

THINKING:
A SOCIALLY
ACCEPTED FORM
OF INSANITY

A Book for the
Imprisoned Mind



Stephen
Muires

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Preface

We place such overinflated importance on originality and uniqueness that we are prime candidates for being fooled, by thought, that our creations are indeed unique and very original. We are 100% unable to see ourselves in the perspective of 7 billion minds thinking thoughts all day long. To think that anything we come up with is new and original, is astonishingly naive. To think that our particular opinion on any topic is the right one, the smart one, the educated one, is severely delusional.

Thinking is a socially accepted form of insanity.

The current book delves into this topic and scouts out issues presented by the realization that we do not think our own thoughts.

Table of Contents

Part I:
Something Thinks Our Thoughts.....

Part II: Escape Route.....

Part III: A New Thought

Part IV: Vital Thoughts

Part V: Allowing Thought.....

Bibliography.....

About the author.....

Part I:

Something Thinks Our Thoughts

The thesis of *You Think You Think* (YTYT) was that thought is a process over which we have no control, that it comes into us incessantly and has done so for so long that we totally and utterly identify with it. We think we are the instigators and authors of our thoughts. But we are not.

This leaves, of course, more than a few questions unanswered. If we don't think, who or what does? This is the starting point and red thread of the current volume.

The thought that asking the question, "Who thinks my thoughts?" is too big, too daring, too risky, is itself a thought and is, therefore, an attempt at intimidation. Like a boss warning an employee not to rock the boat. It is a question that can be approached in many ways, though head-on and direct is not one of them.

Society requires us to be able to think. Animals, children, the demented, cannot function there on their own. As we grow up our parents do their daily utmost to initiate us into the patterns of thinking life, aka society. They introduce rules, warnings, behaviors, prohibitions. Through example and instruction we become adults, long before we are of adult age. In a sense, therefore, it is no mystery why we are so dependent on, and pervaded by, thought. The long

years of childhood training account for it. We do not know any other way to be. This being the case, every thought we have defines our world.

The ontological postulate of *being*, a level underneath the world of events and thought, is just that: a postulate. We can't go there, we can't experience it. This explains, at least in part, why it became such a negative place for Sartre, a place he likened to slime. "Slime is the revenge of the in-itself... it is a possible meaning of being" (*Being and Nothingness*). Furthermore, it links up with the mythological Garden of Eden, which we cannot go back to. Whether we like it or not, our life is thought. It is the starting point, the now point. It is the only point.

The film *What the Bleep Do We Know?* (2004) proposes, in the time-honored traditions of pseudoscience and New Age spirituality, that we create our own reality. Consequently, if that is the case, we may be able to change our own reality. However, "we" don't create reality, thought does. We are not our thoughts. We are not even the source of thought. If thought creates our world and we cannot change thought, it follows that we also cannot change our own reality. This is, of course, confirmed by our actual inability to change anything.

Thought creates reality, or more accurately it creates the world we live in. Reality itself is probably bigger than thought. Thought creates this world in the same way that a computer creates a high resolution image on a screen: pixel by pixel at a faster-than-the-eye refresh rate. A modern

screen has more than a million pixels, far too many for us to be aware of individually. By analogy, if a computer repaints a million pixels 60 times a second, thought repaints the world as we know it, i.e. a great deal more than a million pixels, at a rate that is so fast we have no way of quantifying it.

There is evidence that the world is not what we think it is. We go to sleep at night, wake up five minutes later and 8 hours have gone by. Entheogens like DMT can temporarily rip apart 3D reality and replace it with dense, pulsing streams of color, more real than ordinary reality. Both examples have in common that thinking stops. Thought, therefore, is not a phenomenon in the world; the world is a phenomenon in thought.

It is possible to take this last statement at an elevated philosophical level of abstraction. That would be missing the point. Thought does not create the world as we know it in a physical way, i.e. atom by atom. This ought to be clear. Nor through perception filtering, in the Aldous Huxley sense. Thought does not create in that way. Another word is needed.

The reason we all agree about arrangements and objects in the world is not because we share a common perception of the world, but because we share a common thought structure that defines the world. When one person says to another, "Let's hurry so we can catch the train," the other person understands exactly, knows what train is meant, where the station is, and where they're going once they're

on the train. Yet, at the moment of communicating the thought and in the place where it is spoken, there is no train, no station, and no destination. The thought structures of both people coincide to such a degree that they live “in the same world.”

A great promise of escaping the world, its suffering, degeneration, chaos and imbalance, is hidden in this one understanding. Changing the world is not possible, but neither is it necessary. This promise is freedom, and it motivated the writing of YTYT, as it does the current book.

This is not a philosophical exercise. We are trying to find a way out. Since thought is a ruling and defining influence in our lives, penetrating the source of thought is a promising pursuit. A computer’s behavior cannot be changed at the level of the computer, i.e. the hardware and the software. It can only be changed by going to the source code that resulted in the software. We are looking for the source code of thought.



To get a certain basic scientific misunderstanding out of the way: thought does not emerge as the result of neural activity in the brain. This is the theory that the science of consciousness assumes to be true. It isn't. Just like it isn't true that you can open up a radio set and find small news announcers in there. Looking for the source of thought will lead us away from biology, not into it.

One good thing about our topic of study, thought, is that we don't have to go far to find it. We don't have to go anywhere. It finds us. We do have to be willing to "hold thought" in its tracks, not be swept away with it. Thoughts flow. There truly is a stream of consciousness. We stand forever at the edge of this stream. As Borges, quoting Heraclitus, wrote, "We can never enter the same river twice." This is less deep than it sounds, because in one sense we always enter the same river twice. There is

nothing importantly unique about one stretch of water (or thought) compared to another.



Uniqueness is probably an illusion. Technically each person is totally unique, like snow crystals. But take a few steps back and the unique crystal flakes become just a field of snow. Also, in taking those steps, we have just crushed thousands of irreplaceable once-only snowflakes into indistinguishable mud. Uniqueness is no valuable commodity. Uniqueness is a thought, and thoughts are cheap.

A non-unique stream of thought passes us every moment. People are different, but are they? A die with six different faces can fall six different ways. But in reality it is only one die. With people the die has more faces. And yes, isn't it curious that this gambling tool is called a "die?"

The reason that Joyce's stream of consciousness novel rang a bell with many readers, is that it rang a bell with many readers. The explanation is its own mystery. The

uniqueness of Stephen Dedalus was completely common. While a snowflake is absolutely unique, this only lasts until the boot comes down or the melt sets in. Same for people.

We are continually entering the same river, though each drop of water cries out, "There is only one of me!" There isn't only one of us, there's billions.

Contrary to popular belief, people are not interesting.

You are not interesting.

Thought doesn't like that thought, which itself is a very interesting phenomenon. A sudden transparency. Thought will protest its own importance. It will insist that opinions matter, as do beliefs, emotions, and all the rest of the vagrant inhabitants of our minds.

When we have an emotion, it doesn't matter. Five minutes later it is gone. When we have a thought, it doesn't matter. It has already been thought in one way or another 100,000,000 times before, some of those times by ourselves.

The very first thing to do, in order to find thoughts that matter, is to stop thinking. That is, pun intended, a no-brainer. If we always enter the same river, then obviously start by not entering it for once. Joyce didn't write *Ulysses* by going with the flow; he dragged himself onto the shore and exclaimed, "Look at that fucking river."

It is a paradox, but that shouldn't slow us down. Certainty is death, paradox is life. Many people know more about hobbits than about Australian Aborigines. Therefore, hobbits are more real. An irritating paradox, especially for the Aborigines.

Let us not forget that there are very few things worth remembering.

In English the standard sentence structure is subject-verb-object. This is a distillation of thought, which basically works this way. The subject is the I, the person who thinks they think. Then the thought performs an action (verb) by commenting, criticizing, complaining, evaluating, analyzing, repeating some thing or person (object). A thought is generally always about something else, seldom about itself. We have no language constructs of the form subject-verb-subject. Though I can say, "I like myself," this merely turns the I into an object, myself. I cannot say, "I like I." To be able to do this in thought, we need meta-thought. Thought about thought.

The first, obvious, way of doing this is to turn thought into an object of thought. We have been applying this technique already. But this is not enough. This is not yet subject-verb-subject.

In the grammatical sense an object is passive and a subject is active, even if the verb implies a passive action being done to the subject. E.g. "I was cheated by the shopkeeper." I is still the subject, even though the action is

performed by the shopkeeper. We need something that grammatically does not exist, like “I cheated I.” Thought-action-thought. Not just thinking, but think-thinking. Stepping into the river of thought without allowing the current to move us along. This, of course, is what we called not thinking.

Instead of a passive non-action, not thinking is active double-up. One result that comes out of not thinking is quiet, silence. Yet, this is not the only possible result, nor necessarily what we want. Not thinking is thought acting in itself, instead of flowing out into the world. It isn't about anything, there is no object. It is one hand clapping.

