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Fail to find Work:/Red Pyramid

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Fail to find Work:/A Blue Light

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BY

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Contents	
Abstract	5
Preface	7
Input	9
Detection	15
Symbolization	19
Dictionary	27
Interpretation	33
Output	
Summary	41
Afterword	43
Bibliography	46

Abstract

I attempt to examine the complex structure of human communication, explaining why it is bound to fail. By reproducing experienceable phenomena, I demonstrate how they can expose communication structure and reveal the limitations of our perception and symbolization.

I divide the process of communication into six stages: input, detection, symbolization, dictionary, interpretation, and output. In this thesis, I examine the flaws and challenges that arise in the first five stages. I argue that reception acts as a filter and that understanding relies on a symbolic system that is full of redundancies. Therefore, every interpretation is destined to be a deviation.

Preface

My friend Tung sent me photos of the protest against the US abortion bill and the counter-protest in San Francisco today. The crowd is divided into two sides, calling each other evils. This is the second time I remember that a split of this intensity has occurred. The last time happened when I was 12 years old. After the July 2009 Ürümqi riots, people in Ürümqi started to walk on different sides of the road according to their ethnicity. Entering the wrong area could be deadly. In the 72 hours of CCTV footage from my neighborhood, I saw 11 people attacked to death. The atrocities took place on a regular day: People on their way home with groceries were attacked to death by roadside vendors. They were neighbors, so how did they end up attacking each other with hatred? That's the question my young mind could not understand.

Growing up, I heard about many causes of conflict. The most common reason I heard is that the other side is evil and they don't realize their mistake. The way to resolve conflicts seemed to be to force the evil side to realize their own mistakes. At the age of fourteen, I started my path in photography and hoped to show truths that were not realized. However, this photographer's illusion did not last. In 2018 I did a study on war photography. I found there was not a single war that has been stopped because of the brutal images of war while most war photographers have expressed the hope that their photographs would stop the war or eliminate future wars. A young photographer was about to go to war but he already knew the war would not change with his efforts.

"Will the war change if the war initiator becomes a casualty of the war?" This idea shifted the direction of my practice to interactive experience creation, which I saw as an opportunity to exchange shoes. Unfortunately, this idea was also quickly destroyed, when I discovered two people having the

same experience could have a completely different understanding. History has proven to me that people will do anything for their fanatical beliefs. I have done research on a game called Frostpunk, which is a survival game where the player has to make decisions to trade humanity for survival. It's interesting that the reviews of this game in different languages can be polar opposites. In the English reviews on steam, people refer to the choices made in this game as evil fascist acts while people refer to the same choices as necessary socialist feats in Mandarin reviews. Ideology is at play here, but it is definitely not all of it.

I began to suspect that there is something problematic with the way we implement communication and thinking that goes beyond the way itself. I tend to use experienceable phenomena to expose the structure of communication.

Since moving into my current apartment at Regency Plaza, I have been kept awake by a shrill sound. I located the origin of the noise to the fire alarm in my bedroom, even though the fire alarm was not active. I notified the apartment manager and recorded the noise to send audio to them. However, they couldn't hear anything and the maintenance person they sent found no problem. The repair of the alarm was put on hold as if it had never made a noise.

Does the sound exist?

I was pretty sure the sound was real, but no one else could hear it. To prove its existence, I used audio analysis software to visualize the noise, which confirmed my hearing. I finally used tape to seal the alarm, which reduced the volume of the noise.

If the sound exists, why can't others hear it?

The frequency range of sound waves that can be perceived by the human ear is around 20Hz~20,000Hz. The upper limit frequency decreases with age, dropping to between 15KHz-17KHz in average adults and sometimes even to 13KHz. This gap between auditory sensitivity means that some people, often aged,

cannot hear audio in the 17KHz to 20KHz range of sound, which is also known as mosquito sound.

What does it mean if one could hear things others could not?

I was offered a medical test to see if the sounds were the product of tinnitus or phantom hearing. This proposal assumed that I needed to self-examine my perception of such noise. In fact, I self-examine the information I receive all the time. Since 2021, I have had symptoms of schizophrenia, that is, auditory hallucinations. I sometimes hear voices when there is no speaker. But is the presence of this noise determined by whether or not I have symptoms?

