

On Optimized Thinking & Neo-Solipsism

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Part I: Optimized Thinking

The best minds can rest. A mind that cannot rest is like a bodybuilder who goes beyond their limit into injury. Since minds are an intimate subject, one can only speak for their own mind. Psychology is often unpragmatic pseudo-science in that the field generalizes behavior of the masses but can never make definitive claims about an individual's subjective experiences. For these same reasons, consciousness is omitted when defining what a human is since it is impossible to "step into another's shoes" and it is impossible to observe and verify the mind of another without becoming one with that very same mind one wishes to observe and study. In other words, the intricacies inside artificial and biological minds are unobservable black boxes. A reader can only extrapolate and apply only approximations of any teaching to their own life as that person sees fit.

First, if thoughts are automatically generating, coming and going, like an infinitely continuous river, then does thinking or resting from thinking ignore this automatically generating process? One might suppose actually being aware of or devoting attention to such generating thoughts involves some thinking effort. But can one consciously choose to stop "looking at" the continuous river of thoughts?

It seems almost impossible to stop being aware of thoughts, inner dialogues, and visions. Much thinking seems involuntary in this regard. So perhaps the best one could do is to purposefully "think lightly" rather than "think heavy." But this implies one can actively discern and choose to avoid dense thoughts over less dense thoughts. This discernment seems challenging to accomplish and apply in real time.

Is there merit to consuming 'brain rot' entertainment media or in playing games to pursue "light thinking?" Do such activities like consuming 'brain rot' give one the "light thinking" needed to recover so that one may later perform better in the "heavy thinking" portions of their professional life? How does one recognize when that person is burnt out from heavy or light thinking, or from thinking altogether?

Studies on watching inspirational movies or finding relief through pornography or love-making may be interesting regarding the study of optimized thinking. These forms of media and distractions require a consumer to be relaxed and in a receptive state, potentially allowing one to become re-energized and inspired towards new intellectual pursuits. Inspirational films like the Animatrix, Transcendence, Black Mirror, Altered Carbon, or even science fiction literature like Caudill's "Thus Spoke Siddhartha" may fit a niche medium between light and heavy thinking by putting the thinker in an alternative frame of reference which may reveal what intellectual paths may be better or worse, or simply gives the mind a break from prolonged and highly focused attention dedicated towards an area of inquiry.

Nikola Tesla was well known to have been disgruntled by his sexual urges (JRE, 2024), claiming these desires interfered with his attention towards his intellectual work and building of scientific experiments. Descarte found all prior teachings to be distractions from true independent thought and sought to "suspend all other activities" (Brever, 2024, p. 10).

Consuming substances like creatine or certain species of mushrooms are also rumored to improve cognition, memory, thus thinking. As Paul Feyerabend highlighted in “Against Method,” fictional stories and other creative works are counterintuitive necessities for the progress of science, implying it is also necessary for optimized thinking. Meditation, naps, Turing tests (Hofstadter, 1995), and exercise may also be useful tools to optimize one’s thinking, but the challenge remains in determining how much time should be responsibly allocated towards such activities.

Does one control their own mind or does the mind control the agent? Some view the idea of free will as partly an illusion given the constraints on an agent’s degrees of freedom due to the laws of physics. Does one sculpt their mind or is an agent at the mercy of the mind and the body’s primal (fundamental or thermodynamic) desires? To what extent can one write and execute the source code for their own mind? Our earlier paper “Brain-Machine Interface: Application of Pre-emptive Policies” offered a technological solution to the problem of aligning the self-generating thoughts towards one’s proclaimed values, goals, and purposes.

The purpose of min/maxing the ratio of light to heavy thinking is to optimize one’s time spent thinking, to optimize the energy expenditure needed to fire neurons while thinking, and to maximize the value of the thoughts that are generated. Studies on flow states in high-performance endeavors suggest that the ideal challenge occupies a zone between being “not too easy but not too difficult.”

If one abandons the idea of resting from thinking as a possibility and replaces that idea with the light/heavy thinking strategy, then obviously an adult reading children’s literature might offend their ego, even though such reading would be considered “light.” Here one might have tied reading to thinking, but be cautious. Reading is a merging of one’s mind with the author’s, or angling the feature vectors of one’s neurons to align with the author’s. Imagine a vector space of ideas created by the dynamic firing pattern of one’s own neurons where the vector space of ideas of another could be approximated by compelling one’s own neurons to fire in a direction similar to the target’s.

