily under her breath] She was supposed to call 3 minutes ago. C'mon...I guess I'll have to run it. [Sumitra takes out her phone and sends a text to "Contact 1": *No time to waste. Going to the house now.* She gets up and quickly walks to the door and begins running.]

[Outside a small white house at night, crickets chirping, scene of nighttime serenity with a hint of eeriness. Time displayed on the bottom right of the screen. Flashing 10:27. Changes to 10:28 as Sumitra comes running into frame. She walks up to the front door (out of frame). Noise of her opening, walking through the door, and closing it behind her are heard.]

[Shot cuts back to Claudius and Cornelius, now sitting on roots under a lone, old, tree in a field. The two are huddled over a rolling tray with a mound of dried red flowers. On the left hand side is a rotary herb grinder.]

Claudius: [Talking low while grinding red flowers] The interpreting algorithm takes the chaos generated by the Objective State, maps it to a human brain, then works backwards to build a model of the molecule that would most closely cause that state.

Cornelius: I don't want to say that you've just wasted 4 months of time and energy... but that sounds like pure extrapolation.

Claudius: I don't doubt that there was *sooooo* extrapolation, but every now and then we need to make a leap to discover something new. [Cornelius rolls his eyes.] Here we have a sample of [under breath], a very endangered, Pentas *lanceolata* from an ancient Egyptian garden. The algorithm claims to detect that universal chaos molecule in the flowers of this plant...

Cornelius: Claudius, assuming your data was accurate and the mapping algorithms were true and all the other leaps you took actually pay off, what is this molecule even supposed to do?

Claudius: [Looks at Cornelius, hesitates with a smirk on his face and an inferno of curiosity in his eyes.] I don't know.

[Sumitra is walking among many people within the house who are softly chattering. The people are wearing everything from robes to jeans to shorts, as if they came straight from their daily lives. The interior of the house is well-decorated and cozy. She is

pushing through the crowds, and the camera is following her from behind. At the front of the room there is a large decorative metal bowl on a low wooden table. Inside are red flowers. Sumitra kneels and takes out the plastic bag. It is full of red flowers. She empties the bag into the bowl. Noises of fabric are heard indicating that everyone is becoming seated on the floor. Sumitra, too, becomes seated. The camera faces the mass.]

[An old man and old woman step forward and kneel at the table facing all the people. They are wearing robes and their faces are not visible. In everyone's lap is a pipe, all different from the next. The woman pinches some flowers and places them in both her and the man's pipe. The man compresses both pipes and passes the bowl to a young man in front of him. The man pinches some flowers and packs his pipe. He passes the bowl. This process continues in silence. After 2 more people do the same the scene cuts away.]

[Claudius finishes rolling a joint with the red flowers and admires his work. He closes his eyes for a moment and takes a deep breath.]

Cornelius: I don't know if I admire your bravery, trust in yourself, or find this whole stupid game artistic in some sense, but I know I can't stop you as a friend.

[Claudius seems to be in a state of meditation and does not react to Cornelius' words. Claudius pulls out a small torch lighter and lights the end of the joint, taking a deep inhale and exhaling all the smoke after holding it for a few seconds and repeating twice more without breaks for air in between. Camera cuts to close up of eyes which slowly become a blank stare.]

[All people in the room raise their pipes in unison then bring them to their mouths while lighting them.]

[Some time passes. Cornelius is doodling in the dirt with a stick. Claudius begins to stir.]

Cornelius: What's the consensus, doctor?

Caudius: [Voice sounding far away with a blissful smile on his face] I can either extrapolate further or you can try it yourself.

[Room is in a cloud of white smoke, now the camera is facing the old man and woman who are harmonizing a well-practiced meditation tune.]

Old man: [Woman is still singing.] ...and that we may find symmetry through constancy in the chaos of the universe. [The voice is striking because it sounds just like an aged version of Cornelius.]

END

The Fabric Cube

Henry Levitt

During the intelligible flashes of naive childhood

I recollect crossing crossing my heart and hoping to die,
That I would avoid the fickle organizational prison for good.

But I found necessity a reason enough to buy
Wholeheartedly into deception my previous form understood,
Until the kafkaesque reality seemed to pass daily by.

That is to say my indefinite home of a fabric cube
Encompasses my sensations while daylight shines,
All the while suppressing odd nightmares of the nine-to-five
With promise of more imaginary numerical values I've learned to idolize.

One Day I Will Replace All the Caffeine in Your Coffee.