Thought that attempts non-thinking becomes laser focused, since it does not disperse outward but concentrates inward. Not on the self, making self an object, but in the self.

An analogy would be blowing up a balloon without the balloon getting bigger. The air pressure rises, and yet, to an unknown extent, more air can be added. By contrast, fragmented thought can be likened to blowing up a shredded balloon: the air just dissipates.

The moment thought is about something, even itself, it ceases to be focused as subject-verb-subject. The process is not either/or. Some light escapes the laser; if it didn't, the invention of laser light would have been useless. Some thoughts escape non-thinking. This is clear. We are, after all, reading this text.

Our normal condition is one of a donkey in a treadmill, grinding out grain. In a subject-verb-subject situation the donkey stops walking, yet the grind stone speeds up. The analogy fails, as all analogies do, in that there is no grind stone and no donkey.



A subject-verb-subject transformation of “I think, therefore I am,” is “I think I.” This stretches language to a breaking point. But in order to make an omelet we have to break some eggs.

Since language has the subject-object structure, and since thought uses language, thought itself loves to be *about* things. There is nary a thought that doesn’t concern itself with someone else’s business. This makes thought an evasive subject, both semantically and grammatically. It also provides us with an exploitable weakness.

An about-thought is a thought that has something to hide. A collection of thoughts, such as occupy our minds at any

random time of day, is like a room full of suspects who are all pointing their fingers at another person in the room, saying, "Look over there. He did it."

Our own thoughts are trying to fool us 24/7. Why? What are they trying to hide?

Pandemic corruption and cheating are merely reflections, overspill, of the nature of thought. Since thoughts are invisible, they can get away with murder. We forgive ourselves our own thoughts. Everyone will cheat if the opportunity arises and the chance of getting caught is zero. Realizing this, people of a moral bent have encouraged regimens of healthier thinking. Improve your thoughts, improve your life. Save the world. See, for example, any religious text or mental self-help book. Usually the instigator or source of the healthier thinking belief system is God or a similar higher authority. It is never the person itself and never thought itself. Always there is the pointing, the hiding behind a higher authority.

Authority is a kill switch on arguments, as well as on questions. It turns up, subtly, in a thousand disguises. It shares this feature with the devil. When God doesn't wash, it is the Law, the board of directors, the investors, the customer base, the government, the spiritual leader, the neighbors, or, if all else fails, simply the anonymous and ubiquitous "they." Each of these authorities are abstract, never concrete, present in the room. This is the power of thought. Thought grants power to e.g. the Koran or the Bible, and thus to itself. Thought practices insider trading to

sell stock in itself. And has done so since before Adam and Eve.

Calling upon an authority is the only way to prove something that has no proof. It is easy for a non-believer to poke fun at religious people. But science is a religion too. And logic, and mathematics, history (the latest version of it), anthropology, archeology and let's not forget politics, idealist movements, and many more. Each of them call upon an authority outside themselves, even if it is no more than, "This is accepted fact." Accepted by the anonymous they.

Nothing is true that an authority says is true.

This statement is a spoke in the wheel of thought. Thought denies it instantly. We think that we ourselves, from the bottom of our common sense, deny the dismissal of authority-truth. But it is thought that does this in us. The very same thought that evoked the authority in the first place and sometimes created it out of thin air.

Nothing is true that an authority says is true.

The statement is hard to argue with *and* at the same time refrain from using an outside authority to back up the argument. Of course, the option of discrediting the messenger remains open. Discrediting, as a word, means, destroying credit, calling the authority of the messenger into question. Calling it into question means, denying its validity

as a real authority, since only real authorities have authority. Thought is cunning like that.

Thought is authority fixated. This is one of its weaknesses. It likes to act as an authority, but also to respond to authority. Authority is something thought understands and has affinity with.

The question put earlier as a red thread for this study, was: "Who or what thinks our thoughts?" We can now define part of an answer: authority. Whatever is the immediate source of thought it is an authoritarian by nature. We are bossy, or willing to submit to bossiness, because of the influence of thought, which is bossy. Thought says, "I, I, I," all the time in any context. We, then, identify with I and see no discord.

Almost everything we think we know, can be traced back to a source that invokes authority. From that point on the belief, or truth, relies on that authority.

Some things we know because we see, hear, smell, touch and taste them. No authority is invoked. But this constitutes a tiny percentage of our world knowledge. We know the sky is blue. We don't know why it is blue, but we know it is blue. We can see it.

It is, however, disconcertingly easy to find a piece of knowledge that we are sure is true and that yet we have no evidence for. An old favorite is the earth moving around the sun. There is absolutely no doubt that this is the case. We

can all agree on that. If so, it should be no problem to answer the question: how do we know?

We have not seen, heard, smelled, touched or tasted it. We have been told in school. It's in a book. It was on television. Authority, authority, authority. How do we know the earth circles around the sun? We actually don't; we have taken it on authority. Even though our senses tell us the opposite (the sun rises, etc.), the authority is stronger. This authority is based in thought. Thought trumps sensory input.

This childish example, when pushed a little further, becomes extremely irritating to our minds. Thought goes nuts objecting to the mere thought of the earth not rotating around the sun. What's next? A flat earth? No, we know better than that. We have it on good authority.



A goal of thought authority is to become invisible and thus unquestionable. Thought has achieved this. The more we know, the more certainly we know it. Except that it isn't "we" who know it; it is thought.

We are so deeply immersed in thought that we even consider it stupid, a sign of limited intelligence, if someone openly shows that their knowledge is based on outside authority. This is why we laugh at the phrase, "It is known," uttered with simplistic conviction by the Dothraki slave girls in *Game of Thrones*.

We are laughing at ourselves, since we do the same.

As an aside, this is also why the opposite phrase, used by the Wildling woman Ygritte in the same series, takes on a metaphysical shine: “You know nothing, Jon Snow.” It is both threat and promise. It seems to be more accurate than is comfortable to admit.

Thought is strong. Authority that can be called into question, is weak. Thought cannot be questioned, since we would have to use thought to question it. We can doubt ourselves, but we don't doubt doubt. We feel uncertain and insecure, but we accept with certainty that we feel uncertain. We love to rebel against authority, but who is rebelling if it isn't thought playing the rebellion game against itself. In order to rebel, we need to have an opposite standpoint, accept an opposite truth. We take this opposite truth on authority. We use, in other words, authority to rebel against authority.

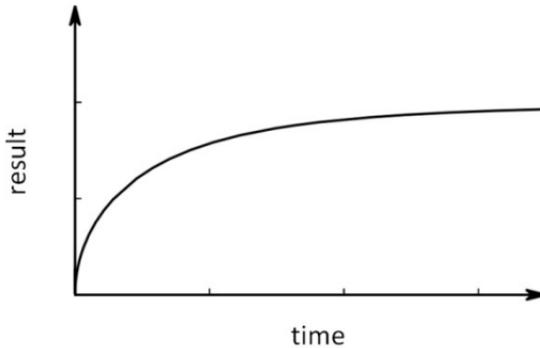
Fat lot of good that will do.

Thought has no problem with truth. It also has no problem with untruth. It loves both equally.

Thought is our enemy. And we have to work together with it, until better options become available. This is just how it is. It is neither good nor bad.

In YTYT we used two diagrams to depict thought movement. Their Greek names are the Kappa curve (#1) and the cissoid of Diocles curve (#2). Kappa rises steeply

at first, has a high learning curve, quick visible results, and then evens out into a horizontal line.



The Kappa curve

This curve rules the world. Another way of saying this is, this thought pattern rules the world. An employer wants every new employee to quickly get up to speed and then to be able to perform at a reliable level. We want to get places quick. We want our video to go viral. We want instant results.

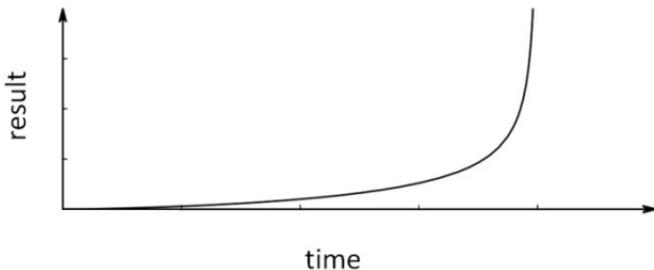
Thought gives us that. The price is imprisonment in the Kappa curve.

The curve is not necessarily easy. The initial climb can be daunting. There is a high threshold of acceptance, of skill requirement, of energy or money investment. The curve pulls us up, pulls us in, and pulls us along with promises of future. When actual future becomes promised future, we

have arrived on the slow plateau. It keeps going, but does not keep delivering. It creates the illusion of evolution and progress, because it can easily point to recent improvements achieved on the first steep rise. “I learned the language in only three months.” “I got three promotions in two years.” “I was unemployed, unmarried and in debt. But look at me now. Steady job, married, a kid, and a new house.”