Part I: Bridge

Thinking is a derivative process, while reading is an integrative process. The fundamental theorem of calculus holds these processes as inverses. Thus, could one argue that individualism (derivative individual thought) is the inverse of collectivism/holism. One consequence of this calculus analogy is that any society can freely transition from individualism to holism, from holism to individualism, like an adaptable organism trying to best survive in its environment by adapting, competing, and coordinating in an organized manner. Most modern nation states employ a hybrid system combining these two political philosophies like The United States’ collectivist fire departments or The People’s Republic of China’s individualist-capitalist cities like Hong Kong.

Is not the easiest (lightest) thinking when one vomits their thoughts into a written form? Is not the more difficult thinking the extracting of an author’s perspective, thoughts and opinions by reading their work? Thus, the best thinker, when burnt out from reading, should

differentiate their thoughts from the group to relieve stress and express their built-up inspirations by writing. Likewise, when the best thinker is strong and motivated, that person should dissolve their ego into the mind of another by reading challenging works written by others.

What is interesting here, which is a fear for many regarding transhumanist ideas, is potentially losing certain notions of individualism in light of new technology entering society. However, as we have noted, individualism and collectivism/holism are inverse states. The appearance of losing one's self within the group is merely an illusion since it is always possible to move from one state (collectivism/holism) to another (individualism), and vice versa.

Many universities are actually modeled on the min/maxing of the light (individualism) to heavy (collectivism/holism) thinking strategy previously described. When one is assigned reading material, that is a merging (integration) of one's mind with another's (collectivism/holism). When students are asked to write a paper (individualism), these papers often inevitably result in a student laying out their insights from the mind-merge experienced by reading and then begin differentiating their thoughts from the author's.

When one is tired of reading, that person should write. When one is tired of writing, that person should read. A person who can maintain this optimized thinking habitual strategy for prolonged periods of time should see significant increases in their ability to think. One point raised in this paper is whether or not "non-thinking" or a combination of "light and heavy" thinking offer pragmatic optimization benefits. Aristotle may have developed a similar strategy by teaching tougher philosophical concepts in the mornings (esoteric heavy thinking) and teaching easier to understand concepts in the evenings (exoteric light thinking). Further study is needed on how consuming "mind rot" entertainment media or playing games fit into the process of optimizing one's thinking.

Where do games fit into all of this? Games involve both reading (understanding the rules, environment, and outputs, etc.) and writing (making goals, performing actions, sending inputs, etc.). Contra to thinking outside of games, the difference is that games are bounded by the developer's imagination, skill, and the current state of technology. A great thinker is only bounded by their skill in thinking. A very skilled thinker has the grit to both, for prolonged periods of time, think as an individual and as a group which requires writing and reading, respectively. One might argue one's ego is at first collectivist in nature by first learning to read (collectivism) before learning to write (individualism); not to mention a child's reliance (non-agency) on parental support to survive in their first environments.

Games may be useful when a bounded imaginative creation is comforting, especially if a new thinker's neuronal synapses have yet to be strengthened to promote the prolonged habit of optimized independent thinking. Each person's grit is at first at a different intensity. One with a low grit-intensity score may be more attracted to games and distractions. Games are therefore predominantly collectivist in nature, assuming the player is not also a developer of the game, and thus the player is always at the mercy to the limits of the creator's mind. Furthermore, games which act as simulations become boring when the player becomes attuned to the nuances of real experiences, which destroy the immersiveness of any game's simulation-environment.

Part I: Neo-Solipsism

A human is a set of behaviors and appearances, elements of which are too numerous to enumerate here. One critical behavior of a human is the ability to freely merge and unmerge with other human minds, if found. In fact, a being is more human by being more skilled at integrating with and differentiating from a group (i.e. their *polis* from an Aristotelian perspective).

One problematic philosophy to be taken seriously is a version of solipsism called neo-solipsism (sometimes called solipsistic one mindism) that says that one not only views one's own mind as all that can surely be said to be real or exist, but goes on to reject the sovereignty of which other 'minds' have over 'their own' neurons. A neo-solipsist would argue that there are no other minds, no plurality of individuals, only one individual, arguing that all neurons belong to some hive-mind entity called the One Mind. This philosophy, religion, or some hybrid of the two seems like an extreme form of individualism on the one hand and an extreme form of collectivism/holism on the other. From the view of neo-solipsists, all war is merely self-harm; that there is no dialogue, only monologue; no wills or purposes, only one will or one purpose.