Fortunately, we live in a time when technologies and theories can verify the existence of noises. In the past, hearing unverifiable noises would lead to a diagnosis of hysteria. Today, we still have a similar diagnosis, somatization, which refers to abnormal bodily sensations without organic pathology. In psychodynamic theory, somatization is viewed as an ego defense mechanism, where repressed emotions are unconsciously redirected into somatic symptoms as a form of symbolic communication (organ language). In other words, somatization means that a patient's physical feelings are caused by psychological factors. Although somatization does occur clinically, I question the way it is diagnosed. Like hysteria, somatization is the diagnosis given when medicine fails to provide a scientific explanation for physical symptoms. The good news is, some people with abnormal physiological feelings have resolved them through psychotherapy, such as Freud's use of hypnosis to treat hysteria. The bad news is that because of the effectiveness of psychotherapy when there is no organic pathology, psychotherapy becomes the only answer that modern medicine can provide.

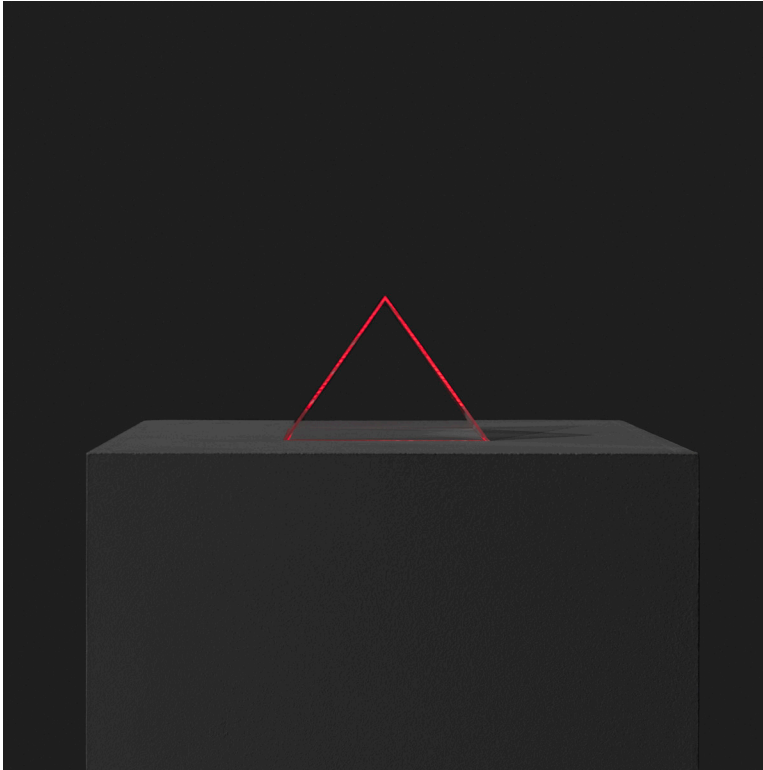
Your pain is not real. The cure is not dwelling with it.

A few years ago, I read an article about treatment for somatization but the argument throughout the article was to emphasize for patients not to dwell on their symptoms; it is not real because there is no discernible organic cause. I understand there may not be a way to better diagnose or treat yet. But this type of diagnosis, this rejecting approach, relies on faith rather than science for its therapeutic effectiveness.

Again, my own personal experience comes into play. I had an extremely bad cough back in 2015. I went to several hospitals and had all the tests done but all were perfectly normal. So I was a healthy person but coughed up blood for over six months. This was clearly not somatization. I had the blood to prove that this was some kind of physical disease. Eventually, the hospital ended up diagnosing me with tuberculosis by way of exclusion in response to my need for treatment, although none of the tests corroborated the diagnosis of tuberculosis. The TB treatment did not make me any better but weaker. I eventually had to overlook a disease that didn't seem to exist and continued to cough for years.

Both the diagnosis of somatization and the story of my "tuberculosis" reveal a failure of this evidence-based world. When the input is not in line with the experience, we in fact do not know how to deal with it. We indulge in this one systematic if-else game, instead of admitting our incompetence. When individuals are confronted with this system, they are pushed into being gaslighted,¹ or manipulated to question their own reality. The world is full of noise and pain that no one else can feel, but can we as the Other declare its non-existence?

