

The Uncertainty Principle: Author's Note:

The following short story was written while I was in Costa Rica in 1999, and is the precursor to the Christopher Sly character in Hero Nation. It was my first attempt to define an algorithm of 'character movement' bridging to the 'alchemical metamorphosis' models of Taoist metaphysics. The dimensionless section codes, such as '000', come out of some stock market research I had recently completed involving 'cause/effect' frequency distributions. I was attempting to explore the possibility of quantifying the odds. The critical question was, given a 'current state', what are the probabilities that a stock price will go up, down, or sideways, and how quickly. This was an early attempt to create a stock trader's 'I Ching', or, 'Book of Changes' intended to make me mountains of money in a guessing game where I was the only player who could quantify the odds.

This three digit binary code is one of several classification tools I researched to model 'wave sections'. The code is defined as follows:

(Displacement, Velocity, Acceleration)

In this case, I am using '0' as neutral or negative, and '1' as positive. Thus, in the opening section, the code '000' means that the price is down, moving down, and accelerating down. If you were riding this stock, you just suffered the stock trader equivalent of a surfing experience called 'going over the falls'. Words can't do it justice.

Christopher Sly

The Uncertainty Principle

Alchemical Fiction

By

Christopher Sly

000 / Uncertainty

The wrong person is out there. The wrong thing is out there. The wrong person is desperately trying to get their hands on the wrong thing.

God is watching me. I am tired... so tired.

I shift, and then shift again. I am on a ship at sea and the storm is upon us. Everyone except me is asleep below decks. I am shouting for them to wake up, that the ship is in peril, but they are trapped inside of their dreams. At any moment a wave could sweep us from the field and all will be lost. I look down and my feet are HUGE. If I move, I may cause the ship to sink. If I do not move, the ship may sink.

"Your play."

Suddenly I notice him. He is an old Chinese man wearing surfing shorts. All around him is chaos, but the shifting deck is impossibly steady beneath his feet. Our eyes lock and he grins a challenge that causes my mind to blink.

The Dragon is awake...

Pain. My body spasms, my eyes blink open. I am sitting slumped in an airplane high over water, and the bloody eastern horizon has just given birth to a brash new sun. I am shivering and disoriented, when a childhood memory flashes in front of me. I am five years old and my brother has just told me that there is no Santa Claus. I am completely surprised, completely devastated. Reality pops like a soap bubble, and what is outside of it ends my innocence. Every grown-up in the world is a liar. They trapped me inside of a cage of lies so they could control me. What else is a lie?

I open my notebook and begin to write.

Day 1:

It is always a surprise. Two views, one from inside and one from outside. The quick movement seems

continuous, but the locations are discrete. The outside was not visible from the inside, but perhaps the memory of the inside is still fresh near the hole, creating an overlapped perspective that helps me to compare sizes in the moments after I pass through. The dual perspective gives me access to data patterns that aren't visible from a single data point, differences and similarities between locations, as well as patterns in movement between locations. I need to look quickly for clues, because my observation time near the opening is brief and valuable, and on major moves, often comes with powerful emotions.

There is always a strong sense of having gained freedom from a delusion that has controlled my life, the sense of discovering that what I thought was a truth is not only an assumption, but a false assumption. There is an expanded sense of existence, of suddenly being in a bigger place. Sometimes it triggers a series of memories, sparks in the cycle of motion, other locations that I have passed through on my way to where I now stand. Sometimes I think I can sense a direction to the next opening. Powerful new options often become visible. I always feel as if NOW I finally know the truth, but ultimately, that always proves to be wrong, and once again, the game is afoot...

Once I know where the outside is, if I realize that I have been sucked back inside, I can chose to make the effort to step back out. My judgment seems superior from the larger, more objective point of view, and improved judgment appears to be well worth the effort. Moving out of subjectivity and towards greater objectivity appears to be a directional trend, but there is a distinct cyclical component where locations solidify between jumps. I never seem to find an opening the first time except by accident, but I have noticed a phenomena I call "the juice", and sudden interest in something as if reality was telling me - "look here now". Accumulating experience suggests that uncertainty may be the initiating state, that I seem to escape a location by "unknowing" what is true.