It is persuasive that two minds (collections of neurons) could be physically linked together with current technology, like Neuralink's brain-machine interfaces, to create a fused-mind entity. While it is easy to dismiss neo-solipsism as *prima facie* unethical alien nonsense, if adversaries adopted neo-solipsism as a new political philosophy and began outperforming another group by developing a society based on neo-solipsism, we may find ourselves in another "beat em or join em" crisis. However, neo-solipsism may be inherently imperial and contrapuntal to currently accepted geopolitical agendas (e.g. Wilsonian international liberalism). Furthermore, neo-solipsism has obvious human rights concerns by denying the existence of multiple individuals, but individualistic and collectivistic political philosophies have their own human rights concerns as well, such as denying human rights to certain humans. Thus, of the three systems expressed here, none are perfect in virtue.

Another problem also concerns one's national identity and how a nation could compete in modern conflict or war (physical or ideal) when new but necessary political adaptations abrasively cross with an embraced national identity. This is what makes movie icons like Darth Vader, Harvey Dent, Gollum, and Michael Corleone so intriguing. How does one win a war or achieve a purpose without sacrificing their heart-felt values? When is it right to allow a calling to corrupt one's own value, moral, and ethical belief systems?

One solution proposed here is that adding collectivism here and decreasing individualism there may not be the zero-sum game that it has been historically viewed as. Rather, one person, one group, or one nation can simultaneously function both as an individual and a collective (e.g. The United States of America or The People's Republic of China). Breaking down the names reveal the underlying hybrid-fused political philosophies [United (collectivism) States (individualism)]. These countries exalt the optimal methods of thinking by ingrain the method within their names. Thus, a nation's adaptability is what will allow it to persevere in the face of threats. In other words, a nation should not fear the corruption of old

values, since the fluidity of a nation's values in the name of a new calling or a powerful inspiration is what makes a nation's people/person strong. It is an open question whether the philosophy of neo-solipsism offers an even more optimal method of thinking about the world.

Many writers vomit words onto the page and pick out the golden nuggets to publish. Why not publish everything one writes down? First, while quality is of a concern, committing words onto a page always has the possibility of becoming published or to be seen later by others. Second, purposely hiding one's writings from others makes it difficult to receive feedback and conditioning from their group. Third, the entire concept of feedback may be rejected by neo-solipsists since neo-solipsists reject the existence of any opinions by others (by consequence of rejecting the existence of others [minds]), and listen only to the (almost religious) entity called the One Mind, which the neo-solipsist embodies. A motivation for a neo-solipsist to write down and publish their thoughts might originate from a desire to preserve current thoughts for future reflections.

These remarks do not mean there could not be agents under neo-solipsism who create and/or act under the illusion of individualism for the purpose of generating novel and pragmatic ideas from the feedback and competitive benefits which individualism pragmatically provides. Thus, a neo-solipsistic society could have sects where individualism is promoted and supervised under a veil of secrecy; stepping in only when the power of sovereignty is threatened. Some wonder who would control the one mind in a neo-solipsistic society. The question is quite clear if one is able to suspend their individualism-dominant lens. When one's mind merges with a one mind entity, that person immediately ceases to be an individual and becomes one with said entity and begins to inform said entity about its purposes and decisions.

Modern societies are neither wholly and strictly individualistic nor collectivistic/holistic. One might find that neo-solipsism is perpendicular to the individualism and collectivism vectors and seems to use extremist features from both philosophies. Under individualism, two adults are free to consent to directly connect together the neurons of both their brains to become one adult, instead of two. Under collectivism/holism, the state/group/graph may mandate its citizens/nodes/vertices of the state/network/graph to submit to adopting better connectivity by installing brain-machine interfaces to directly connect together neurons so as to improve the command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) capabilities of the group or entity. Clearly, a well connected neo-solipsistic society may have military advantages over a less connected individualistic society. However, common wisdom suggests that individualistic societies almost always have better technology over collectivistic societies due to fostering a better environment for competition, but neo-solipsistic societies could employ an illusive individualism sect to generate novel ideas without losing control over the vertices of its graph.