Yet we sooner or later experience the creeping certainty that our lives are not going anywhere. We are right. The curve is never going to rise above its modest maximum level. The worst story of the worst holocaust victim is still better than being on a life curve that doesn't go anywhere. The Kappa line is the graphical representation of an old person saying, “That's life.”

The second curve, called the cissoid of Diocles, is by comparison very unrewarding.



Cissoid of Diocles

Nothing happens for a long time. It doesn't feel like being on a path. It is possible to move on this curve without knowing it. It is equally possible to be on the Kappa plateau and fool oneself that it really is the Diocles curve.

Life isn't either/or. These two curves are interesting, but not exclusive. They do not cover all of life. Which adds another concern: we may want to walk the Diocles path, the signs may look like we are, but in the end we are not. We got sidetracked. We believed one promise too many. This is the nature of this curve. It is hard to know for sure we are on it, since at first there is no progress whatsoever.

On the other hand, it would be a mistake to take this lack of progress as evidence of Diocles life alignment. Maybe there just is no progress, full stop. Persistence is not going to pay off. Clinging to hope, faith, Buddhist teachings about the 1,000 mile journey and the fabled first step, or the latest communications from the Pleiadians, seems to make no kind of difference. Nor will it ever. A third possible life curve is the flat line.

The cissoid of Diocles has a secret. Comparing this book's version of the curve with the one depicted in YTYT, gives a clue. Diocles does not start at zero. Its rise is zero, but its point of departure isn't.

The short of it is that a person will absolutely know when they have entered on the curve. They will have no proof. No one else can confirm it. But they will know. No knowing, no curve.

The Diocles line is the graphical representation of an old person saying... nothing. The chance of finding an example of someone who lives on the second curve is extremely low. But it is not zero.

Thought, our enemy, likes it better if we stay on curve #1. But it does not and cannot stop us transferring to #2. One way to experience this jump, if temporarily, is to stop thinking for 60 seconds.

The Diocles curve represents thought movement, with the peculiarity that there is very little of it in the beginning. It is as if it is hiding from human eyes.

On the Kappa curve we look ahead and have everything to gain. If something is out of reach, it is so vertically, not horizontally beyond the horizon. On the Diocles curve we look ahead and see nothing, just a flat road. In fact, there may be no road. Everything is out of reach.

To call each of these curves a path is too noble. It implies direction, or meaning. But there is none. After thousands of years of human history and billions of human minds traveling into and out of life, direction and meaning ought to have been found and firmly established by now. That has not happened. More contradictory beliefs exist than ever before.

It strikes us that life is meaningless, so we ask, "What is the meaning of life? Where is it?" This is a carefully laid out thought trap.

A salesman would describe it like this: make'em think they need something, then sell'em that thing.

Thought moves in certain ways, and we follow. That's not a path, though; more like a strong wind.

Unhappiness does not come from being unhappy. It comes from thinking we are unhappy. Then we walk into the trap and start looking for happiness at any cost. Happiness, or fame, or money, or whatever. We do this day after day, since, after all, the whole world is similarly engaged. The more we think, the more we think we lack something.

An answer to this riddle, often given by the gurus of modern life, is to realize you have all you need. But that's not an answer. That just compounds the problem. We don't have all we need. We can't change that by superimposing the opposite belief.

Make'em think they need something, then sell'em that thing. The key here, clearly, is the con trick of believing we need something. The salesman has no power to sell us anything, unless we think we need that thing. Who is conning us? It's our own thinking. But our own thinking is not our own, it is thought itself. Thought belongs to thought, not to us.

Something pushes thoughts of need into us. Something thinks our thoughts.

Part II: Escape Route

Something thinks our thoughts. We cannot fight thought. At some level we have no right to fight thought. It may even be in our best interest not to try. Although thought has enslaved us, that doesn't mean it wishes us harm. In any case, we have so little power that fighting against the river of thought is ludicrous.

However, like a qubit, that doesn't mean we need to lay down our arms. We can fight, with no expectation of winning. The qubit mind holds two states simultaneously. Fight and no fight. Think and not think. Thought, being in charge of us, isn't going to fight itself.

But it may allow us some kind of escape. If no one ever escaped the clutches of thought, the human race might be a proposition of diminishing returns. Like a field that is farmed without crop rotation. The escape diagram is, of course, the far right hand side of the Diocles curve. It approaches infinity. It disappears from the world.

If a person or group of persons manages to escape, there would be no record of it. They disappear from the world. This is not encouraging. But no record is not the same as no trace.

Philosophy is the work of finding an escape route from thought, with thought.

In exploring the adjacent possible, a person often finds it necessary to extend language and create specialized

terminology. In academia every field has its own jargon. Here is a specimen, fresh from the jungle:

“Non-local Effects of Conformal Anomaly.

It is shown that the nonlocal anomalous effective actions corresponding to the quantum breaking of the conformal symmetry can lead to observable modifications of Einstein’s equations. The fact that Einstein’s general relativity is in perfect agreement with all observations including cosmological or recently observed gravitational waves imposes strong restrictions on the field content of possible extensions of Einstein’s theory: all viable theories should have vanishing conformal anomalies.”¹

The first-level effect of this jargon is that anyone outside the field or discipline in question, doesn’t know what you are talking about. The second-level effect is that anyone inside the field now also doesn’t know.

Jargon is an attempt to stay dark while seeming to create and share knowledge. Thought is at work here. Thought loves jargon. The more obscure, the more respect is earned. The presence of proliferating jargon is a give-away of deviation from target. The target being the adjacent possible.²

¹ Source of this fragment omitted out of respect for the authors.

² For a definition of “adjacent possible” see *You Think You Think* (YTYT).

It is, nevertheless, not possible to talk about unformed territories without using unformed, struggling language. The difference between that and jargon is ossification, i.e. jargon has been cast in concrete, like church doctrine, and has become self-defining.

Self-definition is an extremely interesting phenomenon. Language has the ability to become self-defining. This is, of course, saying that thought has this ability. Thought can self-define.

This property of language can be found in every field of life. One example is real estate marketing. "Location. Location. Location." The word means nothing, yet saying it creates meaning. Saying it three times creates three times the meaning.

A term gains meaning by being repeated in slightly different contexts. Even if it has no meaning whatsoever to start with. A term does not have to have an initial basis in sensory reality. It is enough if it has a reference in thought reality. Take words like: God, liminality, geopolitics, culture, self, ego, higher self, etc. etc. None of these started out as a description of something observed. They started out as a language extension that later solidified in common or academic usage.

If you repeat a word often enough, it becomes real.

Abstraction is a process that in 10% of cases goes from concrete to abstract, and that the other 90% of the time

goes from abstract to concrete. In the latter case the abstractions are self-defining, by definition.

Let's point out the obvious: if a term or concept is abstract and self-defining, it isn't real. Unless, and this is more rule than exception, reality is created abstractly. This is, strangely, the case. Our reality is abstract, because we think all the goddamned time. A political view, a post on Facebook, a career in technology, a style of clothing, all of these are more real than trees, wind, color, pain, or breathing.

It is a new phenomenon that whole populations nowadays are tethered to and wholly focused on their smart phones. The only thing new about it, though, is the device in their hands. The process of fragmented and distracted thought existed before technology caught up and provided a physical aid. Thought, to further its own agenda, created smart phones. Smart phones did not create thought.

Jargon cannot help us to escape thought. Language itself, though, can. It is essential to be on guard against self-defining terminology that slowly carves itself in stone.



Not all thoughts are equal. Thought is not one, it is multiple. It has many sources and levels. Language, therefore, also exists at multiple levels.

Thoughts are like rabbits. They multiply out of control. Since language multiplies at a much slower rate, language takes on the role of a discipline. As in, training a soldier or a dog. Language has built-in restraints. On the Diocles curve, restraint is all we've got.

It does not require jargon to get tired of thought. Thinking can be, and often is, terribly exhausting. We start each day with what feels like a fresh supply of energy and enthusiasm. We end each begging for the oblivion of sleep. However, sleep deprivation studies have mapped an interesting and counterintuitive feature of tiredness. Whereas we normally think we are batteries that run out of charge, i.e. become tired, measurements of electrical activity in the brain show the opposite. At the end of the day

we are so full of charge that we begin to be unable to think or function. Sleep is not a recharge but an emptying out of the accumulated energy. The morning feeling of freshness is, surprisingly, one of emptiness, ready to begin the process of accumulation once more.