If I continue to move from a smaller place to a larger place, will I approach largest place? Would viewpoints begin to converge as they approached largest place? What would I see if I stood in largest place?

Motion Psychology:

- 1) What occurs is a function of what you do.*
- 2) What you do is a function of what you see.*
- 3) What you see is a function of where you stand.*

I stop writing and stare out the window at the turquoise water below. I am nervous. Is it because I am finally on my way? Or was it the dream? I awoke with the image of eyes looking into me. They were the eyes of an ancient Chinese philosopher who left a marker a place I thought very difficult to reach. In the game I play, every description implies the location where the observer was standing.

Lao Tzu had led me to other Chinese philosophers who seemed to be playing the same game. Alchemy is the language of chemistry. They wrote "The Book of Changes". Motion is the language of physics. I research character movement. It was too coincidental.

What is the Mysterious Pass? Where are they speaking from that it could be outside of my largest circle?

Senior players have materialized out of the distant past, and their solutions are too powerful to be disguised by the dust of years. I put a lot of work into designing this wave, to get the hero to this time and this place. Below the airplane, the coastline of Costa Rica has come into view. The plane has started to descend. My heart is pounding in my chest, and I am grinning like the fool I am.

JumpPoint...

001 / Spirit

If I want to move, I have to push.

My shoulder muscles are so weak that I have to struggle to lift my arms, as though I am holding a fifty-pound brick in each hand. I am exhausted, breathing in gasps, and my body is shaking and twitching. I just want to put my head down and rest, but a huge wave is about to land on my back. I push off of my surfboard and head for the bottom. The wave catches me and lifts me, and then I go over the falls and get pounded deep into the turbulent water. It feels like I am being hit from every direction, and I am sliding into panic when I remember...

"If you panic, you die."

I relax and wait until the turbulence eases, then head for the surface, desperate for air but too weak to move any faster. My head breaks water and I gulp down air. My surfboard is floating eight feet away. The second wave is about to break. I try to take a deep breath, and then head for the bottom. I let myself go limp.

I struggle back to the surface. I am gasping almost too hard to breath, and my arms are so tired I am afraid they are about to stop moving. The third and largest wave of the set has arrived. I take a breath and try to head for the bottom. The wave catches me and carries me along in the turbulence. I try to stay limp while being tossed around, I try to save my strength. I wait for the turbulence to ease, then kick for the surface. The first breath I take has a taste I will never forget. I don't see any more waves. I don't see my surfboard. I feel the tug of my leash, then spot the six-inch tail section, all that if left of my board. My mind is almost too numb to do the math, and then it dawns on me. I am going to have to swim.

My arms are almost useless. I try to kick toward shore. I don't seem to be moving, but I must be, because when the next set rolls through, I'm no longer in the drop

zone. I'm too tired to duck, so I take a deep breath and go limp, hoping the whitewater will carry me to where I can stand up. I'm not sure how much longer I can last. Finally, my toes stretching downward touch sand, and I find myself comically standing on my tiptoes, barely able to get my mouth above water to breathe. For a moment I am elated, but then I feel myself dragging back out to sea. I come close to panic. I am straining to hold my place with the tips of my toes, then in desperation I kick for the shore. I am completely exhausted, but my kick is enough to get me a firmer footing. Very quickly, my shoulders are out of the water. I am going to live.

I am staggering as I emerge from the surf. It is still dawn, and the empty beach is ringing with a symphony of birdsong filled with the joy of just being alive. When I get to the sand, I collapse and lay back. I can't remember ever being this tired. Every breath is a priceless gift. I'm not sure how long I lay there. When I finally roll over and push myself to my feet, I spot the remains of my surfboard where it washed up down the beach. Next time I won't let go.

Day 53

Got a new board, and I don't know if it was the new board, or what I learned about not burning out, but suddenly I felt like I was getting the hang of paddling. I'm starting to feel the balancing point so that the board floats more cleanly, and I've slowed down my strokes to avoid tiring, and discovered I move more easily and efficiently. There may be more finesse than power involved in getting this right. Today was the first time that I actually felt like I might be making progress.

