



An early Zairja, the first official “thinking machine,” Ibn Khaldun: “Select a star rise. Figure out its signs. Reverse its root. Straighten it out with the cycle. Someone will perceive those things. He will achieve his purpose And be given their letters in whose arrangement the evidence lies...”

How to Have Use an Imagination

Artifact is a means to build a Zairja (both must be constructed cumulatively)

We know the word “artifact” from the Hawthorne Effect — the role played by functions that are “lateral” to a salient cause. At General Electric’s Hawthorne factory, psychologists were hired to find out what color to paint the factory interior walls to improve efficiency. Every time a color was changed, productivity went up, but the color didn’t seem to matter. It was discovered that simply re-painting communicated to the workers that management cared about them, and in response they worked harder.

Artifact is usually an unwanted side-effect, so social scientists work to control or eliminate it. In this case artifact is the desirable feature used to develop an imaginary “register” that works automatically to “think for us.” It is a thinking machine. It is a computer. This computer can be on paper or any medium where artifact can be accumulated and re-assessed. The most obvious medium would be a notebook with verbal entries and drawings, overlain with annotations, stickie notes, and inserted pages; in other words, a *messy notebook*.

Zairja

The artifact computer has existed since at least the 11th century, as an extension of astrological prediction. A group of Moslem, Christian, and Jewish (also perhaps Zoroastrian?) scholars applied the techniques of assembling astrology charts for individuals to answer specific questions. This style of inquiry had existed for several thousand years, in the Chinese procedure of the *I Ching*, or Book of Change(s).

The logic of the *I Ching* and *Zairja* is the same. It is the idea that, for any given “effect,” there are multiple causes. Normally, causality runs in the direction of entropy, whose logic is commonly illustrated by a stone falling into water, generating waves that move concentrically outward. The fall creates multiple ripples. Imagine reverse-entropy. The ripples run backward to the moment of the stone’s fall. In the same way, reverse-entropy is a matter of many and diverse causes converging on a single event, instance, or effect. In this model, any material thing or mental idea is the result of a convergence, a coincidence. An event is a point of resonance, implicating interconnecting webs of influence. One act may trigger the effect, but other causal structures are immediately “implicated.”

This idea is key to physics, but it was clearly explained in the 1982 film, *Chan is Missing*. Reverse entropy is not a “weirdo idea,” but something common to all cultures, in all ages. It is something that artists, writers, and architects should use on the basis of its universality, reliability, and power. It is a literal thinking machine that, by negating the traditionally identified thinker, thinks perfectly.



Shipwreck survivors, *The Tempest*.

Trial Run

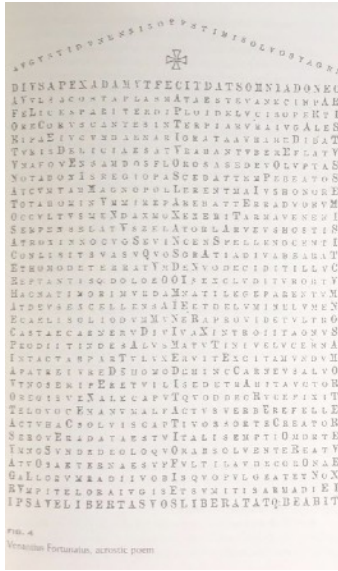
The Zairja can be a notebook, but all too frequently, first-time users try to manipulate the idea of the notebook into an impressive document for someone else’s approval. Wishing to demonstrate their cleverness, they nullify the Zairja’s benefits. The true Zairja does not have to be read by anyone. It needs only to be constructed. It is made to be forgotten. Shakespeare’s Prospero refers to this when he proclaims, in *The Tempest*, that he is going to “drown his books.” This is a reference to the hypothesis that all who have arrived on the island are under the impression that they are alive but are in fact dead. Their actions are imagined in the last fleeting moments of life as they perish in the (literal) tempest, while they are sinking with the ship. They dream, however, that their lives carry on through momentum to an adventure that will correct their unfinished desires and fears. The shape of the play is “orthographic,” or corrective.



Mozart’s score from the final scene of *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

This death dream hypothesis is correct because it does not require anyone to believe it. It can “run in the background” while the audience believes it is experiencing a fictional representation of hypothetically true drama (i. e. not a magic show). The death dream is a Zairja that corrects the audience in the same way it is working orthographically for characters. The dream belongs to no single member of the cast but is collective in that it may be “passed around” in the same way the Graeae (“gray”) Sisters passed around a single eye. In Zairja terms, the eye is the salient function, but the passing is the lateral and effective function, the artifact.

