















MCB 65 Final Project
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The title of this story is “Lagerung”, the German word for storage. It explores the boundary between improvisation and true novelty through the training of a robotic piano player from the brain of a professional pianist.

The story begins with a famous pianist, who frequently plays at the symphony and is revered for his particular style and the emotion he evokes from the audience. One night after performing he gets into a car crash, which leaves him paralyzed and unresponsive to any external cues by medical exam. The doctors decide to see if they can use his brain to train a robot to play piano. They build a robot and connect the two brains via a complex surgical procedure. The robot is then placed in front of a piano to play, and at first the music sounds bad, and not at all like the playing of the pianist. However, over time the robot's playing improves and, eventually, matches the style of the pianist. This is heralded as a miracle, and the audiences flock to hear the beloved music of the pianist. As the robot continues to play, over time the style of the music changes and shifts. It is unclear who is causing this shift. Is it the pianist confined by paralysis, seeking novelty by exploring new music space? Or is it the robot extemporizing over the themes learned over months of playing? Eventually the pianist dies, and the robot is locked away in a storage room, presumably never to play again. Years later, a janitor finds the robot in the room and takes it to a piano. Before he can plug in the robot, it begins to play in the original style of the pianist. The final question is why did the robot begin to play in the original style? Does it lack creativity without the pianist himself? Is it simply warming up? Or, further still, does it mourn the absence of its brain twin, playing in the original style as a kind of eulogy?

I made a comic partially as a rebellion against ChatGPT, and partially because it is a medium which I feel my brain gravitates most naturally towards. I love thinking about how to leverage the way humans see things, and the order in which they look at things, to convey information intuitively. It takes practice and this story certainly isn't a perfect example of that, but I hope I improve with every attempt!