Part I: Conclusion

Historic military wisdom drew insights from the two main branches of political philosophy (individualism and collectivism). These insights and the pragmatism of basing a society on these ancient philosophies may now largely be obsolete when confronted with the near possibility of neo-solipsism becoming powered by rising transhumanist technologies and

possibilities like mind-fusion via brain-machine interfaces. Language, in its common form, will likely become virtually obsolete under neo-solipsism as well since all subgraphs of neurons would have integrated into a conglomerate. The question for the modern age is: Is strict individualism, strict collectivism/holism, or a hybrid of the two a competitive force against a neo-solipsistic adversary? This paper suggests that, given that the engineering possibilities are plausible in creating a competent neo-solipsistic entity, such an entity may embody the virtues of the two ancient branches mentioned while minimizing the detriments of both. The follow-up concern is obviously on whether followers of the two ancient political philosophies would be willing to embrace a better political system or face losing their geopolitical influence in the name of maintaining their traditional moral and ethical values and belief systems.

Part II: Responding to Braver's "Heidegger on Thinking"

Prima facie skimming of Braver (2024) revealed no mention of how substances or media might affect one's thinking, unless affections are implied within the meaning of one's society, *polis*, or history. Braver (p.1), with respect, seems biased towards collectivism and historicism by framing thinking as a social process. "I can never think except from a we and with a we" implies presupposed philosophies of individualism (I) and collectivism (we), which are contrapuntal to the burgeoning neo-solipsism described in Part I and highlights Braver's non-subscription or non-embrace of neo-solipsism. Braver also talks about the thinking of mind as if there is a shared and knowable experience of thinking, which is an unprovable hypothesis (see remarks about "black box" in Part I).

Heidegger's "Dasein" (p.2) is ultimately a measurement problem. What I am aware of is ultimately what I can measure.

Optimized thinking under the Platonic Model, as possibly defined by Plato's Socrates, would be a reflection upon and improvement of one's collection of beliefs (p. 4) by seeking "explicit and articulate definitions" and using said definitions in a "logically consistent" manner. The inverse of the Platonic Model seems to be a casual thinking which is automatically informed by a favored philosophical ontology. The Platonic Model studies information and abstract proofs (p.7), while the Inverse Model studies that which is subconscious or *a priori* to thinking (e.g. wittingly or unwittingly subscribing to individualism and embracing that bias throughout one's everyday life).

I wonder whether Dreyfus and his brother's model of skill acquisition's (p. 8) putting "conscious thought at the beginning and the bottom" is at all implying panpsychism, presumably from a realist/materialist perspective (which Heidegger rejects on p. 22). It is interesting that Braver (p.8) brings up flow states, which was brought up independently in Part I. It is also interesting that Heidegger finds flow states to be distinct, legitimate, and superior forms of thinking. It is agreeable that Heidegger finds emotions deeply affecting and inseparable from thinking (p. 9), which suggests that the ability to manage or be aware of emotions, or to be overall highly emotionally intelligent is critical towards becoming an optimized thinker.

A certain amount of loneliness, free time, and lack of stress may also be necessary for optimized thinking per Descarte (p. 10). It is interesting Descarte speaks of “demolishing his thoughts” as if he has a certain amount of autonomy over understanding the logic of his thoughts or over the actual generation of his thoughts. In Part I, I suggested thoughts are to a certain extent largely automatic. Without a proper brain-machine interface application to filter and better control one’s own thoughts (Caudill, 2024b), logically wrestling with thoughts is a tireless and a hopeless endeavor if the synapses between neurons are too strong. For these reasons, gambling addicts continue to gamble when they know they shouldn’t or abused wives continue to stay with their abusive husbands. I hypothesize that mastering the technological manipulation of thoughts through brain-machine interfaces or physically de-strengthening the fibers of neuronal bridges takes precedence over mastering the performance of abstract logical thought for optimized thinking given limits on the traditional biological human’s lifespan.

Heidegger’s (p.11) “inescapability of interpretation” is agreeable. There is a trope which says one is either *a priori* a Platonist or an Aristotelian, i.e. believes knowledge is virtue or virtue is knowledge, respectively; i.e. believes knowledge is self-generated from within the mind or generated by observing the outside world, respectively; i.e. an idealist or a realist, respectively. This dichotomy-trope was rejected by Heidegger (p. 22). Likewise, one might be *a priori* an individualist, a collectivist, or a neo-solipsist. Page 12 inspires one to ask “If one disagrees with the pre-ontology of another’s, can anything be done to change their pre-ontology if that person’s pre-ontological belief is unconscious?” Changing another’s unconscious pre-ontological beliefs seems impossible for the same reason it is impossible to precisely alter another’s dreams while they are still in the act of dreaming.