All fiction, and by extension all representation, is a death dream serving an orthographic — and *orthopsychic* — function. To be effective is to be orthopsychic, and *vice versa*. All art has the form of sin, forgiveness, and redemption. Some artists (Mozart in particular) proclaim this directly, as when, in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, reverse-causality converges on a garden scene where the Count Almaviva plans to meet Susanna, his servant, for a tryst. The Countess and Susanna have switched roles, to “correct” the Count’s intention to deceive his wife. In the flash of the moment of recognition of the trick played on him, the Count begs for (and is given) his wife’s forgiveness, and the musical structure of this



Palindromic word construction was derived from prayers, charms, and curses following the pattern of the “Rotas-Sator” square.

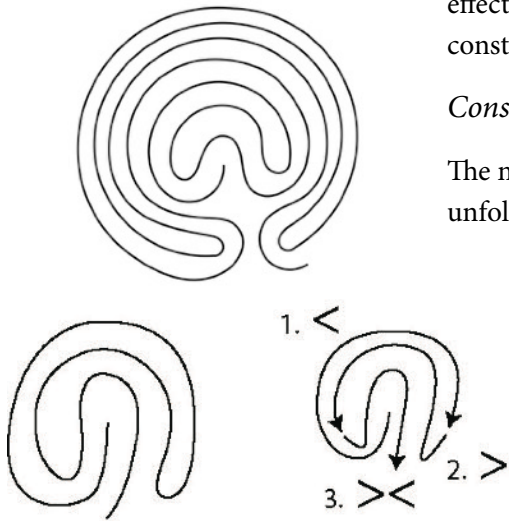
moment, descending downward through the same tones that had risen in the plea for forgiveness, rectify the two couples’ strife, Figaro and Susanna echoing at a “commoners’ level” what the noble couple experiences, repeating the “upper–lower” design of *Die Zaubeflötte*, with the paired pairs, Tamino/Pamina and Papageno/Papagena.

Doubling the doubles, incidentally, shows that Mozart was thinking in terms of projective geometry’s “root surface,” a rotation around a void that engages a second rotation around a void. In music, this is called counterpoint. In geometry it is a torus.

The point of this example is to show that artists of every age, not just this one 18c. example, know how to articulate Zairja thinking. It is not a motif or theme that communicates anything to the audience. It “runs in the background.” Like the thesis of the death dream in *The Tempest*, the audience does not need to be aware of it. It has a “deniability factor” in that the artist can protest that he/she has nothing of the kind in mind. That can, actually, be a true statement. The Zairja does not require the consciousness of anyone, including the artist who may employ it. However, Mozart’s scenes, in *La Nozze* and other operas, shows that he was aware of the utility of the torus design and the advantages of an automaton feature running without the audience’s conscious awareness or the critics’ ability to discover and define it. The Zairja feature is sheer effectiveness. It is virtual *in relation to* the “Euclidean virtualities” used to construct imaginary spaces and times.

Consecutive order / “consecution”

The musical and theatrical examples reveal that the Zairja is a temporal unfolding and re-folding. Layers are coincidental; they have an “origami” relationship, where each layer refers to a fold, a crease, an enclosing/enclosed relationship that is not only reversible but causally reversed/reversible — it is not just a layer that folds, but the space that has defined that layer as such. This is Einstein’s move from a specific theory of Relativity to a General Theory. In its first version, light bends because space is curved by massive gravitation. In the second version, space itself is the curvature.



Thesean labyrinth as meander (not a maze), showing fractal/origami pattern.

Architecture reveals this in its historic reference to a “primary architecture,” the Thesean Labyrinth constructed by the so-called first architect, Dædalus. This is an origami space, a fold of walls and passageways made in a fractal pattern so that “scale does not matter.” It was designed to be a prison, but there is no gate or lock on the door. How does it work. The Thesean Labyrinth depends entirely on the “secondary

virtuality” that emerges out of a Zairja condition, a virtuality of effectiveness. A prison is, if anything, about effectiveness. Something is either trapped or released.



Saul Steinberg, Untitled (artist drawing circle), 1948.

The Thesean Labyrinth proves that it is possible to draw a Zairja in reference to two voids, the inward-tending pattern that aims to conceal and imprison the Minotaur, and the outward-tending pattern (made with the same lines) that allows Theseus to escape with Ariadne. The pattern of the Labyrinth is fractal and “contronymic,” in that it embodies the function of Primal Words (cf. Freud’s essay on “The Antithetical Meaning of Primal Words”). The Labyrinth is and isn’t an actual building. Although it could easily be constructed following the graphic 2d design, it is the spell cast on “whoever would be the Minotaur” to be imprisoned, for “whoever would be Theseus” to escape. The role of the imprisoned/ freed occupant is contronymic and imaginary. The issue is “idempotency,” paralysis.