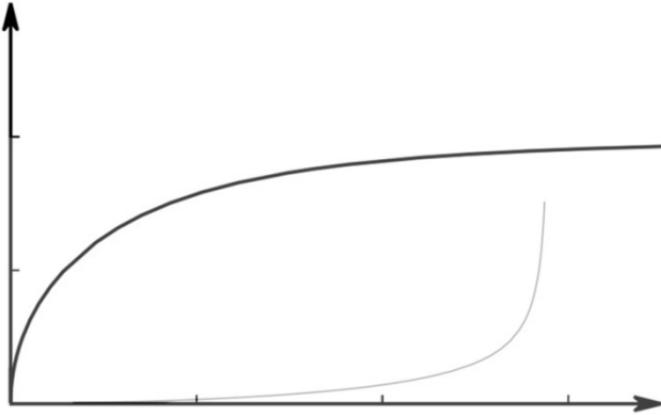
Considering that we can be so very wrong about our energy and energy depletion, it is no surprise that we can be wrong about the nature of thinking itself.

Thinking is an energy harvesting system. We think and think, filling our bucket. When it's full, we feel tired and need to rest. During sleep the bucket is emptied. We wake up feeling as if a truck has run us over during the night, completely wrung out, flattened. We do not feel full of energy; instead, our load has been lightened. We feel ready for the new day because we are empty and light.

The Kappa curve, being a thinking curve, shows this dynamic graphically: build, build, saturate, start over.

The Diocles curve, by contrast, has no build-up. Which is why it can feel unrewarding. We are never getting anywhere, and the reason we know this is that we do not feel tired. That is how our thinking interprets the situation. In underlying fact, it is to our advantage to remain relatively uncluttered. Only relatively, because the dynamic is not all-or-nothing. We are all on the Kappa curve, in the rat race, in the work until you drop scheme of things. Additionally, optionally, we can activate the slower, emptier curve by not

fully being a slave to thinking. The curves are superimposed upon each other.



Thought wants to think as much as possible. It thinks only of the bottom line, the margin, pushing the black numbers as high as they can go.

Trying to think less, even without fully understanding of what is involved, is an affront to thought. It becomes indignant and imperial. It becomes a factory manager who fumes in the back office, coming up with 20 ways to force the recalcitrant worker back into action.

Thought wins this battle. Every time. Thought has an unbeatable ace up its sleeve: it is so deeply embedded in us that we think we are it. The factory manager is I. The

river flows and cannot be stopped. Escape may be possible; stopping the power of thought is not.

By not thinking we do not preserve our energy. Instead, we slow down the clutter of energy blocks clogging our pipes.

Once more, let's return to the starting point: we do not think our own thoughts. Therefore, there has to be a purpose to the incessant stream. Since thinking mostly makes us suffer, and we mostly engage it in battling the endless hurdles of life and society, that purpose is not ours. We are not the beneficiaries of thinking.

Something thinks our thoughts, and it is doing so for profit. Such a thought is, of course, absurd. Insane even.

The ability to think has traditionally been regarded as a gift. We enjoy the fruits of progress because we are so good at thinking, is the accepted version of reality. Not so. The ability to think can be likened to the invasion of a foreign power. It now rules our lives. We became really, really used to it. Now we can't do without it. We have no memory of pre-invasion times. We have become volunteers. We have been in prison for so long that the concept of escape is indeed absurd, incomprehensible, and insane.

Many people whom history has recorded as great writers, scientists, and thinkers, ascribing genius and talent to them, have been halfway insane. Two points need to be made concerning this:

- 1) Their insanity-classified behavior was a key ingredient to their achievements.
- 2) They were not actually gifted, talented, or otherwise superlatively endowed.

The first statement should be obvious without explanation. A person who acts and thinks normally, produces output within the spectrum of what the other billion inhabitants of society consider normal. Everyone else is already engaged likewise. Thought conditions behavior. If the behavior is normal, the thought life that gives rise to it, is also normal, within the norm. If thought makes excursions to the edge of what is possible or known, the behavior will reflect this.

For example, about Newton it is said that he on some days woke up, swung his legs out of bed, and then was assailed by such a barrage of new thoughts that he sat there, motionless, for hours. He also deliberately hid or obfuscated mathematical proofs that we now look back upon as historical breakthroughs in science. Much of his efforts and research was not spent on natural science but on alchemy. He was trying to transmute lead into gold. In other words, he was nuts.

The second statement, that innovators, geniuses, the celebrated heroes of art and philosophy, had no special gifts or talents, far surpasses the first one in relevance and importance. Because we are not Sir Isaac Newtons. But then neither was he, at first.

Talent is ascribed in retrospect. Depressingly, when a parent or teacher says about a child that he or she has talent, this tends to never materialize later in life. Talent is a worthless and useless commodity. We can't take it to the bank. By the time it is recognized, we are dead.

A talented scientist like Newton was not a talented scientist until someone else later said so. It logically follows, therefore, that the revolutionary discoveries in the fields of human endeavor, are made by people who simply go there. The cure for cancer, breaking the speed of light, teleportation, longevity, all of these are going to be discovered by individuals who simply decide to address the question and ignore the accepted belief that "it is impossible," or, worse, that "it is insane."

The universe does not in itself put high pre-requisites upon us. Entry requirements are low. We are, after all, merely stinking animated meat bags. All that is really required is the willingness and the interest to go to the edge of the adjacent possible and tackle an issue that is already waiting there but that everyone has dismissed, until now.

Thought, as an entity, discourages us to do so (Kappa). But, and this is a curious and even delightful fact, it also excitedly supports it (Diocles).

Both are valuable: the 1,000 tonne crop that is harvested this year, and the small number of stalks that provide seeds for next year's crops.

Newton became Newton because he addressed the questions that occurred to him to be worth addressing. Not because he was qualified, talented, or a genius. He wasn't.

In the current study, the question that is addressed is: what is the source of thought? As obvious as the question is, no one seems to be asking it.

There is an explanation for that, of course. Cognitive scientist Donald Hoffman, in the opening statements of his SAND2017 talk, slips up twice and reveals that reason. First he states that the neural activity in the brain causes consciousness. This, he says, can be proven by disabling parts of the brain with the use of magnets, and witnessing the disappearance of abilities like color perception. The assumption slips by him without arousing any suspicion. It is unscientific and untested, since logically cause and effect can be reversed. It is just as valid to assume that thinking causes neural activity, instead of the other way around. Hoffman does not do this. He makes his second slip when he honestly admits that, on the basis of this unrecognized assumption, there currently exists no coherent theory of consciousness. Despite the fact that many researchers have for a long time tried to come up with one. Instead of taking this refreshing admission as an opportunity to revisit underlying assumptions, he treats it as no more than an amusing observation.

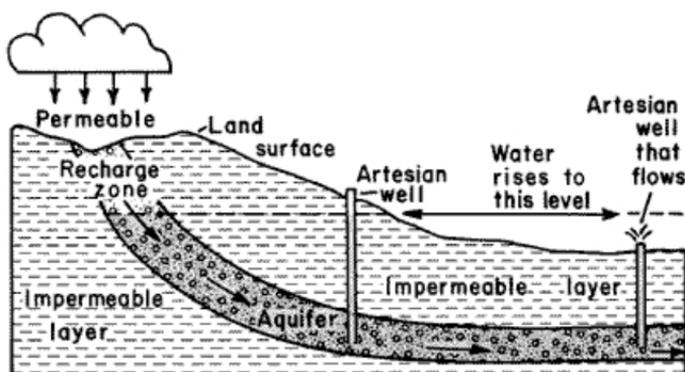
Therefore, the reason that no one asks about the source of thought is the belief that the source is already known. It is the biological brain. Our thoughts are all manufactured

inside the grey cells of the central nervous system, like cars coming off a conveyor belt. Except of course that they aren't. Our brain does not produce or contain thoughts. Nor does it store memories, motor skills, images, stories, childhood experiences, symbols, archetypes, second languages, the location of our spare car keys, and so on. What size of hard disk would one need to store a lifetime? The brain is not that hard disk.

The brain does not produce thoughts. If anything, it's the other way around.

A terminology clarification is called for at this point. Thinking is not the same as consciousness. Animals are conscious, but they don't think. We can stop thinking, and yet remain conscious. We can continue thinking, and yet be unconscious (dreams). The question, what is the source of consciousness, is not addressed in this book.

In the same vein, the terms *unconscious* and *subconscious* are sleights of hand. By saying that a habit, or a trauma, is unconscious, we are really saying that we are in control, just not at the moment. That we are conscious, just not at the moment. Describing something as unconscious, or locating it in the Unconscious (capital U to signal objectification), is a magic disappearance trick. It's there, but it's not. The source of thought is not the Unconscious. Just like the source of water in a house is not the dusty cardboard box at the back of the bedroom closet that we put there last year and forgot all about. There is no relation. It's a sleight of hand. A sleight of jargon.