I have a couple of observations. I was initially troubled by the way the alchemists used the word "spirit". It is not usually a scientific term, but they were world-class problem solvers. They speak of spirit as though it is a force. Is it possible that they are referring to that part of me that acts because it decides to act, that part of me that is capable

of generating and sustaining an effort, of pushing against resistance?

Today my spirit pushed my body to the shore after my body was ready to quit. If my spirit had been weaker, would I have been swept out to sea? Does it also push my mind around? My life around? Is my brain the source of spirit, or is it the tool of spirit? Where is the source of my ability to push? Is it like a muscle? Will it atrophy if I do not use it, but get stronger if I do? What are the limits?

Among the alchemical texts I found something called "Ancestor Lu's One Hundred Character Tablet." It appears to be an algorithm to help you become more present. I don't understand it, but the goal sounds practical at the moment, and it begins someplace intriguing...

"Stop thought."

I would have never thought of that. I am living alone in a tent on a tropical beach edged by a tropical jungle, there are poisonous snakes and various fleshing eating predators, both in the jungle and in the ocean. There are an infinite number of ways I could be injured, and with no one else around, I could easily die long before help arrived. I often stumble around lost in thought.

I began trying to experiment with stopping thought, since now that they pointed it out, I can't help noticing that my thoughts often distract me from watching where I step. I guess I thought it would be easy. In a way, it is even more difficult than trying to paddle out through the surf. My thoughts are like waves, they seem to generate themselves. I keep losing focus and getting swept up in the show, then something will remind me and I realize a long time has passed. I am walking in a dangerous jungle, and I still can't keep my mind focused on staying alert. It was aggravating at first, then perplexing, then frightening. I thought I was in control of my mind. How is it that I never noticed this before?

I began to watch my thoughts to see what could be more important to me than staying alive. My day is spent

largely lost in fantasy or meaningless internal noise. I am a leaf on the wind. The closer I look, the less me I am able to find. My entire reality is suddenly coming under question. It smells like there is an opening near by. Could this be the way to the Mysterious Pass? Somehow, this must all be tied together. Uncertainty seems to trigger the alert state, but it can't hold it. Maybe I just need to get stronger, like surfing. I'm going to keep pushing and see what happens. I'm starting to feel like I'm making progress. Maybe I'm getting my second wind.

011 / Mind

Day 92

If you can't take something with you, and you will not leave it behind, your journey is over.

The closer I look at the contents of my mind, the more worthless it becomes. Now that I am watching, I can't hide from the accumulating evidence. The only me I have ever known is a self-generating lie. A sad day, and very confusing. I feel like I have wasted my life playing make-believe, spent all of my effort trying to get the rest of mankind to help me pretend how great I am. Me, me, me... I am becoming sick of what I see when I look inside.

I will not serve a lie. I will not defend a lie to the death. I have to abandon everything that might drag my attention away from the present, from reality. When my dwelling mind is silent, the only existence I have ever known will be over. I can't even imagine it. I feel like I'm committing suicide.

So what am I waiting for?

I am the infinite dusk sky and the beat of the drumming surf, I am the whistles and the screeches and the trills blended by fragrance currents. For a moment I am totally content to just exist, to flow with time. Dual viewpoints come into focus with a snap, the inside and the outside, the individual and the system. Images begin to cascade through my mind.

Ego is an optical illusion! No wonder the viewpoint is incoherent. No wonder our responses are insane. It creates the lethal misperception that the law of the jungle is survival of the fittest, and that we must do unto other before they do unto us. We miss seeing the deeper pattern, that the law of the jungle is not survival of the fittest, but simply survival. Survival of the fittest is the philosophy of cannibalism and deceit, the philosophy of Hitler, the philosophy of hate and

death. Survival is the philosophy of teamwork and friendship, the philosophy of Buddha, and Christ, the philosophy of love and life.

From inside of ego it appears that reality must be forced to serve ME. It is a false center that blinds us to the big picture, to the symphony of creation in progress, and the part we play in it. We end up fighting the flow instead of using it to grow stronger, to help our team grow stronger. From inside of ego, we cannot admit how we depend upon the systems that we are a part of. We never play for the team, we must rule the Kingdom, and our environment must be forced into subservience. The harder we try to force reality to serve us, the more clearly it doesn't, and the angrier we become until our life is consumed by rage at everybody and everything.