Opening sequence, *The Great Beauty*, Paolo Sorrentino, 2013. The film opens with a quote from Céline’s *Journey to the End of the Night*: “Traveling is very useful: it makes your imagination work. Everything else is just disappointment and trouble. Our journey is entirely imaginary, which is its strength.”

When we sleep it is necessary, physiologically, to be completely paralyzed during the non-REM stage, in order that the brain may be “flushed” of toxic contaminants. To keep the sleeper asleep, dreams recreate the illusion of free movement by moving the experience field of the dream “across” the dreamer as a fixed point of view. This figure-ground reversal is the origami “fold of space” that is *purely effective*, i. e. a secondary virtuality that holds the dreamer in place and insulates the dream from interruption.

Extrapolating to the condition of the work of art, it is whatever fascinates the spectator *long enough* for the spell of fiction to be cast.

Proof of art’s universal use of an idempotency function, an origami/ Zairja fold across the viewer *and* the viewed, is to be found in the occasional instance of overload. This is the “Stendhal Syndrome,” the collapse of an art-lover before the artwork’s beauty. In *The Great Beauty* (a synonym for the Stendhal Syndrome”), a Japanese tourist visiting Rome moves away from his group on the Janiculum to photograph the city panorama. Unable to take in the profound meaning of this view, he collapses of a heart attack. Just as we must accept the figure-ground reversal hypothesis on the grounds that the sleeper is undeniably immobilized during sleep and (therefore) the dream *must be moving around* the dreamer’s point of view, we must accept the Stendhal Syndrome as proof of the “toroid” shape of the fourth wall connecting/ separating the viewer from the viewed in the case of art. IF it is possible to paralyze or even kill the viewer in an instance of idempotency, then idempotency is the effectiveness — the *effect* — of the work of art, its

second virtuality, a virtuality *literally* of “effectiveness.” It insulates the art experience and insulates the viewer as well, temporarily or permanently!

The function of the death dream in the dramatic imagination proves that something can “run in the background” to create an agency of orthopsychic effectiveness. The reality of the Stendhal Syndrome proves that idempotency is an equally real, equally effective, equally universal component of the artistic imagination. Yet, artists, writers, musicians, etc. *do not need to know they are using it.* The Zairja is, as one manifestation of a pure virtual efficiency, only “briefly” material. If it should take form, for example, as a notebook, its efficiency would be its ephemerality — the practice of writing and revising but never presenting or re-reading. The book is “drowned while it is being written.” The imagination folds what it creates, merging destruction with construction. As with Mozart’s counterpoint, its identity emerges out of a simultaneous up and down motion of tonality.



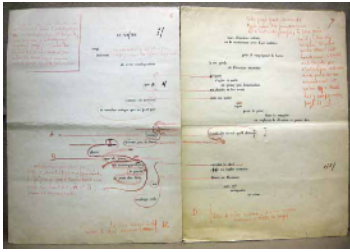
Van Gogh paintings work particularly well for this experiment, thanks to the painter’s use of reversed perspective (cf. P. Florensky). The torus explains the effectiveness of reversed perspective.

Try this now

There are two simple experiments that can demonstrate the truth of the above to the most resistant skeptic. The first experiment is vulnerable to fatigue, the second to a lack of resolve.

The First Experiment. For anyone willing to stand still for 15 minutes or more in front of a painting in a museum (it is better that the artwork be minimally unfamiliar), the first experiment requires a viewer to create a meditative bond with a flat work of art long enough for the viewer’s “standard expectations narrative” to subside. In this narrative, we “try to understand” what we see. Only by standing still for a longer-than-normal allotted viewing period does this narrative give way to a peripheral awareness of the space around the painting. Instead of the conventional cancellation of this space following the frame’s implied distinction between the “reality” of the museum space *versus* the “fictionality” of the flat contents within it, we enter into the painting’s constructed virtuality, which may be perspectival or, as in the case of cubism or surrealism, a confrontation of perspectival space.

This simulation of the Stendhal Syndrome produces results that are unique with every experimenter. The viewer who no longer attempts to “tune in to” the painting’s superior temporal duration (although the artist is probably dead, the painting “continues to speak”), the viewer allows the painting to tune in to him/her, but not as a “him” or “her” but rather as an accomplice. The viewer is not using the painting as a Zairja, the painting us using the viewer as a Zairja. The Zairja by definition must fail. It must not “retain,” “preserve,” or “convey” any recorded meanings. It must



Stéphane Mallarmé, notebook preparation of *Un coup de dés n'oublira le hazard*.