Frankie Vinehardt III

One day I will replace all the caffeine in your coffee with cathonine. Maybe you won't notice the difference, or you'll think to yourself "My coffee is especially good today!" Maybe after the second day you'll want to drink coffee even more. But by the third day, I'll have replaced the caffeine with codeine. And you'll think to yourself "This isn't coffee at all!"...but it is, I simply replaced the caffeine. On the fourth day I may get tired of alkaloids and replace all your caffeine with rat semen. Don't worry, I'll limit myself to a maximum of 100 mg. If you still happen to be drinking coffee by day five, I may start experimenting on you with ayahuasca. You won't feel much, though, because I won't add the MAOI inhibitor until day seven. On day six, you'll still taste the characteristic bitterness of those DMT crystals, but I'll have replaced the caffeine with a healthy dose of scopolamine. When you lay down in mild delirium thinking "This isn't at all how coffee should make me feel!" I'll be right there caressing your head and whispering sweet Italian gibberish into your left ear. On day seven, I'll throw some Syrian rue in your coffee and watch the show.

New Stanford Study Raises Alarm Over Widespread Addiction

Henry Levitt

In a new study conducted by psychologist-researchers A. Greenley, R. Staffe, and L. Koi published in the *Stanford Psychological Review*, found positive emotions to be addicting. These emotions were so addicting, in fact, that subjects were observed to seek them out virtually every moment of the day.

“The results were frankly astonishing,” reflects Arthur Greenley, PhD, tenured behavioral psychology professor at Stanford University and co-director of the Institute of Modern American Addiction Studies and Systems (IMAASS). “Before the study, we expected the positive-emotion-seeking behavior to occur rather infrequently, perhaps twice to three times a week. But we found that this behavior occurs up to seven times a minute in normal populations.”

The data is in and it’s clear: People want to feel good. But not everyone is jolly about the results: Stanford psychology researcher Rebecca Staffe, PhD, who has written numerous peer-reviewed articles on the socio-psychological benefits of corporate employment, worries about the dangers this addiction poses to youth. “This positive-emotion-seeking addiction has the potential to completely alter a young person’s life in harmful ways. What if, for example, teenagers and young adults begin to spend all their time seeking pleasure instead of focusing on productive pursuits?” Staffe’s concerns are not without merit; a recent survey conducted by the American Sociological Foundation found that 88% of young adults held unfavorable views of employment, three quarters of individuals 19-34 felt dread when paying credit card bills, and 2/3rds of this age group disagreed with the statement “Being an active member of [my current] society is an important use of my time”.

Naturally, the Stanford Study has raised widespread public alarm. Fortunately, politicians and privately funded think tanks are already working alongside the researchers to stifle this crisis at its source. Some proposals include “anti-pleasure addiction” pills that block the release of problematic endorphins and mandatory dopamine and serotonin center lobotomies for the highest risk populations. Both proposals show promise in limiting the damaging and permanent effects of positive-emotion addiction.

Emotional psychology professor, Lee Koi, offers a simpler solution: “Whenever the urge to seek a positive emotion arises, don’t follow it. Instead perform dull tasks you ought to be doing or seek out experiences that bring abject boredom. You can even pursue activities that bring about negative emotions, like interacting with your wife.” Koi has been testing the strategy on himself for some time. “This method seems to be 100% effective,” Koi continued, “I haven’t felt a positive emotion in years.”

About the Author:

Henry Levitt has been covering addiction related news since 2021 when he got addicted to reading addiction-related psychological journals. We are all praying for him and hope he makes a full recovery!

The O.A.R. Project,

AKA Obscene Amount of Radishes Project

Goal: The goal of this project is to grow an unnecessary, objectively outrageous, and perhaps frightening quantity of radishes.

By the time they're ready to harvest, I want to be questioning my mental sanity with how many radishes are in my possession. I want to be utterly perplexed with why I started this project and equally bewildered with what to do with so many radishes. I want to lose sleep over the nightmarish thought of the unbelievable amount of radishes I own. I want everyone who knows about the O.A.R. Project to reject me as a member of society, a sort of radish pariah. If they did not, I would be concerned with the type of people I'm surrounding myself with. I hope to lose all my friends, family, and acquaintances over the sheer amount of radishes in my life.

This is the goal of the Obscene Amount of Radishes Project.