Uncertainty is the exit...

Hundreds of birds announce the approach of dawn. I shift my weight in the creaking hammock and adjust the sheet covering me. Almost immediately I am in conflict. I'm not supposed to be thinking. *Oh well.*

Do learning how to surf, and learning how to stop thought simplify to the same problem? When I try to drop in on a wave and stand up, I lose focus, and the next thing I know, I'm down. Words distract me, and I've begun to notice that watching something can make me disappear, and then reappear when it finally lets go of me. Something very strange is going on. This is not about being trapped inside of an egocentric viewpoint. This is something different, something that was hidden outside of ego. It seems like there must be another opening.

This is the first time I have ever felt like I was accessing raw data. I almost feel as though I am actually touching reality, and the longer I remain in contact, the more solid the connection becomes, like I'm burning in a circuit. Where am I when I'm distracted? Why does it feel like waking up, or coming into existence, when I remember

and rejoin the present? There is a definite edge that I cross, and it is becoming more substantial now that I am watching for it. How can I stay in touch with the present? What if the now is in motion, and the object is to catch the wave, to ride the now?

Surf the now?

I am getting better at spotting the peaks, at being in the right place at the right time. I am straddling my board in the late dawn, floating in a tropical paradise under a sky filled with fire and melting ice. I am practicing an exercise I invented called "dropping in", a term surfing uses to describe the point of commitment to a wave. The object is to "drop in" to your sense of touch, to stay with the present by grabbing it where you interface to raw data, to ride the waves in your "sense field". It is a very physical sensation, made easier by closing your eyes at first. I have to rip away from whatever thought I am having and thrust into touch. I have to hold onto the raw data, the vibration itself, to avoid from getting swept into the place I now call "the holodeck", a sensory-simulation chamber where data is interpreted. The harder I practice, the longer I seem to last, the greater my awareness expands.

This is a place beyond fear, beyond pain, beyond opinion, it moves too quickly for emotions or thoughts to touch it. Only naked awareness can synchronize to the present, everything else must be let go of. I have come to believe that when I am in this place, I exist. I am not in this place unless I am actively powering the circuit, applying continuous awareness to raw data reception and holding onto the present. All action occurs in the present. If I am not present, I cannot act.

I slide down prone on the board, turning towards the shore. I start paddling, looking back over my left shoulder to track the wave. I become the wave. I lever to my feet, the board plunging down the steep face. I lean into it, trying to make the bottom turn, but my balance is wrong, I dig the rail

and get driven down into the water. I relax while the wave spends itself, and then drift toward the surface. I find my board and get outside before the next wave drops on me. I pop up into a straddling position, adjusting my balance to the rolling swells. I am still missing the turn, still reacting to what I see instead of what I feel. *Big difference.*

VERY big difference! Raw data is vibration. Everything else is an interpretation manufactured on the holodeck. The holodeck manufactures data? Oh my...

I can exist outside of the holodeck. I can silence the interpretation, and not only do I still exist, I exist in a big new way.

But what about right now? I am awake, actively holding contact with the present, and yet I am talking to myself at the same time. I must be getting stronger, I didn't know that was possible. I can both hold onto existence, AND act. I feel like a toddler who has struggled to his feet. I am standing. I am balanced. I look around. Where do I want to go?

My reality convulses, then shreds and dissolves, and I am out of the bottle. My entire life stretches out behind me, imagines cascading in waves of cause and effect, every memory ripped from its place and refitted into a picture so large it seems infinite.

Here is a secret so deep, so powerful, that empires rise and fall upon its tide. Here is a secret so pervasive it controls every moment of every human life. Here is a secret so well guarded that only sincerity will seek it, only uncertainty will find it, only courage can apply it. Here is the realization of a dream I had not even believed in, that if I step back, and then step back again, someday I might find a place large enough to bind the demon that haunts my nights.

I tried to give everything away because it wasn't mine, and in return, was given back more than I can measure.

Luck piled dangerously high...

