




There is a closed door at the end of the corridor

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Introduction

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w = 'w = {}{}{}; print(w.format(chr(39), w, chr(39)))'; print(w.format(chr(39), w, chr(39)))
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I find stubbornness in the craft of casting materials through mold making, despite how rewarding it can be. The whole process makes it hard to allow for later changes. The mold is not the memory of a piece, nor its essence, but it will define it's final shape. Is the environment in which we grow and develop ourselves such a kind of mold?

I remember very little about my own past, but I've spent the last few years making stronger efforts to understand the ways in which I perceive my own "umwelt", why I react, and what I react to. What shaped this current way of thinking? Without an objective memory of my own history, creating versions of this multidimensional mold in which I've cast my way of perceiving has become an iterative process of re-modelling, perhaps allowing the casting of new materials.

The little snippet of code at the start of this page is called a Quine. It is a special type of program that will output its own code when executed. This connects to the idea of creating our own model of the world, and the difficulty of interpreting the reality as something different than the one we defined for ourselves.

curiosity

As many people, I place some of my early memories during my time in elementary school, and similarly to many, such memories are not particularly the most enjoyable ones. It was the time where differences were notorious, misunderstood, and punished. In a German school during the late 80's, where discipline and uniformity was still a first value, I learned the hard way to defend my position on the left side of this equation:

curiosity = disobedience curiosity = commitment to struggle curiosity = insubordination

Quoting Aristotle, "all human beings, by nature, desire to know". That was in fact the opening line of his work *Metaphysics*, highlighting curiosity as a fundamental aspect of human nature. However, I experienced that curiosity, as a "distracted learning style", is often rejected as a vicious form, as opposed to a virtuous one. Aristotle did actually have an incline to recommend being studious about one thing (*monopragmosyne*). Even Plato argued before that curious people suffer from an imbalance in the 3 parts of their soul: reason, spirit and appetite. [Arjun Shankar]

It became well established that being curious implies taking risks, fail, make mistakes, "die at least a few times". [Foucault, 1980] Foucault reflects on the transformative power of curiosity, suggesting that it involves letting go of established ways of thinking and being open to change, which he metaphorically describes as a form of "dying."

Neurodivergent

I spent the last years of my life understanding what this means to me. I learned about the mask I put on unknowingly — to fit in, to attract less attention, to avoid conflicts and misunderstandings. I learned the consequences of wearing this mask. The idea of perception as a controlled hallucination suggests that what we see, know, and understand is no more than the most likely prediction made by our trained brains. A neural network in which an internal conflict arises between an error signal—indicating that what’s in front of us does not match our expectations—and a massively skewed training dataset of memories, insisting that what we know from past experiences is the correct interpretation.

Neurodivergence is now better known and understood, but as a statistical minority, it is not well represented in the dataset of human interactions. It is only logical that it would be difficult to comprehend from the perspective of a neurotypical brain. The issue of skewed datasets is commonly addressed in the context of AI and machine learning. However, while we can design datasets to balance the represented populations, a real brain learns from real interactions, and the statistics remain the same regardless of awareness.

Analytical acceptance, algorithmic forgiveness.

Laplace's demon

Pierre-Simon de Laplace conceived a thought experiment involving a hypothetical intelligent being with knowledge of the current state of everything and the capacity to process all that information. Under the hypothesis of a deterministic universe, such a being would know both the past and the future, thereby eliminating the perception of time, since everything that exists now would also reveal what was and what will be.

In a much more limited context of both space and time, the constant monitoring of microscopic changes and patterns places me in a position to predict possible futures and assume causality from potential pasts. I live without a normal perception of time, burdened by the overwhelming anxiety of processing all possible realities with the same intensity as the "here and now." Predicting an experience and experiencing the predictions. Presuming a cause for every effect. Speculative remembering, blurring memories.

Hypervigilance

Whenever I take a walk, I don't just stroll from A to B and enjoy the views. I'm constantly monitoring every obstacle, every moving object and person around, everything that can be moved by the wind or shifted by the weight of raindrops. I calculate the next position of every object, adjusting my trajectory to account for the space needed for myself and my companion, when there's one by my side. I walk, and I am in the near future as much as I am in the present—more than most people I've discussed this with.

I observe what everyone else sees, and I analyze the changes in their motion patterns and facial expressions, curiously attempting to predict their intentions, possible thoughts, and probable actions. I play out their actions in my mind like a game of chess. I'm here and now, yet I am also everywhere before and after. I'm everyone in my own form, simultaneously avoiding and seeking connection.

Perception

Loud drones, low frequency soothing sounds. Whispers louder than the loudest screams. A new detail that changed my day. The repetitive, unsettling touch. Tight knots like hugs. Invasive gazes that were not supposed to last. The faces, the mirrors, the shadows.

Decay

When an atom has an unbalanced number of protons and neutrons in its nucleus, it becomes unstable. When an element is unstable, it decays. If there are additional neutrons, making the atom heavier and disrupting the internal nuclear forces, a neutron can transform into a proton by emitting an electron and an antineutrino. This type of decay is known as beta-minus decay.

Just like a carbon-14 atom, with an extra pair of neutrons, we carry the weight of indecision, of uncertainty, of forces that throw our lives out of balance. And just like that carbon atom, we decay, emitting electrons and antineutrinos—massless and imperceptible particles we leave behind, transforming. And just like the resulting nitrogen-14, older and stable, we find rest.

Emulation

Living often feels like running a sophisticated emulation program on a computer. On the surface, the emulated environment mimics a typical operating system, seamlessly performing tasks and following expected protocols. However, behind this facade of normality, a complex system is working overtime to replicate behaviors and responses that come naturally to others. Constantly striving to appear organized, focused, and in control, while internally grappling with distraction, impulsivity, and a torrent of unfiltered thoughts.

Just as an emulated system can lag or crash when overloaded, I become overwhelmed and fatigued by the continuous effort to conform to neurotypical standards. The emulation requires immense mental resources, leading to burnout and a sense of disconnection from my authentic self.

Wave Function Collapse

This chapter talks about influences of the unknown on anxiety.

Anxiety is proportional to the entropy of a situation.

$$a \propto E$$

Entropy, quantum mechanics and Sudoku solving

The algorithmic way to solve a sudoku puzzle, is to find the cells that present minimum entropy. This means, find the cells where the number of possible options is smaller. When a possible solution is presented to this cell, the cells around them will in turn decrease their entropy.

According to quantum mechanics, the wave function represents the probabilities of different coexisting realities, that is, until a measurement is made. At the moment of measurement, chance is replaced by actuality. The wave function collapses, and reality is set.

Every unknown in life, every decision still not made, creates a multitude of possibilities, a distribution of parallel potential realities, simultaneously existing in a high entropy state.

Making a decision, or a discovery, will collapse all possibilities into one, reducing entropy and in consequence reducing the associated anxiety for the unknown.

[chu] [Perec]

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