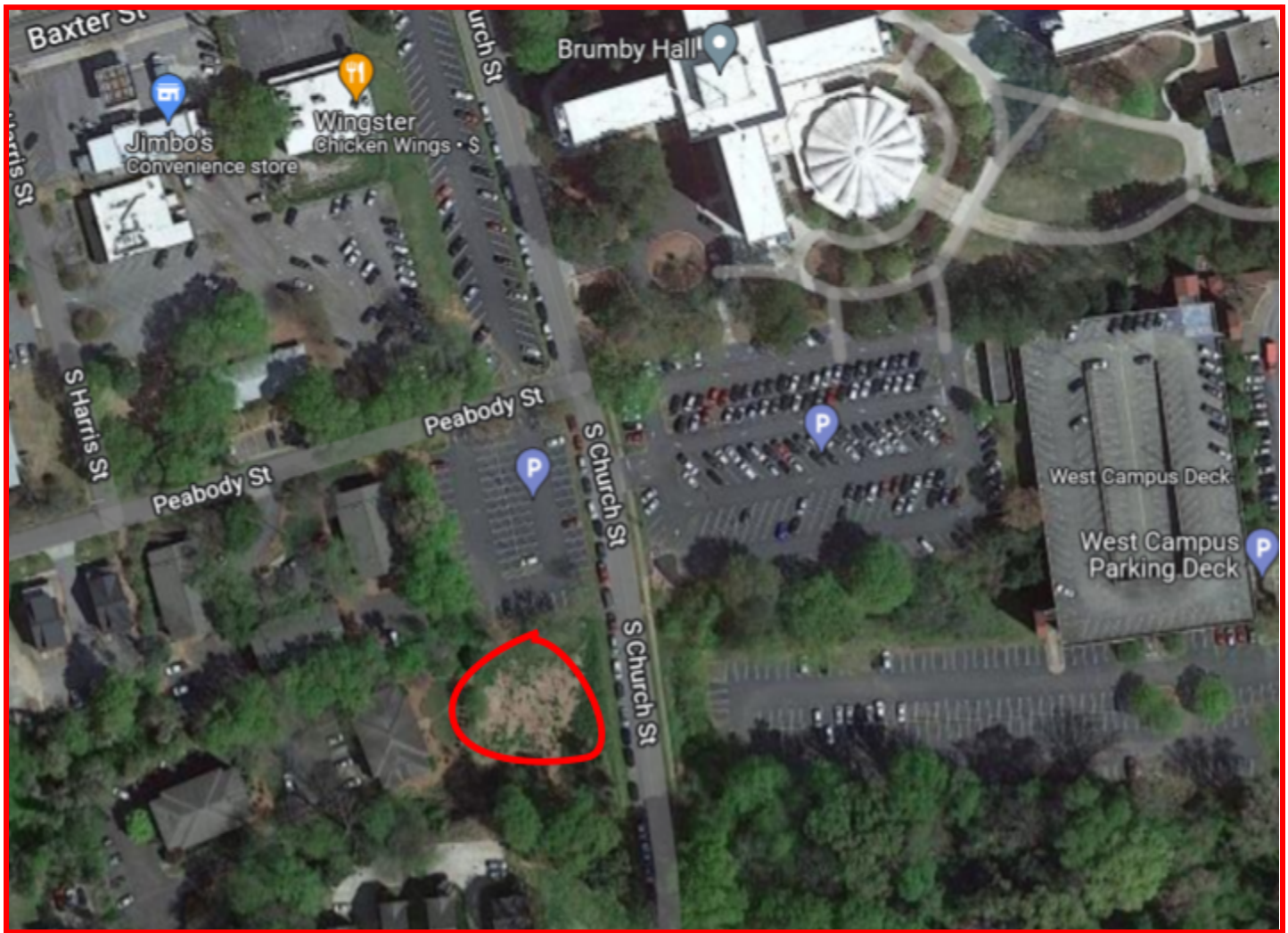
****You may ask, why am I doing this? Perhaps there's some shadowy impulse driving me that I don't understand or maybe it's because I can. Or it could simply be to pass the time.**

Plan:

1. Find location
2. Order materials
3. Prepare soil and plant radishes
4. Water occasionally
5. Harvest

Location:

In my typical criminal fashion (because I am a criminal) I plan to guerilla grow, or grow on property that does not belong to me (trespassing). This is because I do not own property and I cannot legally vote in Georgia. The latter point is completely unrelated. I have identified a seemingly abandoned site very close to my dorm. I live in Brumby hall. There is an open field next to a parking lot with relatively decent soil. It seems to have been an old dumping ground for wood chips. On the side opposite to the parking lot there is a bamboo grove. The prospective spot is circled in the image below.



Here's a view from on the ground:

The area I plan to plant in is circled in red.

Materials:

- 1000+ radish seeds (variety undecided)
- Quick release fertilizer
- 2 Watering cans
- Water source
- Shovel/hoe

**Materials will be ordered

tonight, (9/14/22)



Music of the #1: Clubbing Harder at Home

Henry Levitt

This has been The Sensationalist: #1

“Everyone is too involved with their own bullshit to smell yours”