111 / Body

Day 108

Data collection must precede data analysis.

Having a tough time sorting out what is going on. Patterns of movement are revealing patterns of force. I am trying to understand the alchemical models, comparing them to my own. I have no doubts that the alchemists are very far ahead of me, but the language of alchemy SUCKS! I think it was chosen more for its ability to conceal than reveal. There appears to be some intentional confusion designed in. Lead into gold? They must have been laughing.

I've been working on a model of form, push responding to pull, effort organized to satisfy need. I think forms might be "quantum locations". My model of reality has expanded: the inside and the outside, the finite and the infinite, certainty and uncertainty, supply and demand. I think forms might move like waves, they come together and then come apart, the finite surge inside of the infinite. I am starting to see waves of probability propagating into the future. I am noticing a lot of system relationships I hadn't noticed before. It is amazing what is there to be seen if you practice looking.

I can feel the flow inside my sense field much better. I created two exercises to try to expand my sensitivity. I call them the broad scan and the narrow scan. The broad scan exercise has no point of focus; it is open receptivity with no boundary. I am trying to feel whatever is there. In a way, it is like going completely soft, becoming an antenna, and then tuning it back and forth, searching the spectrum. I try to turn up the volume knob and feel more and more subtle differences, constantly searching for anything previously unnoticed. There is a very difficult balancing point between observation and interpretation. It requires constant effort to hold the circuit closed, but slowly, the sense field comes

alive, and you reach this "gestalt" kind of feeling where you are very comfortably occupying your body.

The narrow scan exercise moves a point of focus through my body. I start with the hands or feet, and it takes an extended concentrated effort, but slowly the feeling opens up in a very peculiar way. I try to move the point of focus up my arms or legs, prying open the feeling. It takes a long time and a lot of effort to open the whole body, but when I am done everything is pulsing with life. It seems to be getting easier and faster, as if it isn't closing back up all the way. I am beginning to feel the flow that follows my focus.

You can only practice something like this if you can escape ego, escape the holodeck, and remain present. This must be how they discovered the acupuncture points and the rest of their healing and martial arts. What an incredible advantage this seems to be, like having sight in the land of the blind, or being awake in a land of sleepwalkers. We have known about this for thousands of years. Very strange. There seems to be a missing counter-force, I don't know how else to account for the behavior. I can't understand why this hasn't been common knowledge for a very long time. I can't understand how I could have grown up without learning it, why I wasn't taught all of this in grade school. Maybe if I had been taught how to "balance" I wouldn't have come so close to getting swallowed when I hit puberty and my appetites "went large".

I am moving in powerful new fields of motion with no obvious limits. I have never felt so good in every way. I am beginning to suspect that this only starts with data reception. I can push energy around. I don't know what it is, but something is moving. This opens up almost unlimited possibilities for establishing new circuits. What engineer wouldn't trade a kidney to be able to be able to access this level of play? No wonder their applications were so powerful.

Had a seagull land on the tip of my surfboard this morning and stare me down. Very strange.

When I thought up the idea of writing *The Uncertainty Principle*, of playing the hero to research the story, it seemed like a clever way to justify not working, and more fun than waiting for another rejection slip. I decided to use my experience at plotting to plan an adventure worth writing about. If the story doesn't sell, who cares? I will be too busy having fun. I have escaped from the unpublished writer's dungeon through a secret passage. I entered the page.

I hadn't expected it to work so well. Existence has become surreal. I am both the hero and the writer. Every movement is a dance, every moment is an opportunity to play. I have never felt this euphoric. I love everybody and everything. I stand in the shadow of a palm tree, eyes closed. I am practicing a narrow scan exercise, and there is a spot on the front of each leg just below the hip where my concentration is touching. I am inching the feel down the front of both legs simultaneously, giving it plenty of time to warm and open up. Suddenly, through closed eyes, I see gold dots appear on the front of my legs.

Startling, but other weird things have been happening lately, perceptual distortions, strange sounds and sights. I hold my balance in the present and continue the exercise. The gold dots become gold lines that trace down the front of my legs until they touch my feet...

110 / Tension

It is not what occurs, but how you respond.

