

## Random Permutations of Imperfection

When doing math, the blind are seeing, and the seeing are blind.

In a recent study at John Hopkins University, scientists discovered that blind people used a part of the brain usually reserved for visual processing for doing mathematics. And sighted people, using the same part of the brain for sight only, can utilize some brainpower from parts of the brain dedicated to senses other than with sight, according to a different study by the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. Quite an interesting trade-off.

It's like the option to turn a thumb drive into virtual RAM. You either have more storage or more power to run applications. Or perhaps it's like the choosing of classes. Should you spread out in more, average classes, or would it be better to take multiple classes focused in the same field?

But we have the choice in real-world problems; the math-solving brain is rigidly hard-wired. No amount of fiddling with combinations will be able to make optimizations such as the mind could. Who knew that the brain in a blind person would find use in mathematics? Why didn't the brain just give up on that region, forsake it for its lack of normal function, turn it into a mass of atrophic refuse?

Why even try?

Yet Evolution has thrown its creativity for a whirl and given this part of the brain a different function. Another chance.

But life doesn't seem so simple. While the switch in the mind to use that part of the brain is simply incited by mathematical action—a simple yes-or-no condition—the decisions in people's lives have many more levels of complexity. Presumably, it took at least a few thousand years for the brain to generate the simple redirection of brainpower into that extra part of the brain; an individual human, however, cannot undergo evolution in a lifetime, so one has to do his or her best through learning. What is not Nature is Nurture, and the latter can be quite substantial.

To look at what one can do to change via Nurture, it is imperative to first view the laws of Nature. The brain is an amazingly intricate, dense glob of nerve matter. Electrical signals govern our every thought and memory; men are computers with biological hardware. In this hardware comes a layer of software, the artificial intelligence of the Creators. Within it, there are many optimizations, nuances that take care of life essentials from breathing to defecating, that makes the life of Man easier. Like any code, this is simply a production version, susceptible to bugs and viruses—here lie the imperfections of men, the egoism and avarice that can spark violence and unease. On the brighter side, however, any super user can increase the efficiency the software further to create a well-oiled, well-customized, and well-optimized automaton of a person.

This optimization is learning. But not quite.

The reason why intuition—the preloaded software—is relatively flawless and optimized from birth is because of Nature's infinite permutations. The saying goes, "Failure is the mother of success"; yet no human being will be able to encompass all of the different combinations of failures. Neither does the collective knowledge of mankind, for there really is no limit to the possibilities.

Homo sapiens are built on trillions upon trillions of the lives and deaths of organisms from billions of years ago, but modern Man is built on a quantifiable number of laws and scientific theories and mathematical derivations. There simply is no comparison.

And yet the systems of mankind are structured and exact. Nature is imperfect. And yet men are civilized and attempt to benefit the lives of each other. Nature is barbaric and takes life without reason. And yet Man has learned to present himself more stately and neatly than its animal neighbors. Nature still dines voraciously with hands and sans handkerchief, messy everywhere. Yet it rules us.

Perhaps the eye of Man is staring transfixed—at the wrong location. Our surroundings have everything anyone might need as a random possibility. The unused seeing part of the brain in the blind—a faulty bit of hardware—discovered mathematics. Who says that potential is lacking in ordinary people, for whom Nature might, on a whim, also decide to give a second chance?