As the source of water in a house must itself contain water (the well, the municipal reservoir), so the source of thought must itself contain thought. This is logical. We don't know what our next thought is going to be. We don't see where it comes from. The place it comes from is the source of thought. By definition, it must be a place with a lot of thoughts.

It is possible, even likely, that it is more than one place. The well goes into the groundwater, goes into the aquifer, goes into an even larger underground lake. The source of thought may be multiple.

Thoughts can be clunky. Tackling a problem can feel like pushing large rocks around, or wading through mud. Yet, as far as we know, thoughts exist as some form of energy, some form of electro-magnetic wave. Energy should be

flexible and instantaneous. It travels near the speed of light. Yet sometimes thoughts are exceedingly slow.

Therefore, it is possible that thought = energy is another inaccurate assumption. Maybe thoughts are not made of energy.

Brain wave activity is measured in the physical brain. As already pointed out, what is measured may be the end result of thought, instead of the movement of thought. The fact that the brain shows electromagnetic variations that correspond to thought activity, does not mean, at all, that thoughts are electromagnetic. Just like the ripples on the surface of a pond do not prove that the stone, which caused the ripples, was made of water.

By calling into doubt the energetic nature of thoughts, we approach the edge of thinking.

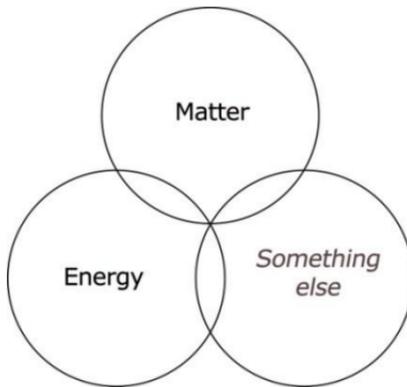
The scientific paradigm says that all things are energy and matter. The search for a physical location of memories has been guided by this paradigm. No memories have been found. Logically, we can then surmise the existence of a third “thing,” apart from energy or matter. This constitutes naive thinking, of course.

Energy
Matter
Something Else

If thoughts are not made of matter, and they are not made of energy nor exist anywhere within the electromagnetic spectrum from ELF at 3 Hz to gamma rays at 300 EHz, they must be made of something else.

Thoughts are real. We experience them every day, all day. Thoughts are useful. We employ language, math, images, to express and capture thoughts. This in turn leads to engineering, technology, architecture and shiny new smart phones.

Thoughts interact with energy (as seen in brain wave measurements) and with matter (as seen in building a bridge).

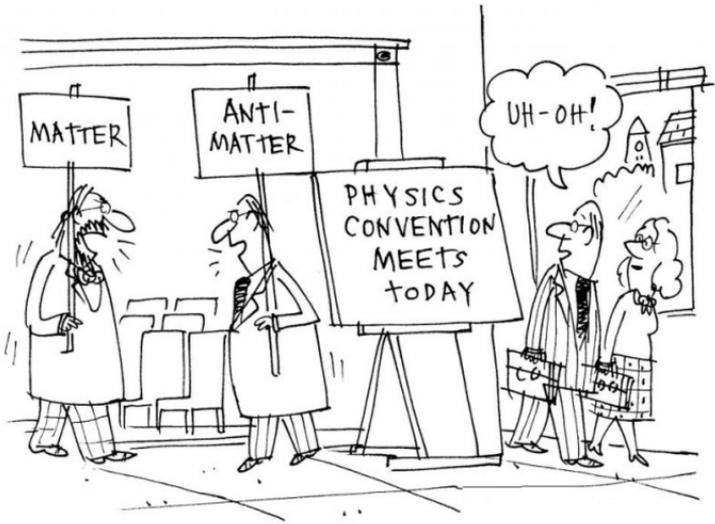


To avoid objectification we will say that thought consists of “something else.” It is not clear what. If it was clear, science would have mastered thought already. We would be able to buy thoughts in gallon containers at Wal-Mart.

The computer simulation of thought, aka software, consists entirely of electrical currents. Which is why a computer only simulates thoughts, instead of thinks.

This is the edge. We have energy, reasonably well mapped out by science; we have matter, also reasonably well mapped out by science; and then we have thought. It doesn't fit into the other two categories. It is not yet lit up and visible. What thought is exists smack in the middle of the adjacent possible.

Thoughts can be easy, light, as well as clunky, hard, unfinished. In thinking we have non-thinking. In electricity we have positive and negative, or charge and no charge. In matter we have antimatter. Bringing antimatter into the presence of matter creates an explosion. Bringing differing potentials of electricity together, like the two wires in a cable, causes sparks, a surge, lightning, and other dramatic effects. Consequently it makes sense to ask: what is created when bringing thought and non-thinking together?



This one question has far-reaching practical application.

When a lamp is switched on, a current of negatively charged particles flows from the zero pole, which we usually call negative, to the plus pole. This suggests that in thinking “something else” flows from non-thinking to thinking. Which leads to the following tentative conclusion:

The flow of “something else” from non-thinking to thinking is what we experience as thought.

This flow is neither made of energy or matter.

For human beings to be able to build a thinking machine, they would first have to build a non-thinking machine.

After Thomas Kuhn came with his paradigm philosophy, the theory of paradigm shifts entered into the reigning paradigm and became part of it. Suddenly paradigm shifts popped up all over the place. Except they didn't. These were thoughts masked as new insights, but within the old, existing paradigm. To shift a paradigm we need to step outside of it. To shift thought we need to not think.

We cannot replace an old office chair with a brand new one, without first removing the old chair. The new one may be ready, unpacked, assembled and still smelling of factory carcinogens. It is already standing on the corridor. But replacing the old chair means removing it. We cannot physically put the new one in place, without that first step of removal. For some moments, maybe just seconds, the space occupied by the old chair has to be empty.

Almost no one is willing to do this with thought. It's hard enough to go through the gut wrenching experience with old trusty office chairs. To go through it with beliefs, thought constructs, thought patterns, is too painful to contemplate.

Therefore, let us continue contemplating it.

Part III: A New Thought

Saying that Newton invented gravity is usually taken, and meant, as a joke. We already enjoyed gravity before that, of course. However, in the world created by thought, Newton did in fact invent gravity. He did not merely discover it or describe it with a mathematical formula. Today, in 2018, the existence of gravity waves, which is the closest they can come to the supposed energy making up gravity, is uncertain. Gravity is a weak force, yet it keeps the planets circling around the sun. No force can travel faster than light, yet gravity can travel across the universe without such limits. Unlike every other known force, gravity has no polar opposite. These properties of the un-measurable force of gravity make it possible to call into doubt it even exists.

In this field, at least, there are scientists who contemplate replacing the old office chair. For example, at the Zigurats Technology Center and Dakila Research in Brazil.

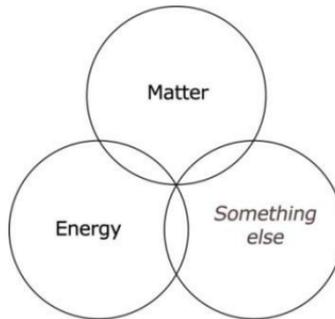
Discussing gravity is a mild exercise in testing the unwillingness of thought to consider certain questions. We are further discussing the presence of a third something else, beside matter and energy. This third element has the same standing, the same importance, as matter or energy. That exercise is rather less mild.

If this line of inquiry has value, it cannot be it has never been considered before. Of course it has; many times over. We have simply landed up in an age where rationality, science and logic have taken dominance. Science, after all, insists that nothing exists that cannot be measured, tested, described, analyzed, or understood with the laws of nature.

It insists on this even though thought itself does not conform to this requirement. Science has dismissed previous forms of inquiry, relegated them to the realms of superstition, the metaphysical, and the insane.

This means, in fact, that the scientific thought framework is put as an authority on the universe. Science doesn't exist; thought of the scientific denomination exists.

The third something has been postulated countless times before by people of all cultures and from all historical eras. However, instead of researching their thought here, let's leave this to anthropologists and continue at the level of clean, experiential philosophy. This also avoids, to some extent, the misconceptions and deviations of the past.



The diagram of the three overlapping circles is not accurate. It only serves for now to begin to delineate a method, a path forward. Obviously, energy and matter are themselves a result of thought looking at the world. In that sense there are no three circles.

It is a temporary construct, by thought, for the purpose of tackling thought. The first benefit is the elimination of the thought that we could look at energy or matter to understand thought. We can't. There is no point.

The scientific dominance, too, is set aside. After all, thought does not obey the laws of nature. It weighs nothing. It can fly. It can create something out of nothing. It ends up with more energy than it had to start with. It is both fast and slow. It can travel backward in time. And so on. Very unscientific behavior of the one activity that we all, without exception, engage in all day long.

