

## A Man Walks Into a Searchbar

### *Glossary of terms included at the End*

A man walks into a library looking for a book within a Theme. He hopes to check-out a suitable object-found to satisfy his object-searched-for. He strolls through a door and describes to a Librarian his desires, his objects-searched-for, his recent successful object-founds and his current Theme. The Librarian nods, points a gnarled finger, whispers “Stack # Shelf #.” The man performs courtesy and walks to Stack # and scans for Shelf #, his gaze prismatically focused through the object-searched-for. He spots *The Text A*. This object-found fulfills enough conditions to satisfy his object-searched-for. He grabs it, but as he does so, his eyes glance over at books huddled nearby, books he did not wish to find but that are nonetheless presented to him. He is interested, and grabs one of these books, *The Text B*. He wonders only briefly “Why was *The Text B* near *The Text A*?”

Reasons for *The Text B*, the related-object, being found in proximity to *The Text A* bubble up and simmer along his understanding. Perhaps “Stack # Shelf #” is indication enough – there is a numerical pattern here. Perhaps *The Text B* was within an arrangement with a placard on top, displaying “THEME!” next to pictures of color. Perhaps *The Text B* was placed upright and open and inviting, with a placard saying “Curated by Librarian.” Or perhaps the book titles were in alphabetical order, the books authors in reverse alphabetical order. Perhaps the books were arranged by the Dewey Decimal System, or according to the latest Library of Congress guidelines. The man ponders, finds an organizing principle he deems reasonable and continues with the sure sovereignty felt after acknowledging structural bias. The man chooses *Text A* and *Text B* out of his free choice, though it was a limited freedom insofar as he didn’t choose the structure, did not dictate the decimal system, did not point the gnarled finger, did not write the alphabet. However, the man had the object-searched-for embodied into an object-found, and then discovered a related-object through a system that, while outside his control, was nonetheless visible to his intellect. He has chosen with simultaneous freedom and awareness of restriction. The object-searched-for remains outside the structures he perceives; perhaps another library, another day with a different placard will reveal another object-found and another satisfaction.

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A man opens his Browser, wishing to find a News article. He enters in some key words that fit some Theme, distillations of distillations. He gets his results, and he evaluates their value. The only structure he perceives is his own desire, the only filter he recognizes is his own judgment. All else rests beneath his comprehension. The man keeps some vague notions of popularity, search history, cookies, and programming but there is no clear number, colorful placard or numeric arrangement. The Internet appears infinite, total, expansive – he perceives only his own keywords, syntax, and command of hyperlink guiding his search. The rest is subterranean. The Internet is unintelligible in its responses to questions of structure. The man forgets this incomprehensible structure as easily as he forgets the biochemical decisions necessary to take a breath. He doesn’t recognize the bias of Shelf #’s and Stack #’s; he sees the unbiased array of blue upon white. The man is overwhelmed with a sense of

structureless seas, divided and narrowed into boxes by his own Moses-struck divisions within a searchbar.

When the man then searches for an object-found to satisfy his object-searched-for, he regards the array of links as objects-found. The terms are his, the criteria his, all his results are objects-found and he simply picks the best-object-found. Ask this man what the object-related is in his search and he will tell you “After Page 3.” So confident is the man in his refinement and search that suddenly the Search Engine decides which are objects-found and which are objects-related. The objects on the first page are found, the best-object there (maybe even the perfect-object), but as one drifts further and further the objects become not objects-to-be-found, but objects-related. The objects-related have a taste of happenstance garnishing their intelligibility, like the casual chance of spotting a particularly colorful Theme display. Anything can show up on Page 4 – any good finds are quite accidental. But Page One? Those are the best of the best results. Those are all objects-found.

One may now ask: why do the links become objects-found and not objects-related? When the man regards his array of links, there is no perceivable structure beyond his own inputs. If he cannot locate the object-found he does not go to the next page, he does not try another browser, ask a different librarian. No – it is *his* fault he was presented with objects-found that were not the Best. He must refine *his* search, change *his* terms, raise *his* arms and wooden staff and divide the sea differently. With only shadowy and slippery structures shaping his results, the man quickly allows for those structures to fade into passivity, as wallpaper, and focuses on the only structure he truly perceives – his own will. Since he is the only agent intelligibly in control the objects are therefore all found, all his, all satisfactory to his dimming ideals of object-searched-for. The link he chooses is the best-object-found from an array of other objects-found. The man never even clicked on the fourth page of his search, let alone leave his browser. Why would he need to when he is constantly presented with his personally obtained objects-found, and needs only pick the best?

Give him enough time, and the man will proclaim himself owner of perfect-objects-found. As he scans his arrays of objects-found, he refines and refines until he is confident in obtaining the best-object-found. This man looks for a News article. He finds one, but it is only partially what he wants. It is not 100% perfect, there are moments of tension and poor diction he disagrees with. So he refines. He refines. He refines. Eventually, he discovered it: the perfect-object-found. Every word is a commandment, every phrase impervious to attack, every character a bastion of perfection. It is utterly and perfectly defensible, a perfect manifestation of an object-searched-for long eroded through the process of refinement necessary to distill perfection from idealization. With his sense of power and infinity, there is no need to retain the unscratched itch of the object-searched-for. There is no need for messy abstractions. Surely, in this information ocean, there is a perfect-object to be found.

So as the man further obliterates his object-searched-for with a perfect-object-found he sees his own will grow stronger and stronger, his command more fluid and his own capacities unmatched. He starts to fully believe in his perfect-objects-found (they are Perfect!) perhaps even bookmarking and noting objects of indisputable satisfaction. He is incorporating the will of the structure, the algorithm, into his

own – the feeling of gaining this power is exhilarating, especially under the delusion of autonomy. He is a lone God parting a chaotic but subservient sea.

## Glossary

- *Desire*
  - Desire is understood as similar to a Euclidean Vector: there is a magnitude and direction of the desire. Magnitude is the degree of passion, investment, and interest in the desire, the length to which one will go to fulfill one's desire. The Object Searched For defines the direction of the Desire.
- *Object Searched For [OSF]*
  - An abstract, inexact, cloudy idea of a Thing Desired. A tip-of-the-tongue dream, a wish for something that may not even be real, a collection of harmonies that never quite solidify into a melody. The OSF exists only abstractly but can materialize in a myriad of ways as Objects Found. The OSF acts as a vanishing point upon the horizon, as a lodestone in a compass — it provides a guidance for the direction of Desire without confining itself to be a destination.
- *Object Found [OF]*
  - The concrete, discernible quanta determined to sufficiently fulfill the OSF. It is not an exact copy of the OSF, nor a destination finally achieved. It is a concrete manifestation of the OSF; some OF are better aligned to the OSF than others.
  - *Best Object Found [BOF]*
    - The best manifested form of the OSF available within the current parameters. It is only “best” contextually, not universally.
  - *Perfect Object Found [POF]*
    - The best manifestation in any circumstance ever, a literal and exact copy of the OSF in a concrete form. POF is purely illusory and deceptive in that it convinces one of totality when such totality is not possible.
- *Object Related [OR]*
  - A tangential, near-by, and related concrete finding that is not a manifestation of the OSF but is connected along some resonance. This OR can be within the family of OSF but may not be. Any object can become an OR to any other OF, if one perceives a connection.