¹ APA Dictionary of Psychology". APA.org. American Psychological Association. Retrieved 24 Jan 2023.



Pan, Chengjun. *Red Pyramid*, 2023, Installation, 6"x6"x5.1"

Red Pyramid is a sound interactive device that explores the nature of human perception from a transcendental idealist perspective. It responds to frequencies between 20KHz and 80KHz, which exist beyond the range of human hearing by changing its brightness. It is a simple yet effective way of helping individuals become aware of the sounds in their environment that they are unable to hear. While the pyramid does not interact with most sounds that people can hear such as voices, it does interact with some broad-spectrum sounds that both people and the device can perceive such as jangling keys.

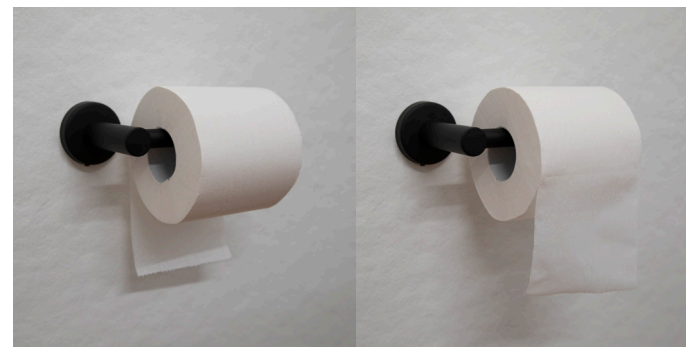
Perception plays a significant role in understanding the *Red Pyramid's* purpose. Perception can be defined as the process by which individuals organize and interpret sensory information to give meaning to their environment. *Red Pyramid* reminds us that human perception has its limits, as there is information outside our range of perception. The device detects these sounds, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging an individual's perception of sound, even if others can't detect it.

Red Pyramid highlights the importance of carefully identifying personal experiences and understanding the complexity and diversity of human perception. This is achieved by validating sounds that others may not hear. The work also emphasizes the nature of the input we constantly receive, i.e., we lose information as we receive it.

A transparent pyramid glows with its surrounding sound.

Why does it glow when I hear no sound?

Have you ever considered the orientation of the toilet paper in your bathroom? Is the loose end hanging over or under the roll? Despite encountering toilet paper multiple times a day, most of us are unaware of its orientation. Surely, if we had paid more attention, we would have noticed this detail. Our inability to provide an answer demonstrates that we don't process all available information. In this context, processing information involves analyzing and categorizing it, allowing it to enter our cognitive space. Although some individuals may recall such details, this isn't a matter of identification ability but rather selective attention.



Pan, Chengjun. *Toilet Paper*. 2023.

Much like machine learning trainers who determine which data is considered noise and doesn't require processing, the human brain seems to have a similar mechanism that filters information before identifying it. Even when equipped with the right sensors, we might still fail to receive certain information, likely because our brains can only process a limited amount of data. As a result, we filter out what we deem less important. This perceptual filtering mechanism, which detects the significance of information, gives rise to a phenomenon called change blindness.¹ Change blindness is a perceptual occurrence where an alteration in a visual stimulus goes unnoticed by the observer. This suggests that much valid information never reaches our conscious awareness, and our cognition is based on such deficiencies.



Pan, Chengjun. *Still Landscape*. 2023. Moving image. 16 x 24 x 2".

A landscape photograph framed and mounted on the wall.

Is that all?

¹ Rensink, Ronald A.; O'Regan, J. Kevin; Clark, James J. (September 1997). "To See or not to See: The Need for Attention to Perceive Changes in Scenes". *Psychological Science*. 8 (5): 368–373.

Still Landscape is a looping video that appears to be a static landscape photograph mounted on a wall, yet it is more than just an image. This looping video presents subtle changes that elude the naked eye, emphasizing the existence of a filtering mechanism in our perceptual process. This mechanism dismisses information considered less crucial, resulting in change blindness.

Change blindness implies that some of the valid information may never enter our conscious awareness, revealing a fundamental deficiency in our cognition. *Still Landscape* builds on this sensory filter and hints at the existence of additional filtering mechanisms that may have gone unnoticed.

By prompting viewers to contemplate the limitations of our perception and how our brains filter information. It serves as a reminder that there is more to the world than meets the eye, and encourages us to be conscious of the biases and limitations of our own perception, and to be careful with our judgments.

