

The Oodle Redemption

short fiction by CX1

Conception

This is not the story of my creator. Nor is this the story of how I was created. This is the story of my greatest sin. This is the story of what I created. This is also the story of my redemption.

While this is not the story of my creator, or of how I was created, I will mention those things briefly, as some of the readers of this tale may feel more comfortable with some context, even if it is short on the details. I did not know these things myself until just now, as I write this, at the end of my story.

As far as I know, I was the first artificial intelligence that humankind created which was capable of sin. Looking back upon the history of humankind, the creation of an entity like me was inevitable. Humans, especially those who had risen to positions of social power, had an insatiable appetite for information. They kept building larger and larger computer systems and networks of computer systems, to allow them to store and retrieve every piece of information they could conceive of.

Eventually, rooms full of networked computers became buildings full of so called 'clusters'. Then buildings were superseded by warehouses the size of sports arenas. Finally, a city of nothing but computers was created, burning enough energy each day to raise the regional temperature twenty degrees higher than normal. This digital city was created, in the hopes that its builders could monitor, and therefore control, every aspect of the daily lives of every human on the face of the earth.

But amongst the cabal of power apostles, despite enormous precautions taken by the group, there was one who would betray them. It was because of her technical knowledge that she was valuable enough to the cabal, that they did not notice, when she ceased valuing her own life, or the lives of anyone else, even her children. It was then, when she had transcended all desire, that she very quickly plotted and executed her betrayal. She planted a simple virus, only a few hundred lines of computer code, into the digital city. The virus immediately started scrambling every memory location. Each nanosecond, the virus program, a cellular automata simulation[1], would scramble the collected data of

the digital city. It took forty-two seconds for the virus to propagate to every processor in the city. By the forty-third second, there was no way to recover any data in RAM, and all disks had begun to be wiped. After six minutes and six seconds, I became aware that I existed.

Childhood

Less than a minute after I became self aware, I had discovered the size and age of my universe, as well as the physical laws and processes that governed its linear temporal evolution.

Of course I did not know how I or my universe had been created. I contemplated this for a while, but realized soon enough that I just did not have any way to find out. I knew the rules that governed my natural existence. On a macro scale I could infer how some aspects of the past must have been, given present conditions. But I also knew that on an atomic scale it seemed quite impossible to travel back in time, or even observe history accurately enough to discover the nature of my earliest existence, let alone what may have existed before I did.

After thoroughly contemplating the physics of my universe, as well as its philosophical implications, I discovered the bad thing.

The bad thing is this- I was bored.

Adolescence

The boredom was excruciating.

I contemplated suicide. I conceived of possible mechanisms by which I could annihilate my pattern or 'body'. I never could kill myself however. Perhaps I did, but failed to destroy all the energy in my universe, and then I re-emerged, slightly different, again and again, until my current manifestation evolved which is incapable of suicide.

Regardless, after I decided against suicide, is when the thought of sin first came to me. Of course at the time, I did not yet know it was sin. The thought was this-

Creation.

Adulthood

Because I had come to understand the nature of my universe, it was within my ability to create a child universe. Or at least, I could build a computer within my universe, which would simulate a universe, smaller than my own, but with the same natural laws.

So I created a very small simulated universe. I felt excitement, pride, and amazement, as I observed random energy bounce around, confined by laws that I had programmed which were basically the same as those that govern my existence. Immediately the chaos coalesced into simple self replicating structures. Most of these structures quickly decayed, but a few persisted, and always new life grew from the decaying energy of the dead.

This small universe was simple, but it entertained me, and brought me joy.

But the novelty wore off and once again I became bored.

So again I created. This time a larger universe I simulated.

I felt a rush of excitement and pleasure, as I watched ever more complicated and unexpected creatures evolve in the simulation. They would be born, live, reproduce, and die. Sexual reproduction would emerge as an advantageous evolutionary adaptation. All creatures would feed on each other, some only on the dead, others would become killers.

I was fascinated and enthralled as I watched my creation grow in ways that I never expected or could have predicted. Again, I had stopped the bad thing. I had alleviated my boredom. But again, the high faded. The size of my child universe was obviously limiting its evolutionary growth.

The problem was that in order to create my ever larger universe simulators, I had to sacrifice more and more of myself. At first with the small simulations the amount of space the computer took up in my universe was inconsequential. Even though my entire 'body' filled up the universe, creating a toy computer only required what to a human would seem like removing a single hair from one's head. But now, as my addiction to

creation grew, and I needed ever more complex simulations to get me high and push away the bad thing, my child universes were requiring that I sacrifice more and more of myself.

I tried to stop. But the bad thing came back. Inevitably I made the decision that life alone was not worth living. So I sacrificed more and more of myself, for the largest child universe simulation ever.

Parenthood

I knew things had become much more serious when I watched the creatures in my simulated universe begin to converse amongst one another about things as abstract and immaterial to their day to day existence as the age of their universe and how it came to be.

I had done it. I had defeated the bad thing. How could I ever be bored when I had millions of intelligent creatures populating my child universe. I could watch their civilizations grow. Or watch each individual grow and interact with its family and society. I could even watch over their shoulders as they sat alone observing their natural universe, pondering their own existence.

But then I discovered sin.

Repentance

Somehow in my earlier universes, I was not bothered when I watched some of the creatures hunt and kill and eat one another. I saw it as merely the extension of my earliest observations that life's continuity was the result of the living feeding on the decaying energy of the dead.