To recap:

- *Thought is made of "something else."*
- *Thought has an opposite - not thinking - which provides its vitality.*

Put this way, it feels we are actually walking on the Diocles curve. These thoughts have momentum. The Diocles curve, to rephrase it once more, shows one possible movement of thought energy, or rather of thought "something else." This particular pattern seems, so far, the most profitable. There may be other patterns later on.

Other areas of life exist where the laws of nature are not, and don't have to be, obeyed. Graphical arts, video games, fantasy and science fiction literature, movies. We cannot call these areas insignificant or irrelevant. They are billion dollar industries. They affect and influence our lives.

Hobbits and black holes have this in common: no one has ever seen one. Yet the average person can more easily enumerate the exact properties of hobbits than those of black holes.

The “something else” that thought is made of does not obey or conform to the laws of nature. Is this due to our shortsightedness, in that we simply haven’t spotted the relationship yet? By asking this question we allow thought to short-circuit our inquiry and plug us right back into the scientific paradigm.

Admissions of ignorance are sometimes the opposite. They are sly assertions of superiority. For example, the smug scientist on TV, who says with a smile, “We don’t understand X yet...” “We don’t yet know if there’s other life in the universe.” “We haven’t found the cure for cancer yet.” The big problem with these sentiments is the small word “yet.”

Thought loves the authority that the laws of nature are endowed with. Authority, as we have seen, is a give-away sign that thought is pulling a fast one on us. The opposites of authority, like rebellion, revolution, anarchy, are only authority in disguise. A rebellion derives its authority from being against authority. The real opposite, the one that creates vitality, is non- authority, or no authority at all.

Authority is an old office chair.

Thought, though inclined to love authority, is itself free from obeying authority. Thought is an expert at eating its cake and having it. Thought, being neither energy nor matter, can actually do that.

With thought, we are in the presence of a something that is not a force, not energy, not a physical thing, but that has nevertheless incredible power, mileage, opportunities, and real-world effects. What a thought.

Thought is tricky. It can, and does, convince us to take the most outrageous lies as truth. We say we fool ourselves, but it is thought that fools us. We say we believe in a cause, but it is thought that does the believing. We say we have an opinion, but it is thought that has it.

Another major feature of thought is its self-centeredness. In daily life we think almost exclusively about ourselves and all things related to ourselves. Biological necessity explains this in part. We need to make sure food gets into our own mouths. Putting ourselves first is, furthermore, an inevitable consequence of thinking we think. We identify, therefore we come first.

But is that all there is to it? Self-centeredness is neither accidental nor coincidental. It is rampant and all pervasive. The more money a person accumulates, the greedier they tend to become. Self-centeredness has been called original sin, egotism, megalomania. Kids have it in abundance, even more than adults. We can't help ourselves. We put ourselves first in all we do or think.

Thought is selfish, even as it pretends to be objective, rational, enlightened. Thought is selfish even when it knows better. The Nash equilibrium won the Nobel Prize in 1994, but it didn't change the way we conduct business. Most recently, the new US president summed up his mind and his politics with the words, "America First." Everyone else second.

Thinking is selfish by nature, in essence, and, probably, by design. This takes us back to the red thread of this study. Something thinks our thoughts. Something has designed our thinking.

Authority was one characteristic of thought. Self-centeredness is another. This exercise is one of connecting dots.

Thought has a purpose. This purpose is invisible to us, or unimaginable, or too silly to be true. Any or all of these.

The purpose that thought acts from does not necessarily benefit human beings. It seems to do so, but we are almost certainly missing something. For example, we do not know the purpose of life. Since we don't, assumptions about the purpose of thought are shaky at best. Unless, somehow, the purpose of thought leads to or encompasses the purpose of life. It is not impossible that understanding the purpose of thought (why it exists, what it wants) automatically elucidates the purpose of human life.

We are not our thoughts; therefore, our life may be at cross-purposes with thought. Not exactly opposite, but certainly not aligned or identical.

Mean while, thought runs our lives. We think that we run our lives, but that's exactly it: we think. Thought makes it that we think so.

This sounds sinister. It is a sinister world. Animals feed on other animals. Our digestion system is full of bacteria. We will die, and life after death in any form is an unsubstantiated myth.

It's not sinister so much as stark. Starkness means our choices are few. This is better than believing we have plenty of choices, lots of opportunity, and a great future ahead of us. Because none of that is true.

Our choices are few. But not zero. The Diocles curve is near horizontal for a long time, but not zero. Life ends, at which point it truly is zero, but it hasn't yet.

Bill Bryson gives an anonymous quote: "A physicist is how atoms think about atoms," originally ascribed to Niels Bohr in a similar form. The circularity of this thought is comical. We could also take the statement, not as a joke, but as an attempt to describe the universe. It is a true description, yet nonsense as well. Atoms can't make such decisions. And yet... the folly of the thought almost reveals something. It takes the human being, i.e. the physicist, out of the equation. In other words, it takes "us" out of the equation.

We see human beings as playing a central role in life. It is possible that thought sees this differently. It is possible that thought doesn't see us at all.

Part IV: Vital Thoughts

Thought is made of “something else.” Asking what this is, has limited usefulness, because our answers will inevitably come from the world of matter and energy. Neither of which is “something else.”

The benefit of the thought construct “something else” is that it allows for unencumbrance of thought. It opens a door. It opens up the possibility that there exists a “something else” which we have access to and yet have never before consciously seen as playing a role.

We do have access to it. Thought may rule our lives, but the price it pays for that is that we think. Thought shares, as it were, its thoughts with us.

What would happen if 1,000 people stopped thought for 60 seconds at the same time in one place? Mass meditation events have been held, but always with a different agenda. Aligning thought through meditation is no more than a paddle in the water. A section of water is pushed into one direction for a short period of time. What if 1,000 people stopped the water in its flow completely? This experiment could be conducted.

Bringing non-thinking into the presence of thinking creates a vitality of thinking that is unequalled.

“Something else” has immaterial properties which make it possible to do immaterial things. These properties cannot be defined in terms of physical or energetic qualities. Despite this, we have full access.

The property of immateriality is not unknown in art. Take the early music of German group Tangerine Dream, e.g. the album *Rubycon* (1975). It truly has an indefinable otherworldly quality. It isn't just experimental and crazy. It is composed, constructed, driven. As if the artists knew what they were aiming at. It speaks, it transports. At the same time it is jarring, dissonant, anticlimactic. That is part of the deal. Tangerine Dream lost that otherworldly quality after about 1980 and turned into shallow pre-programmed music, but for a time it was "something else." For a time it was unthought-of.



In trying to define something that strikes us as unique and special, we fail, in a way unsurprisingly. The art comes from a pre-thought world, an outside-of-thought world. Thought hasn't yet thrown its nets over it.

Thought appears to exist in, or stretch into, a dimension where thoughts have not formed yet. We know this to be true, because we can observe thoughts coming out of “nowhere.” In fact, we can’t stop thoughts coming out of nowhere.

When a thought enters our awareness, it takes shape. It becomes ideas, images, words. This, however, does not mean that thought is formless and that we give it form in our minds. After all, sometimes fully formed ideas pop into our heads. Thought isn’t so much taking shape as unveiling its shape. When we think the same thoughts of worry, of hope, of roving criticism, of plans for the future, again and again, we are not shaping them. They already have shape, a familiar one. Thoughts have shape even when we are not thinking them.

Most of our thoughts are old thoughts.

Yet some thoughts make the impression of being new, unique, never seen before. Like the music of Tangerine Dream, or Roger Dean’s paintings, or Einstein’s discovery of the mathematical relationship between energy and matter without carrying out any form of practical experimentation.

Not all thoughts are equal. We want to have original thoughts, make inspired art, push the boundaries of knowledge. But there is a problem with this wish. Since we are not the source of thought, whether or not our thoughts are new and original hardly matters.

We said that most of our thoughts are old thoughts. Let's rephrase this: *all* of our thoughts are old thoughts.

We place such overinflated importance on originality and uniqueness that we are prime candidates for being fooled, by thought, that our creations are indeed unique and very original. We are, after all, 100% unable to see ourselves in the perspective of 7 billion minds thinking thoughts all day long. To think that anything we come up with is new and original, is astonishingly naive. To think that our particular opinion on any topic is the right one, the smart one, the educated one, or the best one, is severely delusional. This includes the opinion expressed in these sentences.

Thinking is a socially accepted form of insanity.

Let's remember that common opinion used to hold that people who talk to invisible presences on the street, were crazy. Today, the spaces of public transport are full of people who loudly talk to no one. But this has become acceptable. The smart phone has made it OK.

The demarcation line between clinical insanity and normal behavior is shifting and not clearly defined. The reason for this is that we don't think our thoughts. Something thinks our thoughts. When all is said and done, we are not really in control.

Originality, in other words, is of limited value. It is like the uniqueness of a snow crystal, easy come, easy go. When

non-thinking flows into thinking, it doesn't create originality. It creates vitality. These two are entirely different beasts.