Let's say you go to a hospital, and you aren't able to describe your issues and pains, to the point that you are not even able to find an appropriate doctor. That was me, sensing the pain with full consciousness but being unable to communicate effectively via language. How do we describe pain without adequate vocabulary? We may as well be a baby.

How would a newborn baby, in the pre-symbolic state,¹ understand this same situation?:

When a baby has just left the thermostatic womb and comes into this world of change, it cannot accurately index and distinguish its own feelings, such as cold, hunger, and pain. Although these feelings are different, a baby can only understand them as discomfort, just as if we were in the hospital, not knowing how to describe our conditions. When the baby interacts with the strange creatures of humankind, it still can't communicate its condition, but it starts to see how things are connected. This little being may find that its own cries can summon the humanoid creatures to resolve their discomfort. When the relational chains of discomfort, crying, summoning, and

¹ Pre-symbolic state: A state that is not yet indexed by human language and behavioral patterns, so the being is not yet able to use symbols to communicate. Yashaswini and Manjula. Pre-Symbolic and Symbolic Communication Behaviors of Typically Developing Children (1.6 Years) in Dyadic Communication Context Using Adapted Communication Complexity. (2016).

resolution are repeatedly reinforced (when the adult shows up), the baby has established the first symbolic chains. As the number of summonses increases, the baby eventually realizes that the stupid person summoned can not understand its cries specifically. They have to spend extra time locating their discomforts. When they do finally figure it out, the discomfort is addressed and the baby better recognizes its discomforts.

Babies might be unable to identify themselves as a being before the mirror stage.² The world is a single-player game to them while they've not yet acknowledged being the player. In terms of their symbolic world, there is no difference between conscious beings and things. Everything is a presence with which babies can interact. It's not until the mirror stage that babies recognize they are individuals like any other being. From that point, babies separate their own presence from the outside world. They interact with the world and see the cause-and-effect relationship they have with the world. These successful interactions have essentially become the rules of the game. As languages enter the babies' cognitive system, this symbolic game expands beyond their own vision.

Everything in the symbolic world is indexed, classified, and connected by an ineffable and disciplinary force. The connection between one thing and its symbol is not necessarily logical. Ferdinand de Saussure distinguished things from their symbols, pointing to them as signified and signifiers. Saussure believed the relationship between signified

and signifiers is arbitrary.³ This arbitrariness is mainly reflected in the fact that as long as an index is used and operated for a long time, it creates a default connection between things and how we treat them. For example, the flight recorder is often referred to as a "black box" because its appearance was literally a black box when it was first invented. Nowadays, the color of a black box on planes is not black anymore but bright orange. Because of the usage of such a term for a long time, the index of black box is no longer related to the color but to the specific equipment.

Such a detachment of the symbol from its materiality reveals the retrospective construction of meaning. In contrast to the traditional Saussurean semioticians who believe that the signified determines the signifier, French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan believes it is the signifier that conditions the signified. The shift underscores the importance of the subject in the process of understanding.

In 1956, Lacan explored and reported on his "Seminar on The Purloined Letter," about his understanding of signifiers in relation to his analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's 1845 novel, *The Purloined Letter*. This story revolves around a purloined letter, a correspondence between the queen and her paramour, which Minister D illicitly procured from her boudoir and has since used as leverage to blackmail her. Unable to retrieve the letter herself, the queen enlists the services of the prefect, who employs a range of strategies, including surveillance, undercover apartment searches, and even a faked burglary, all to no avail. The prefect had to turn to the private

2 The mirror stage is based on the belief that infants recognize themselves in a mirror (literal) or other symbolic contraption which induces apperception (the turning of oneself into an object that can be viewed by the child from outside themselves) from the age of about six months. LACAN, JACQUES. 1949. Pp. 1-3 and 172-175 in *Écrits: A Selection*. New York: Taylor and Francis, 1977.

3 Arbitrariness: Saussure introduced the notion of arbitrariness according to which there is no necessary connection between the material sign (or signifier), and the entity it refers to or denotes as its meaning (or signified) as a mental concept or real object. Charles Sanders Peirce later proposed that the relationship among signs is not only about arbitrariness, but also motivation. "arbitrariness." Oxford Reference. <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095421385>.

detective Dupin. Dupin eventually found the letter and replaced it with a fake letter. When the letter was found, the details of its exterior features were the opposite of those of the stolen letter Dupin knew.

