Blindfolding the Mind's Eye

The year is 2184 and the worldwide society is at peace. Through advances in Neuromorphic Computing, Neural Interfaces and Computational Neuroscience, by the turn of the century non-invasive bidirectional communication with the brain was made not only possible but perfected and made ubiquitous across all of society.

It turns out that the early theoretical frameworks for understanding the brain, although crude in detail, managed to nail the conceptual high-level metaphor – the brain really is a **prediction engine** in its essence.

Even more controversial at the time of its postulate, the theory that conscious experience itself is nothing but a bi-product of predicting the next time step in a spatio-temporal system[1] a theory that has since been proven beyond any reasonable doubt.

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[1]The spatio-temporal best effort prediction (a moment of consciousness) gives a survival advantage as perception (organisation, identification and interpretation of sensory input) takes time to process.

The once groundbreaking experiments on consciousness are now routine; by hooking into different stages of the prediction engine every layer of consciousness is made accessible – just like peeling an onion – and as such left vulnerable to Inspection, Replication, Manipulation and Extinction.

Inspection

The first application of this technology surprised even the experts of the field with its uncanny precision, mind reading with near perfect ability to predict the next few hundreds of milliseconds of thought at fine-scale conceptual level.

Replication

The second application long dreamed of by the dori-kei community, not just life-like but fully sentient androids and other self-aware robots with conscious experience. The ability to replicate consciousness – the once believed **Hard Problem** – was solved almost by accident. Striving to replicate intelligence, the scientific community managed to reverse engineer the semantics and dynamic properties of the prediction engine that is the mammalian brain. The reverse engineered blueprint was used to produce an interconnected information processing system with sufficiently auto-associative and recurrent capabilities to give rise to the emergent phenomena that is consciousness.

Manipulation

The third application was debated for decades before being integrated into society, manipulation of the very fabric

that makes up our subjective conscious reality. Initially the method was used to treat people incapacitated by severe anxiety or suffering from trauma. However, the method of consciousness manipulation quickly escaped the laboratory and found its way into development of immersive video game experiences, profoundly effective psychedelic drugs and re-education programs.

Extinction

While the other applications were scrutinised by ethical review boards, this final application was developed by a small and secluded group of Computer Scientists and Neuroscientists hand-picked by the Ministry of Social Stability and Security (MSSS); the main objective of which was to limit civil disobedience. Prior to this application, the MSSS would employ a variety of strategies, including personalised monitoring and control of each individual's information diet. However, all previous methods were rendered obsolete when the experimental arm of the MSSS developed the Mental Blindfold, a technique used to selectively eliminate parts of an individual's conscious experience.

Somewhat surprisingly, eliminating parts of an individual's conscious experience did not severely alter their cognitive or physical capabilities. Fully eliminating it did produce individuals that could not seem to predict aspects of their future based on prior experience, and as such were left as blank vessels without intrinsic will to act, but readily accepting commands received from the environment.

By a tragic sequence of political decisions, today the vast majority of the human population on Earth have been men-

tally blindfolded, they have been stripped of their subjective reality, their inner Cartesian theatre, as their conscious experience has been systematically eliminated. The result is an elitist society, with a few conscious individuals controlling the worldwide workforce. Civil unrest is a thing of the past, national borders have been dissolved, and with them, the need for war has vanished.

What is left is but an ocean of Chalmarian zombies. *Without an eye for the future, we are but automatons.*

— X44929251