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Subject: Something to publish.

Below is a revised version of an essay I wrote for PE (www.prisonersexpress.org) for their photo theme (a picture of a canopy of intertwined tree branches, light shining through them); under it is a letter from a Cornell U' student who volunteers for PE. Please post it far & wee.

Infinite Thoughts, revised 11 Oct. 2019

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In science and art there is something known as a fractal, which is something that , if extended into infinity, would have no section that is identically structured/patterned to a previous section. (E.g., the number for Pi is a fractal, as are the kinkily twisted branches of an oak tree.)

Fractals change, forever, which captivates our minds as our minds are programmed to seek patterns.

Seeking patterns is how we make sense of the world , what we base our conceptions of our world on, which we begin creating the moment we're squeezed or pulled into the world. Noticing the pattern of a predator's eyes staring at us enables us to realize we're in danger (coincidentally, on some moths' wings and the backs of some large cats' ears they've evolved patterns that mimic predatory eyes, which discouraged attacks from behind).

Each human mind, compared to any other human mind -- even "identical" twins -- is a fractal. This is because even identical twins, who start with identical genetic programming, from their initial embryonic stage experience slightly (or greatly) different environments (e.g. more or less nutrition from their umbilical cords), which flip epigenetic switches that activate!/deactivate genes (genes are not set in stone -- many can be turned on or off, such as those responsible for cancer, which is why some chemicals cause cancer); the flipping of epigenetic switches determines how/if cells grow, what proteins they produce, etc., resulting in such things as baldness, hair graying, diabetes, even schizophrenia. There are approximately 80 billion neurons in our brains, each having around 10,000 dendrites that connect them to other neurons and sensory organs (e.g. retinas, cochleas, skin); and the activity between those synapses/connections at the ends of dendrites (which happens in femtoseconds, tens of thousands of synaptic signals per second) creates the myriad micro- and macro-psychological

functions that, together, constitute the unique person/mind/soul that we and others perceive us as being.

Change in the activity of one neuron in one twin -- something easily caused -- ends identical twins' identicalness. Different experiences make such changes, changes that determine future behavior, which causes further epigenetic changes, further differentiating even "identical" twins, which amplifies over time, so that the older "identical" twins are the more different their minds and bodies will be.

Fractals do more than show how minds/souls can never be identical to each other. They suggest the existence of infinity -- a fractal cannot forever change unless forever (spatial or temporal infinity) exists!

Mathematics in its simplest form supposed the existence of infinity: tell me what the largest number is and I, like a child playing a game, can always tell you one that's bigger! ("Plus one!")

As far as I know, given my puny resources, no one's yet proven that infinity (of any dimension -- time, the Macroverse etc.) doesn't exist. If it does exist, we'll never be able to empirically prove it, because that would require infinite knowledge, knowledge of the infinite, which is impossible as infinity never ends: you can't see the end of infinite space, can't touch it, can't bounce sound/radio/light/x-rays waves off it, thus can't measure or detect it; you can only measure an abyss with a bottom. (Infinity doesn't mean "all," "the most," nor does it mean "everything" -- those terms refer to limited amounts. Infinity means everything, but ALWAYS something more.)

If you're fair, you must at least be agnostic about infinity: it may exist, it may not. But, if it does exist, it profoundly dictates what we can/can't rationally believe about the world (i.e. everything in existence, within and beyond our Universe), including whether or not God or gods exist, whether or not extraterrestrial life exists, and if our Universe is alone or one of ...infinitely more.

Infinity is an abnormal concept: you needn't understand infinity in order to cope with daily life or survive...generally, for now. Infinity requires an abnormal, obsessive mind to grasp its ungraspableness. Thus it shouldn't surprise you that a high percentage of humanity's great thinkers (most who didn't ponder infinity, just its fringes -- actually, infinity has no fringes!) were or went crazy or had a sturdy "nuts" branch in their family tree! For example:

EINSTEIN -- who "merely" contemplated the nature of our Universe, his son was schizophrenic, while he dressed like a slob, didn't wear socks, neglected his wife, was out of touch w/ normal reality;

BERTRAND RUSSELL -- who's Principia practically proved that infinity exists (mathematically), his aunt and uncle were insane, son and granddaughter schizophrenic (the granddaughter killed herself);

KURT GÖDEL -- who studied infinity in math and logic, starved himself to death, fearing nurses poisoned his food;

GEORGE CANTOR, GOTTLÖB FREGE, inter alia, were all bull-goose loonies. Nietzsche, an O.G. freethinker, infamously stalked the composer Wagner's wife, died in a sanitarium.

The good news from all of this is that my comrades stuck in solitary (as I was for 15+ yrs.), deemed and being driven criminally insane by the state, may use their Abby-normal minds to figure out things that square noodles are incapable of pondering with their conformation minds. E.g., those studying the cosmos have come to realize that over 90% of our Universe's matter is "dark," meaning it neither emits nor reflects light (or other radiation) and is undetectable with our technology. As with infinity, contemplating dark matter APPARENTLY serves no practical purpose, won't impact the average person's life or survival (the same was once said about discoveries that now enable us to make 5G smart phones), won't get you groceries, won't get you a mate, BUT, as with mentally grappling with Einstein's theories of Specific and General Relativity, BUT IT'S FUN ... for us weirdos.

Infinity, even more so than dark matter, is undetectable. Our minds evolved to help us survive in a world that we can touch and experience, a world that will kill us if we don't understand it and intelligently conduct ourselves...such as penitentiaries!

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A letter from Cornell U' student Janice (she may give her last name if she wishes) responding to the initial version of this essay, published by prisonersexpress.org, elucidates its aim...& flatters me. Here it is:

Hi Nate,

I really loved your thought piece. I'm not gonna lie, when you started bringing up scientific readings and theorems, I got a bit intimidated (especially as a non-physics and non-philosophy major) expecting incomprehensible jargon, but you drove your point so clearly and with so much excitement -- I could imagine you giving scientific lectures at museums and other academic institutions!

Another reason why the concept of infinity and the University makes me uncomfortable is that, with this topic, people often like to push this idea that humanity & our individual selves are so insignificant. Yrs, we may be smaller in size and time within the scale of the Universe, but the scales we can physically observe ourselves. We give meanings to our own existence, and I hate when people try to take that idea away from us. Our feelings and experiences are significant to us from OUR frame of reference. So I

appreciate very much the stance you took -- it was super refreshing, optimistic, and something that I agree with so deeply.

I hope you continue to write on your musings after all this -- the world could use more of your passion and positivity!

Best Wishes,
Janice.

She said what I didn't. Alas, making the world a better place isn't paying my bills (or her student loans). Pay the Honkie people! If you like my scribbles, order me some stamped envelopes (#8039 --\$3.35 per 5-pack, up to six 5-packs at a time) from www.JLMarcusWisconsin.com / Ph.# 1-800-236-2611, or write me love letters, send either to me at

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