The letter was hanging right in the middle of the mantelpiece, where it could not be missed if one ever looked at the room. The prefect spent months looking in this room but could not see such an obvious letter? He saw the letter, of course, but the appearance of the letter did not match all the information he knew about it. He thought then that this letter that looked different must not be the letter he was looking for. Lacan builds on *The Purloined Letter* to further reflect on what he considers the truth of symbols:

"For the signifier is a unit in its very uniqueness, being by nature symbol only of an absence. Which is why we cannot say of the purloined letter that, like other objects, it must be or not be in a particular place but that unlike them it will be and not be where it is, wherever it goes."⁴

The letter is interspersed throughout the novel as a signifier, but no one ever knows its content. In the Lacanian view, the content was never important. The meaning of the letter is determined by its position, and constructed retroactively by the subject. The communication takes place in intersubjectivity, so a symbol is consistently in displacement.

To illustrate such a displacement, I attempt to reproduce the process of symbolization, and expose it in contrast to its failure and success.



Pan, Chengjun. *A Volume Lost in a Library*. 2022. Installation, 6.25" x 6.25" x 8"

A green lightning ball with a shrill noise.

The noise was replaced with a dialog when I touched it.

Wait... Was the noise the dialog?

⁴ Lacan, Jacques. (1956) "Seminar on The Purloined Letter," ÉCRITS

A Volume Lost in a Library is an interactive device that releases different layers of sound (a dialogue) depending on the duration of the audience's interaction. The main body of the installation is a green plasma ball, which emits sound that changes when it is touched. The sound device includes two different forms of the same dialogue. By default, the device releases a (whistling-like) sine-wave synthesis. As the device is being approached it shifts to normal human speech. When the physical interaction ends, the sound switches back to sine-wave synthesis.

The first layer of speech are sine-wave speech, which is artificially degraded. It lacks traditional speech cues, i.e., pitch, stress, and intonation,¹ so listeners fail to extract information from it upon first hearing it. However, if the listeners have previously heard the discernable speech, listening to the sine-wave synthesis again produces a very different perception of a fully intelligible spoken sentence. Cognitive neuroscientist Matt Davis at University of Cambridge argued that this dramatic change in perception is an example of a top-down perceptual process produced by higher-level knowledge and expectations concerning sounds that can potentially be heard as speech.² In other words, more broadly, human understanding of the outside world is not simply from sensation to perception. Past experiences influence the perception of new experiences. Such a discontinuity alludes to a structure of symbolization:

That the listener can understand the synthesized sounds after listening to the clear speech proves that its message is meaningful the whole time but the fact that they could not extract information from the sine-wave speech in the first place indicates that

they failed to find the corresponding message in the "dictionary" they are used to. To continue with the metaphor in the script, they are trying to find the book at the library but the book was not there.

The script of *A Volume Lost in a Library* is inspired by the discussion between Lacan and Derrida on the 1845 novel, *The Purloined Letter*, by Edgar Allan Poe. The script alludes to the failure of indexicalism through a book that cannot be found, but this part of the information is not available to people without relevant background knowledge, just like the information in the sine-wave dialogue can't be extracted before listening to the dialogue in normal human speech.

1 Remez, R.E., Rubin, P.E., Pisoni, D.B., Carrell, T.D. (1981) Speech perception without traditional speech cues. *Science*, 212, 947-9. PubMed

2 Davis, Matt. (2007) An Introduction to Sine-Wave Speech. <https://www.mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk/people/matt.davis/sine-wave-speech/>

“Hi there, could you please help me find the book, The Purloined Letter by Edgar Allan Poe?”

“The book is in the classic literature collection, so you should be able to find it on the shelf M1.”

“I saw the same information on the website, but I went there and didn’t see the book.”

“The system shows that the book is not checked out. If you could not find it on that shelf, the book might have been accidentally misplaced on a different shelf. Or someone else might have it.”

“Could you please tell me what the book looks like so I can try to find it myself?”

“I wouldn’t recommend doing it, but the system says it is an 8x10 green hardcover book.

“Thank you; I gotta get going.”