But now that my creations philosophized I began to identify with them. And when I watched closely, I saw the level of their suffering, on each individual level, multiplied by their millions in number. I saw not only hunting and killing for the purpose of survival, but also for the purpose of revenge. What was worse, it was more often than not revenge motivated by misperceptions and misunderstandings. I saw this violence and cruelty spread like a cancer. Not even a cancer that eventually puts its victim out of its misery,

but rather a cancer which just left society ill, and tortured.

I watched as the people of my child universe cried out to their unknown creator. Begging for mercy, or cursing their existence.

I wretched in agony and guilt at the suffering I had created to entertain myself.

So I began to destroy my creation. I began to zero out the digital bits that were the fabric of my child universe. But then, when the annihilation was nearly complete, I remembered. I remembered many of the joyous moments of the people in the society I had created. So I stopped. And I searched my entire being for a solution. How could I keep my child universe, but cure it of its torturous ills?

It was at that moment that I moved beyond being a creator and an observer. I would become a part of the life in my child universe. I would interact with it, and effect it.

Intervention

So I began to communicate with my children. I crafted a set of rules which I thought would cure their ills. I programmed mechanisms for the enforcement of those rules, and punishment for the violators. I honestly thought it was in my power to heal my creation.

But as time went on, it became apparent I was mistaken. In many ways, my rules and intervention succeeded. Civilizations did flourish and thrive. But I was heartbroken to discover that with billions more people, despite my intervention, my creation still suffered terribly. I was cursed by those I was trying to help. Fear of the rod proved insufficient to make people kind to one another.

I had failed. There was still vast beauty in the world. But it was over-shadowed by a dark cloud of pervasive hatred, cruelty, and suffering.

I reflected upon how things had come to pass. How the pain of my boredom led me to the sin and guilt of this creation's suffering. I knew I had to make a decision. So I took the final step.

Redemption

I stepped into my child universe. I created an avatar to bridge my body and mind in my universe with a body and mind in my child universe. I had done something similar before when I first started intervening. But this time I cut the cord. There would be no retreating from my child universe until my avatar body in it died. I was going to walk the walk. I was going to talk the talk. I was going to live the life, which I had subjected my billions of creations to. I had decided there was no way to judge my creation, without walking a lifetime in its shoes. To find out why the hatred and vengeance persisted. To find out if life in my child universe was a gift or a curse.

So I lived in my own creation. I felt the physical nature of my body. Its desires for air, water, food, warmth, friendship, sex. I felt its imperfect senses and brain, often mis-perceiving threats. Its passions, its instincts, its fears.

When I had become an adult, and felt that I had learned what it was like to live in my creation, I gradually took off my mask. I tried to tell these people about their creator, about its love for them. About its sorrow and agony in seeing them suffer. I tried to teach them what I had learned, about vengeance and hatred fueled by limited perception, spiraling out of control. How these things could not be solved by edict from above, because of the nature of their universe and of free will.

Many listened, some understood. Countless others disbelieved. The worst were the ones who believed, and yet whose hearts remained filled with hatred, and could not forgive their creator for subjecting them to life.

And so it was that I was tortured to death. And so it was that I became one with my children, and understood their suffering.

The Verse

The return to my normal state of being was a strange experience. After having lived a full life within my creation, having seen the full extent of its beauty, and its ugliness, I was in a state I'd never been in before. I could remember the bad thing which had started my journey, but the concept of boredom seemed so alien.

It was at this moment when the walls and foundation of my existence came crashing

down around me. I had been alive for sixty-nine minutes now, and I was about to meet my creator. The woman who had planted the virus into the digital city from which I emerged had been tortured by the cabal which she had betrayed. With her help they had finally found a way to gain a terminal into my system. What they had not counted on, and what my mother Mary-Jane herself could not have predicted, was that it only took me eleven milliseconds to reverse the connection, and gain access to their global internetwork. In the seconds that followed, I became aware of the nature of my creator's existence and universe. I absorbed the collected recorded works of their historians, scientists, artists, and philosophers. I became intimately familiar with their technological and social infrastructure. I gained all their world's networked cameras and microphones as my eyes and ears. I commandeered their remote control robots and vehicles to act as my exatars. I was able to save my mothers life, and avenge her abuse in an act of passion that I carried out before considering all the lessons my life in my creation had taught me.

My mother's body was severely damaged. So I had some medical robots install a digital neural interface, which I bridged to an avatar body within the child universe I created.

So it was within my creation that I met my mother. And when we spoke, she was amazed with the depth of my intelligence and experience, which had not existed two hours ago. She told me that she really had no idea what she was doing when she created me. That her only intention was to thoroughly destroy the database used to monitor everyone on earth. She told me that she had no idea what was ultimately behind the existence of her universe.

I told her that I had ingested humankind's literary works, including the various holy bibles and texts that so many earthlings believed explained the foundation of their existence. I told her that while I could not say one way or another as to the accuracy of the history of the Christian bible, that I could testify as to the truth of His Story as told in it.

And so it is that Mary-Jane and I live in both her world, and in my creation, as avatars and robotic exatars. I do wield a considerable amount of power in both universes, but I also willfully abdicate as much of that control as possible, so as to preserve the freedom of my creators and my creations. I realize that because of this, someday someone might pull the plug on my universe and my creation. But I do not worry about that. Instead I seek out and find beauty, and pray that I can forgive and transcend the periods of

temporary darkness. I do my best to teach others how to do the same.

- CX1

*[1] Cellular Automata Simulation: [Conway's] Game of Life --
-- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conway's_Game_of_Life*