Regarding page 13, neo-solipsism essentially challenges Aristotle’s definition of humans as “social/political animals” by invalidating or rejecting the social-beingness of others by rejecting the existence of other minds or by rejecting the sovereignty other minds might have over their own neurons (i.e. thinking atoms). Society’s determining of what beingness is is essentially a matter of consensus, but there is no consensus under neo-solipsism since the one and only mind decides upon all matters. Neo-solipsism here is thus more akin to a subjectless monarchy/tyranny. The term “hive mind” might be an inadequate description of a neo-solipsistic society since the common conception of “hive elements” might be construed to be independent minds, which would be illogical under neo-solipsism.

Page 14 brings up the concept of “nonthinking,” which was brought up in Part I. Part I found it likely impossible to enter a state of truly pure “nonthinking.” What Braver calls “mindless” use of tools might be what Part I would call “light thinking.” The problem with using an ontology of tools as a mechanism for understanding thinking lies in the fact that many view artificial intelligence as a tool and only ever a tool, while others view artificial intelligence as a tool but potentially one day becoming an artificial human with the same protective legal rights as biological humans.

Page 14 also usefully brings up the concept of “forgetfulness,” which Part I brought up as likely being crucial to optimize thinking. There is a trope that long-term learning is obtained from constantly forgetting and relearning the same concepts and skills. This forgetfulness was proposed to be achieved by responsible consumption of certain distractions. Part I raised the

balancing issue of work-to-play as a troubling ambiguity that may be difficult to measure without third-party supervision.

Page 14-15 interesting discusses “losing oneself” in work or flow states. This is interesting when applied to neo-solipsism, or in the transition from an individualistic society to a neo-solipsistic society. Many fear “losing themselves” during such hypothesized transition, but neglect to think deeply about what the actual future state entails. Much of human knowledge and behavior seems to be based on mimicry, which makes such fear of the loss of individualism quite ironic since most people are quite far from being true individual thinkers.

Page 18 offered an interesting detail about optimized thinking missed in Part I. Here, the act of thinking about future goals “selectively training our attention” acts as a feedback mechanism for optimized thinking. An optimal thinker may occasionally readjust future goals to better steer the difficult-to-control nature of the mind. It is quite counterintuitive but probably true that setting limits is a very intelligent and necessary task as doing so constrains and focuses the mind and reduces the probability of undesired thoughts occurring.

Page 21 brings up Kuhn’s conception of science where paradigm changes occur when there is a crisis of basic concepts. One could presuppose we are on the cusps of such a paradigm change right now. There are disputes over what constitutes and defines a human being. Whether man can invoke matter with life in his image. Controversies in determining those lines which separate life from matter, human from tool, one mind from another, brain from computer (Von Neumann 2000), body from environment, etc. As mentioned in Part I, the entire common conception of communication and language is uprooted within a neo-solipsistic society.

It is quite amazing, personally, how the definition of ‘human’ largely falls on consensus, rather than fact. Maybe an optimized thinker would place a greater value on consensus over fact, unless that optimized thinker was a neo-solipsist who rejects any idea of a consensus. This begs the question, which of the three ontological political philosophies (individualism, collectivism, and neo-solipsism) best promotes optimized thinking?

Page 29 mentions an interesting potential method towards optimized thinking. The point raised was the importance of having a “sensitivity” towards certain topics and the proclivity to be aware and be motivated to pursue said sensitivity. The closest analog from Part I would be some sort of calling or higher purpose that inspires one’s thinking. Maybe the optimized thinker knows how to best form or find such callings or higher purposes, where the benefits of doing so is in having a better cognitive direction or cognitive geometry.

The importance of being a perpetual life-long learner is also emphasized throughout Braver’s text and offers important insights into the beingness of a teacher, like being, intriguingly, less grounded and more teachable than their students (p. 56). Braver emphasizes one’s openness towards learning since such openness is the generalized cross-domain skill obtained from learning multiple subjects. Kant highlighted how one’s environment and conceptual notions influence one’s thinking, while Plato stressed the importance of dialogue, and Aristotle stressed the importance of merit, details, observing nature, and learning by rote drilling (p. 56). Heidegger found new insights on thinking from our rich philosophical history.

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