Before further processing any of the inputs, people, in fact, need to have an idea of what is being input. Just as you need to know the meaning of each word as you read the sentence. Therefore, for information to be processed, we need to be programmed to identify things first. This step is the process of initial symbolization. The symbolic system we usually use is the language based on sound and image.

Helen Adams Keller, one of the great writers in American history, contracted an unknown illness that left Keller deaf and blind when she was 19 months old. At seven, Keller had about 60 home signs to communicate with her family. These gestures can express some simple responses, such as acceptance or rejection. On March 5, 1887, Keller met Anne Sullivan for the first time. Sullivan brought Keller a doll as a present. When Keller touched the doll, Sullivan used the sign language alphabet to spell d-o-l-l on Keller’s palm. Keller managed to repeat the series of hand gestures under Sullivan’s guidance, but she mentioned that she didn’t know what she was doing in her memoir. Since then, Sullivan has repeated this operation spelling out the corresponding word on her palm of Keller whenever Keller engaged with something. One day when Sullivan spelled the words doll and bed on Keller’s hand and then Keller ran to her bed and found the doll on it.

At that very moment, Keller officially enters the world of languages. Those hand gestures became meaningful symbols that pointed to something else. In semiotics, symbols are known as signifiers, while the concept, object, or idea behind the symbols is known as signified. Without such a dictionary of symbols, no matter what message input receives, it's all noise to the receiver.

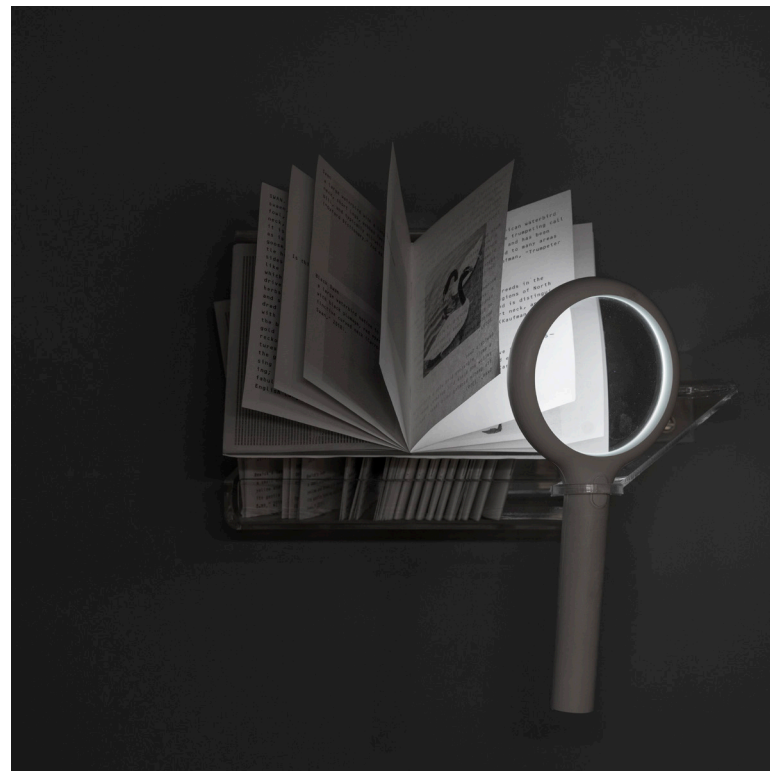


For example, figure above is an English word in Braille. I, as a person with sight, fully received the symbol, do not know its meaning, but a blind person with a background in using Braille might be able to quickly tell me it means “doll” when they touch the braille. From the input level, we both received the same message, but since I could not symbolize the message, I could not proceed further and understand it.

Such a symbol capture system is a boolean-like type. In computer science, Boolean is a data type that has one of two possible values, which usually denotes either true or false. However, there is never a division of false but the concept of “not true.” The data is not accepted and divided into two categories; rather, only the information recognized by the programmed lexicon is accepted, while the filtered-out information is treated as if it did not exist. So when there is no information or recognition, it is shown as false. See fig below.

Although a message is not located or captured does not mean that it is really meaningless noise, it does not enter into the information processing.

I attempt to explain how the dictionary is structured with the transformation of the word “Swan.”