Now I know what it feels like to become the path to ground. Exploding gold light, the jolt, the thunderous roar; what the heck was THAT! I thought I was blowing to bits!

I've hacked my way through the firewall and gained super-user access. What if I push the wrong button and vanish, or burst into flames? Reality is a field polarized by supply and demand. I've been around long enough to guess how delicious I might taste, charbroiled or rare. Suddenly I feel dangerously exposed. I am a very long way from any place I am familiar with. I am alone in my own bizarre version of reality, a definition of insanity. Paranoia swells up inside of me. Is the hidden counter-force attacking?

I have no way to guess what is going to happen next. There is nobody I can ask. I am blind in unfamiliar territory. I need time to solidify and consolidate my gains.

I jerk my foot off of the accelerator and slam on the brakes...

100 / Spin

Day 120

When effort meets need it creates motion.

When correct effort meets true need it create profitable motion.

I have to get out of here. I'm beginning to wonder if I have gone insane. Too many strange things have happened to me, things I am afraid to even think about, much less put into words. I am supposed to be an objective observer. I keep getting images of myself standing on a street corner shouting that I know the truth.

I am still on ground zero. A raven flew by me yesterday screaming- run, Run, RUN! I am afraid of accepting what my mind is telling me. I don't want the job. I REALLY don't want the job.

Is this what it takes to be a teacher? To know the truth?

But opposing certainties cannot peacefully co-exist! The philosophy of certainty is a mathematical progression that terminates in one. The equation of extinction - one equals zero...

If we could only get together and agree that the wisdom of our great teachers belongs to us all. If we were uncertain, we could team up, we could practice solving problems together instead of fighting over who owns the truth. We could organize our efforts and push, the engines would come on-line, we would accelerate into an age of peace and unimaginable prosperity instead of being torn apart by violent internal turbulence.

I am pacing back and forth in the cool evening sand.

Events I couldn't explain occurred. Astonishing explanations rushed in to fill the void. Suddenly they are True?

How can I doubt what I can so clearly see? If I do not move, the ship will sink. If I move?

This is madness!

Emotions so powerful they almost lift me off of my feet swell up inside of me. This is the big one. It is calling to me on a level so primal that I want to start beating on my chest with my fists. I am a hero on duty. This is my watch. This game does not end on my watch.

My play...

I roar my challenge through time and space -

“Prince of Lies! I will drag you from the shadows where you hide. I will strip you of your deceitful mask, and bind you naked to the Tree of Knowledge so that all who come to feed there shall perceive thy true nature. Your Age of Arrogance is ended. The Age of Uncertainty is begun...

“Let my people go.”

I begin the step to set it in motion...

000 / Uncertainty

What if I'm wrong?

I stand there with one foot hanging ridiculously in mid-air, and then slowly lower it back to the sand. Of course I am wrong, how many times have I been around this circle? The question is never if I am wrong, but how am I wrong, and will I survive finding out? It feels as though a tidal wave of insanity has come and gone, and I'm trembling with relief. I remain human. I am still guessing. My judgment has not become divinely infallible, and pretending that it has will honor neither the gift nor the giver.

What a diabolically seductive trap, an illusionary finish line baited with a "feel-good" of epic proportions. If I had not already been familiar with the phenomena of motion, with the spark in the cycle, the crystal clarity and the feeling that I finally know the truth, I could have easily fallen for it. I could have spent the rest of my life defending a delusion, insisting that it must be true, demanding that I can't possibly be wrong. I would be afraid to re-enter uncertainty because of loyalty to a lie. I would be trapped inside of my own private Hell, ranting that "I know what is best, so do what I say". My life would become a state of war.

Why do I keep forgetting that I am not done? I leap out of the frying pan into the embrace of the fire; I gain my freedom, and then swear loyalty to a larger lie. I am a dreamer who keeps believing that he has awoken, but the dream has only become more fantastic, wave by wave. It is not my job to know the truth, but to seek the truth. Somewhere outside I may accidentally find what I am not wise enough to be looking for. I play a guessing game called trial and error. I try to guess right. I try to limit the consequences of guessing wrong. I compound my gains. I share what I learn.

For the first time in too long, I am grinning like the fool I am.