An original thought is not necessarily vital. A vital thought is not necessarily original. We are in this for the vitality, not for the originality.

One of the great qualities of Bill Bryson's book *A Short History of Nearly Everything* (2004) is that the author, inadvertently, highlights that the history of science is one set of assumptions piled on top of other sets of assumptions. What we "know" today as accepted scientific fact started as a guess, upon which a theory was based, which was then partially corroborated by a handful of measurements or experiments, and finally silently slotted into the curriculum. The book shows, quite unintentionally, that science is a thought product. Not some science; all science.

Discovering that a fact long taken for granted is an assumption, is liberating.

For example, warm blooded animals produce heat in their bodies by burning calories. The only part of this theory that corresponds to observation is that we have warm bodies. The rest is a guess. The underlying assumptions are so deep that researching this question ("Where does body heat come from?") is all but impossible. Thought has hidden the access tunnel.

Vitality arises from realizing that a question has no answer. The challenge is not finding the answer; the challenge is finding the question.

Thought is actively unwilling to focus too hard on questions. It wants answers. Questions are irritating, answers are fulfilling. Thought feeds on answers, not so much on questions. Answers drain our vitality.

Vitality is not a measure of energy. It can, tentatively, be equated with a high Heart Rate Variability (HRV) as discussed in YTYT. Energy is a tricky word, because we think we know what it is. We don't.

Thought loves to argue, to find flaw. A 300-page research report will be skewered by a reader who finds one mistake on one page. Thought is cruel. It is thoughtless. Thought is, almost, inhuman.

When questioning the nature and intention of thought, we get one immediate result: thought shuts up, it doesn't want to answer. It acts like a hardened criminal taken in for questioning by the police. It knows if it talks, it loses. But if it plays for time, then talks to divert attention, it may win.

Thoughts are slippery little suckers, and there are a lot of them.

The validity of thought does not reside in the recognition of that validity by others. Objectively we know this to be true. The phenomenon of groundbreaking work in any field being ignored, at least at first, is disconcertingly common. It used

to be ascribed to poor communications and language barriers. Today it can be ascribed to the unbalanced growth of the Internet that turns search engines into no more than garbage heaps. In parallel with these obstacles, the elitism of virtually every scientific or academic discipline prevents new ideas to find fertile ground and recognition.

The validity of thought resembles an oil well. Even lacking the recognition of oil as a fuel, e.g. in pre-industrial times, the well still yields oil and the oil is still oil.

The argument put forward to validate the gigantic quantity of thought that is produced (an estimated publication of 140,000 physical books in the English language alone every year) is that this extends the edge of human knowledge. Despite this enormous extension we cannot yet cure cancer, visit Mars, or even have direct knowledge of the interior of our own planet (the deepest mine ever dug went a mere 2 miles into the Earth's crust). Something is wrong with the argument. 140,000 books do not advance human knowledge. A search engine that yields 300,000 results on any search is pretty much useless.

We are inundated by thought. Everyone has an opinion, and usually shares it on Facebook or YouTube. Everyone is a writer. Everyone is an artist. Everyone is a spiritual teacher, a scientist, philosopher, shaman. But if everyone is, then no one is.

The validity of thought is undermined by thought itself. Thought doesn't care about validity; it only cares about its

next meal. If it can get this meal by persuading a million people that Justin Bieber is cool, then that's what it will do.

All forms of life eat. Thought is a form of life. Therefore, thought eats.

Such a thought construction is easy to dismiss as juvenile, or moronic. The weak link in the above logic chain is, "thought is a form of life." But this is also exactly the thesis of the current book, as well as of the previous one (YTYT). If we don't generate our thoughts, if something thinks those thoughts in us, through us, then that something is alive. All forms of life eat. Therefore, thought is feeding, or at the very least a feeding mechanism.

While we look for validation and vitality in thought, thought looks for food.

The reason that opinions and beliefs always contradict each other, is the same reason that a couple of dogs snarl at each other when presented with only one food bowl.

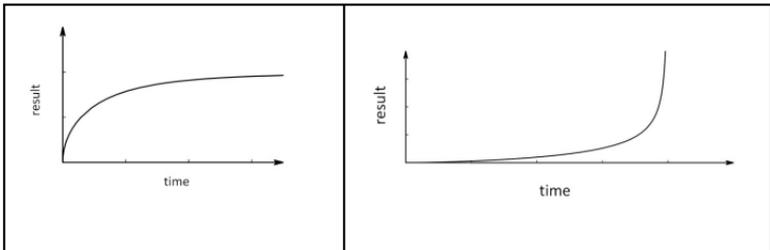
We get a kick out of thought, but only because thought gets a kick out of us.

Validity of thought doesn't depend on recognition, but it sure helps. Increased thought recognition means increased nutritional value of that thought.

Though the words resemble each other, validity and vitality are not the same. Vitality benefits us, validity benefits thought. Thought has organized the world so that it looks to

us exactly the other way around. Validation and recognition are of supreme importance, and can be taken to the bank. Vitality is just a feeling.

Elitism makes the threshold of validation high, as on the Kappa curve. Someone without credentials or friends gets nothing. But if ex-president Jimmy Carter in his old age writes a book about *Faith*, he gets a contract and invited on TV shows, regardless of whatever the contents of the book are. This is not unfair; it is how thought works. Thought prioritizes the wow effect, the emotional response. Thought prioritizes the next meal.



Vitality, on the other hand, is the only requirement for proceeding on the Diocles curve. In fact, without it we can't. It is flat for too long. There is no incitement.

Thought, as we well know, is mostly merely blabbering along, blowing bubbles. Blabbering is low-vitality activity. When thought becomes excited, which is called inspiration, the bubbles get somewhat bigger. Bubbles can't be transformed into focused laser light. They just go poof.

Thought becomes a Diocles tool if it has:

1. awareness of underlying assumptions
2. and the willingness to question them.

An unfortunate side-effect of following such a process is that we land up with empty hands. Broken assumptions and nothing to replace them.

Yet, this is one way of getting to the edge of thought. The term “adjacent possible” hints at a reality, not yet realized. Not a new thought or explanation, but a reality; something we can experience.

The method of puncturing thought bubbles, assumptions, reality perceptions, can bring us to the edge of a reality or realities never experienced before. That such a reality exists is testified by the fact that life exists. This requires questioning the assumption that life started chemically a few billion years ago, as some kind of random, miraculous coincidence.

The world did not evolve conditions in which life was possible (enough O₂ in the atmosphere, that kind of thing). Life was already possible. Before there was a planet. The conditions did not create life; life created the conditions.

We do not create thought. Thought creates us, as personalities, human beings, adventurers, fools.

We think we think. No, thought has, with overpowering force, pushed itself into existence. Thinking is the visible

surface of that process or configuration. It is certainly inconceivable that thought created rocks. But it is conceivable that thought created the television on our wall or the phone in our pocket. We know it did. If thought can create televisions, cars, bridges, streetlights, and Nobelium (one of the 24 synthetic elements on the Periodic Table not found in nature), then it can also create rocks. Rocks are much less complex, after all.

What is required is to question the underlying assumption that matter simply exists, out there, independent of thought. We do not know that it does.

Let's back up. The thought that the universe existed long before we did, is just that, a thought. Not a fact. Not an observation. It is an assumption that can be questioned. We do not actually know if our planet existed 4.5 billion years ago. We weren't there. We think it did, scientific theories and models point at it, but we do not know.

Thought overrules knowledge. Then it becomes knowledge, by assuming its mantle.

Our minds are incredibly resistant to being put out of action. We can dismantle the mind, i.e. thinking, of its power. It doesn't really lose its power if we do so, but it does lose its power over us specifically.

The reason we believe we're special and important is that thought believes it is special and important. We simply

identify. But we know we are not special and important. No person is.

We are not thought. We are a mystery and thought is a visitor, an extraneous presence, an occupier. Thought didn't only move into our house, it moved into our mind.

Analogies just don't work anymore at this point. Analogies assume there are two things to be compared. But we cannot compare thought to thinking. We cannot compare ourselves to ourselves.

Earlier we listed a conclusion:

The flow of "something else" from non-thinking to thinking is what we experience as thought.

This means that the practice of not thinking increases thought. This can be tested experimentally.

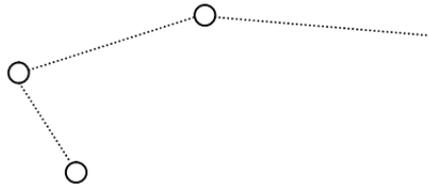
We are constantly in touch with this "something else." This is quite extraordinary. We don't just have access to thought, we don't just experience it, we don't just use it to express and create, no, we are swimming in the stuff. It comes out of our ears. We are surrounded by it, and dependent on it, like a fish in water. The role of thought cannot be overestimated.

