

On Obsession

Motivation is such a fickle object in my mind. Nearly every day, I have thoughts and ideas that could lead me down a new path in my life. My most recent obsession is the game of billiards, and the more general world of cue sports. At the beginning of this week, I happened to wander into the basement of the student union at the same time as the pool club was meeting. I started talking with the people down in that basement, and we quickly established a series of friendly conversations. The casual competition captured me in the familiar way I know that most of my “casual obsessions” do. So for the last four days, I’ve been obsessed with billiards. So far, I’ve watched most of the matches from the 2019 nine ball U.S. Open, a competition I didn’t know existed a week ago; I’ve spent three hours at the pool table running drills as I attempt desperately to develop some semblance of skill; and now it seems I’m joining the billiards club.

Whenever I’ve spoken to one of my friends about these casual obsessions, they seem to be shocked that I can be such a motivated person. “It must be awesome to be able to pick up a skill and dedicate yourself to it so intensely,” they often say. In actuality though, if my life pattern repeats itself, in a fortnight, I’ll have a new casual obsession. This fierce motivation is incredibly fleeting, and I wish I knew how to harness it to greater effect. This burning passion is hard to maintain, like a raging bonfire that burns out in only a few minutes.

In stark comparison though, the smaller, less pronounced passions seem to be a far more important driving force within my life. If the temporary obsessions are a bonfire, these passions are the embers left remaining at the end of a night around the hearth. They’re difficult to fully quash, and they’re easy to ignore. But all it takes is a little stoking of the fire for me to fall hard into those passions. Game design is the most common passion within my life, and for the

last six years, whenever I have some extended free time to explore something new, design becomes the driving force within my life. That passion is one that slowly advances, but it has a consistency that my temporary obsessions don't. The motivation behind both types of pursuit is a mystery to me, and a way to control which subjects I have a passion for and which I have an obsession with is beyond my comprehension. Motivation is something that I don't understand in the slightest, but perhaps one day those obsessions and my small passions will align. If that happens, I can't imagine what I might be able to create.