Giambattista Vico (1668–1744), author of *The New Science*.

smother/drown whatever it creates as soon as it creates. This wave-function was explicitly referenced by the poet Stéphane Mallarmé in *Un coup de dés jamais n'oublira le hazard* (“a throw of the dice will never abolish chance”). The title itself gives away the secret, that the poem not only knows the trick of the Zairja but is able to recreate it graphically/poetically, through “self-consuming” lines.

The viewer self-immobilized before a painting for 15 minutes or longer *may* be able to experience what it's like, not to *use* a Zairja but to *be* a Zairja. This is deployment of Lacan's definition of the unconscious, not as a concealed content but as a self-conversion into an automaton. Standard psychology and phenomenology “cannot handle” this radical definition, which puts the logic of the Zairja, idempotency, and the Stendhal Syndrome out of reach, although Merleau-Ponty comes close to capturing it in his last, incomplete work, *Le visible et invisible* (the title itself gives away his main accomplishment of contronymics).

The results of this first experiment belong to the experimenter, who will not (should not) be able to speak about the effects. The experience is the same as that of psychoanalysis: a pure effectiveness rather than any interpretive understanding. Therapy will be “pure” in that there is no way to add additional meanings. The Analysand of psychoanalysis is able only to report on the “cut” that has “turned sideways” to be an opening, and an opening that has “turned sideways” to become an escape (*askesis*), to which may be added some account of the *dæmon* that is the pure function of turning. The ability to “account for the *dæmon*” is the gnostic and scholarly component of the Zairja, a commentary that is true simply in terms of its powers of accumulation (layering), which metonymically convert what is originally a function of metaphor. I am able to give away this secret with the confidence that it will not be understandable except to those who already know its meaning. Those ignoramuses who “discover” it later will do so in the act of *retroaction*, that allows them to experience their “ignoramity” simultaneously with the realization that they have, all along, been ingenious. This is Vico's principle of *aut deus aut dæmon* — “either a god or a demon” — or, namely, a realization of the contronymic bond between gods and demons, the risen and the fallen (the insight of Milton's *Paradise Lost*). The experimenter undertaking Experiment One will experience something of this connection.

The Second Experiment. Since most writers have to produce texts, the second experiment requires producing texts that are “perfect the first time,” in appearance at least. Word processing software has made formatting of a typographically perfect (–looking) text, with correct punctuation (e. g. curly quotes) and the kind of supplementary elements

(e. g. footnotes, separator lines, hypotext links, etc.) that, in the era before text-processing, something that only a printer/publisher could provide. This is an experiment that begins as soon as a writer decides to produce a “perfect page,” attending to all style rules that normally impose themselves at the final stages of proof-reading corrections. There is nothing more to the experiment. It involves only the *intention* of following all of the rules of typography, grammar, and style that will be required by the final edition of the work, as if the pages being produced are the pages that will be read immediately by the imaginary person who has the finished work in hand.



Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Chartres, the Labyrinth.

This experiment has failed, in the past, because writers have cheated. They have not made the required effort to inform themselves of a relevant style sheet; or they have failed to think about things such as margins, line spacing, headers and footers, facing or non-facing pages, font sizes, headings and subheadings, paragraph spacing, or other rules. Worse, they have allowed themselves to use one convention then, a few lines later, another. For the text to convert to a self-writing machine, a Zairja, the writer must become a typist who is mechanically producing the “thoughts of another,” another who is *not* saying why one word or idea is chosen above any other. Without this self-effacement, conversion is impossible and the experiment fails. The typist has wished to impose his/her will over the writer, who in the experiment must remain anonymous.

The obvious product of this experiment is failure. It will be impossible for any typist who is actually inventing text as she/he goes to sustain the belief in another anonymous writer, for whom he/she works as a hired assistant. But, as in the previous experiment, the humiliation of failure is not just what happens, it is what is effective. Humiliation is what Count Almaviva experiences and sings about. It is what the lines of *Un coup de dés* describe graphically. What is *required* by the experiment is *unavoidable* for the experimenter. Clearly, failure is key. This is why (for one of many reasons) the Labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral is placed where it is and used for the spiritually essential function it is able to produce. Anyone who has tried to pace it will know this. It works. It is effective. Its effectiveness is virtual. This is what Plato means by the term *anamnesis*, knowledge as re-collection, emblemized as a series of folds creating a *mons delectus*, or “mountain of choices/chances.”

Once you stop trying to make a Zairja, you become a Zairja. The point is: don't stop trying. You can't “have” an imagination, you can only ~~have~~ it. Joni Mitchell: You don't know what you got 'til it's gone.”

Use it or lose it.