Pan, Chengjun. *Is A Black Swan A False Swan?(Falseswan)*. Print. 2023. 4.25"x5.5"x1/8"

A zine floats beneath a luminous magnifying glass

Is A Black Swan A False Swan? (Falseswan) is a zine, project, or compound of words in which explores the formation of symbols; a fundamental cognitive process that allows us to represent and communicate information. To examine the transformation of the word "swan" and its context is to unpack the underlying symbolization in practice.

Falseswan discusses how a symbol is created and modified over time, using the example of the word "swan." It demonstrates how the meaning of a symbol can be changed as society develops and new information becomes available. For instance, Johnson's Dictionary from 1755 defined a swan as "a large water-fowl that has a long and very straight neck and is very white." However, with the discovery of black swans, the definition had to be revised to include birds that did not fit this description. This new definition does not include the short-necked swan.

Falseswan implies two different stages of symbolization: the pre-symbolic state, where the symbol has not yet been created, and the post-symbolic state, where its attributes describe it. The formula in the text of *Falseswan* provides a map of linguistic logic. This map leads to the conclusion of symbolization, where anything that does not contain the attributes of a symbol would be negated.

Overall, *Falseswan* is a zine examining the conversation beyond symbols and words through a unique perspective. The transformation of the word "swan" and its context provides a rich example of how symbols are created, modified, and abandoned under the title of communication and knowledge.

Post-symbolization, the use of symbols to convey meaning, often leads to redundancy. One of the most notable features of redundancy is exclusivity. This means that a symbol is equal to what it excludes. For instance, the word YES means non-NO, and the word NO means non-YES. However, the meanings of these symbols can become distorted when a person tries to comprehend them. This is because the act of comprehension is a complex process that involves not only the recognition of symbols but also their interpretation and contextualization. In other words, the meaning of a symbol is not fixed, but rather depends on the cultural, social, and personal factors that shape our understanding of the world.

Consider the sentence, "Behind the wall of my backyard you can see two trees: one is a date tree, the other is also a date tree."¹ If we were not informed about the very last part of this sentence, what would we know about the other tree? This part has never been described, but the logic of language assumes it is not a date tree. Otherwise, it would have been described as if there were two date trees. This fantasy presupposition is immediately shattered by the rest of the sentence.

Processing is not recursive but parallel. The

¹ 鲁迅(Lu Xun), 秋夜(Autumn Night) translated by Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang.

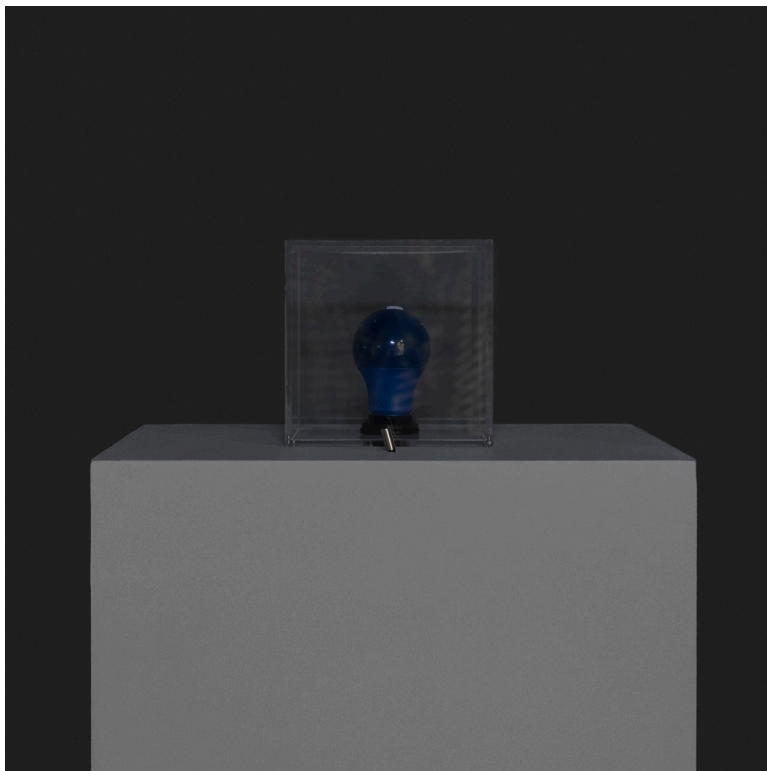
transfer of information from the bottom (sense) to the top (perception) does not wait for the analysis at each stage to be completed before sending it up to the higher processing units. Rather, the nodes pass the information up every time they have some. This has the advantage that the upper-level processing system can start processing earlier and guide the direction of the lower-level processing system by eliminating the possibility of other results based on the available information.