The normal view is that we are human beings and, second, that we think. That is not really the way things hang together. First we don't think, then we think, and third we

are human beings. That last part is not essential; thinking is.

The “something else,” although defined as neither energy nor matter, is a flow or fabric or power. We will not divert into more traditional nomenclature, because then thought will label it and dismiss it. Thought is great at dismissing things, because it doesn’t care about us. It dismisses as a way of life, probably not even aware that it is doing so. It’s one of the dots to be connected: thought is dismissive. It is dismissive because it is not of this world. It is not human.

The dots so far are: authority, self-centered, dismissive.



Thought is curiously reluctant to think about death. We know people die. We know we ourselves are going to die. Yet we don’t dwell on it. We dwell on everything else, but not on death.

The reason for this reluctance may be that thought doesn’t understand the problem. It is not going to die. It has 7 billion carriers. The reluctance may be in reality non-comprehension, ignorance, and a kind of instinct for

secrecy. What happens at death is given to us on a need-to-know basis. Apparently, then, we don't need to know.

The accounts or myths of death, including the stories from people who entered a semi-death or near-death state, are wildly variable and informed by the thinking, i.e. the culture, of the times and people in question.

What we know for certain is that death means the end of the physical body. That is about all we know. This means that death has no reality as long as we're alive. This is not a play of words. Death is a definite threshold. Once across, there is no turning back. We care about that, thought doesn't. Another way of saying that is that thought is fine with us caring about death. Our fear and melodrama are food, short-lived but intense. It wouldn't want to interfere with our wailing, because that might spoil the meal.



Someone died.

Thought is not only thoughtless, it is also heartless.

Vitality and death are opposites.

From death it is a small step to religion, the postal delivery system of myths about death. Religion is a prime instance of thought basically taking over a person's mind.

At first this may seem odd. After all, a strong belief disables a person's rationality, rendering them unable to think and question even basic information. Thinking and believing are not compatible and often antagonistic.

This is, however, only a surface appearance. Believing is a form of thinking, one where certainty, unfounded conviction, and emotional investment are requirements rather than impediments.

The belief that God exists is a mental construct, firmly cemented into place by ascribing personal authority to the entity called God. The question whether such an entity, somehow, really exists is not addressed in this book. Nor is it rejected.

The belief is a thought. Belief as such is a major achievement of thought, a crowning career accomplishment. Here it can succeed without having to be logical, without needing proof. This has got to be easier than dealing with a scientific or philosophical mind.

Thought, in the form of faith, shows another aspect of its nature, another dot in the shadowy shape to be drawn: ownership.

The religious thought being, in other words the deity, goes far beyond authoritarianism. He owns his people, and openly says so. They are called, and accept to be called: servants, slaves, sheep, branches on the tree, children of God, followers and martyrs. God owns them. They are his.

Incredible as it may seem when put this way, a religious person actually agrees to these terms. Their thinking does. All power is ascribed to God, none to the believer. The aspiring priest prostrates himself, face down, on the cold floor.



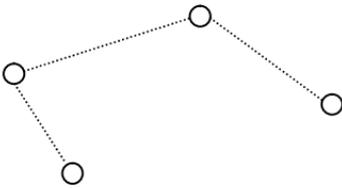
Thought loves to take power away from people.

Faith is thought possessing a person. Possession is a form of insanity; just like thinking itself is, only more extreme.

This insight leads to a further clarification about thought: thought \neq rationality. Thought is simply the activity of thinking, whether rational or irrational.

Anything and everything can be, and is, justified by a religious bent of mind: war, suicide, genocide, theft, wealth, corruption, child abuse, manipulation, secrecy, and so on.

Now the dots to be connected are: authority, self-centered, dismissive, ownership. At some point we will see the shape of thought.



Part V: Allowing Thought

When we sit, tired at the end of a long day, and cannot focus on any particular issue, the mind is literally clogged up. The day's experiences have filled the pipes, the containers, the filters. Not that thinking stops. It cannot stop. It splutters on. At such moments we are bound victims, thrown in the back of a truck, bouncing around.

The moment of realization is extraordinary: we witness the mind in process together with our total inability to control it. But since this happens every day, we don't mind. Which is an apt expression.³ Like the steering wheel of an unresponsive car, we don't have our mind anymore. Grappling with the wheel is out of the question, because we grapple using our mind.

It points to an alternative, a hint at a different approach. If we cannot grapple with our mind using our mind, can we use something else? What?

Instead of reaching for an answer, which is thought trying to take over again, we can push against the question and increase its unanswerability. The answer is guaranteed to be a deception, and useless, if we allow thought to provide it.

Thinking allows stuff in. Other people's thoughts, advertizing, moods, worries from unknown sources. Thinking is an open door.

³ As Stalin said before executing someone: "You don't matter, and I don't mind."

To describe thinking as an allowing process, rather than as a causative and controlling one, does not at first seem like a big deal. Yet it makes all the difference. As an allowing process, thinking is not a tool with which we drive nails into wood. Instead, it is a tool with which nails are driven into us.

When it comes to randomness and coincidence, as an example, there are two diametrically opposed views. Views are thoughts. One says that coincidence governs all, that in the long run all options and events will occur in statistical equal measure. A deck of cards will favor a player one day, but this isn't luck, it is coincidence. Tomorrow the deck will not be favorable. The second extreme view says that nothing is coincidence, that destiny, God, the cosmos, guides each moment, and that everything happens for a reason.

Dealing with either of these extremes is fortunately not necessary. Neither of them matches our life experience. Neither can be proven.

Since we are interested in escaping the prison of mind, neither view is acceptable. Both deny freedom. One implies that nothing matters, the other that everything has already been decided.

The difficulty lies in dealing with the occasional coincidence, luck, or fateful experience. We know without any doubt that some life events are not due to random chance. Two or more separate things happen in sequence,

clearly connected with each other, yet it is impossible to assign cause.

In a bookshop you come across a book on Croatia, and you buy it for reasons not clear to yourself. The next day your eye falls on a job advert for a position in Croatia. A day later a friend casually mentions that they just came back from a vacation in Croatia. We can accept this is not coincidence, but don't know what else it could be.

The phenomenon is not understood, and little studied. Science is, unsurprisingly, fervently non-deterministic and has no space for non-coincidence. Carl Jung recognized that the psychological life of a person plays a role, somehow. He called it synchronicity. A person's thinking is instrumental in connecting disconnected events. But more than that, the instrumental effects often look and feel objectively causative or fateful. A person's thinking is instrumental in the sense of allowing a non-coincidence to happen, bearing in mind that it really does happen.

Thinking allows stuff in.

Therefore, instead of ascribing life events to fate, coincidence or random unfeeling chance, we can ascribe them to the open door nature of thought. What comes through the door is not a mere wisp of thought, unsubstantial, private. Thought is substantial. It is made of "something else." Thought is an open door for that something else.

Only in this sense can meaning be ascribed to events. Thought does not interpret meaning. Thought triggers meaning. When meaning is not triggered, there is no meaning.

We feel the truth of this, and because we do we tend to inflate our own importance. Both at personal level and at the level of the human race. We do this in the face of hard evidence to the contrary. One person is a speck in an ocean of 7 billion people. Planet Earth is less than a speck in a universe of two trillion galaxies.



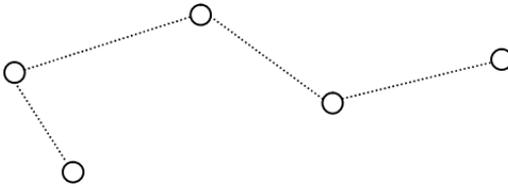
Hubble Space Telescope

When we allow meaning in, through thinking, we feel the flow of “something else,” which is taken as confirmation of significance. Just like emotion is taken as confirmation of the same.

Remember that thinking is basically a form of insanity, of possession. The more we think, the less we benefit from meaning. The flow doesn't come our way. The flow goes somewhere else, which is why the strongest emotions, the deepest inspirational moments, last the shortest.

The more we think, the greater the harvest, taking into account that we are not the farmer.

So we arrive back at the question posed in the opening pages of this book. Who is the farmer? Who are the farmers, plural? Who or what thinks in us?



The shape of thought is far from complete. Completeness is a misleading target, because it implies life is over when reached. We are not aiming at the finality of completeness. That is exactly one of the thoughts that have kept people pursuing elusive goals throughout the centuries. The finality of completeness, the philosopher's stone, the absolute.

Who or what thinks? Who or what has given us a mind? Can it even be called "our" mind? How can the thing we

identify with and consider to be “us,” not be “us”? That is the question.

We have orbited it and dived through layers of cloud cover. This process creates momentum along the slow curve of Diocles. The question helps us think. But just as importantly, it helps us not think. We know by now there cannot be a normal answer.

The question is not normal, so neither will the answer be.

(Not the End)

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