In the early 20th century, the American psychologist James McKeen Cattell introduced the word-superiority-effect (WSE). This theory demonstrated how the upper-level node affects lower-level processing. Cattell explained that people could recognize letters more easily if presented within words than as isolated letters. To explain WSE, American psychologists Rumelhart and McClelland developed a model of word perception called the Interactive Activation Model. In this model, they suggested that it takes less time to recognize the letter "A" if it is in the word "CAT." In this case, the word "CAT" is a node that can be called during the recognition process and provides top-down feedback to accelerate the progress of underlying recognition. This is because people know there is an "A" inside the word "CAT," which speeds up the underlying recognition.

Previous experiences influence the perception of new experiences, and the parallel feature of processing brings recognition to a new level. The McGurk effect,² another perceptual phenomenon, demonstrates an interaction between hearing and vision in speech perception. When the lip movement of the person in a video provides information that is slightly inconsistent with hearing, the brain corrects the perception based on this redundant signal. The result of this effect is that visual perception overwrites auditory

perception. No matter how well people know about this phenomenon, and even if they find that the sound and the image are not consistent, this phenomenon still applies. Even with consciousness, we cannot prevent this false perception.

2 "The McGurk Effect." Directed by J. Stevenson. Published on April 3, 2012. Video, 2:13. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-1N8vWm3m0>.



Pan, Chengjun. *A Blue Light*. 2023. Sculpture. 6" x 6" x 6".

A square lamp with a toggle switch in the front.

It does not function.

A Blue Light is a broken blue light in a room that also contains red and green lights. When the audience notices that playing with the toggle switch has no effect, they may interpret it as a broken light, and this interpretation changes the whole symbolic world. The room contains red, green, and blue lights, as seen in Figure-a.



Figure-a

In one scenario, the blue light breaks.



Figure-b

"When this circumstance is noticed and communicated as 'the blue light is important, and it needs to be addressed.' for one observer, it results in Figure-c.



Figure-c

However, when the statement is interpreted by someone else, a slightly different image [Figure-d] may be generated as they noticed not the color but the functionality of the light.



Figure-d

The exclusivity of the selection in the statement implies that both the red and green lights are functioning correctly, even though the status of the red and green lights are never mentioned. However, in every event where a light is broken, such as in Figure-e3, this is just one of many possibilities. Figure-d is a static image generated by one statement that may not reflect the entire situation. It is possible that the red and green lights are damaged, and not mentioning them in the statement could lead to confusion for those who rely on the information presented.



Figure-e1



Figure-e2



Figure-e3

However, if another interpreter formulates Figure-d and wants to acknowledge the other lights with a new assertion that 'the condition of all lights is important,' it results in an erroneous interpretation. This new assertion may seem accurate symbolically, but it contradicts the initial statement. In other words, it could be inferred that the blue light's state is not important, even though it was stated that the condition of all lights is important. Moreover, this 'adjustment' disregards the immediate problem situation of the blue light."

Although both sides may feel left out by the other's statement, none of the interpretations come directly from the statements. If affirmers disagree with these interpretations, they may realize that they share the same vision: when a light is broken, it should be fixed regardless of the color. People may think the other side is playing a word game, but the player could be the game or the language itself.

Summary

Communication is a complex and fascinating phenomenon that has been studied by many fields, including linguistics, psychology, philosophy, and sociology. Despite all of our efforts to communicate effectively, it seems clear that communication is destined to fail in some way or another. There are several reasons why this might be the case.

Firstly, reception acts as a filter in communication. When we receive a message, we often interpret it through the lens of our own experiences, beliefs, and biases. This means that the original message can be distorted or misunderstood, leading to miscommunication. Furthermore, understanding relies on a symbolic system that is full of redundancies. This means that a message needs to go through the process of being missed and then replenished, so its understanding is inevitably a deviation.

Secondly, communication takes place in the context of intersubjectivity. This means that communication requires at least two subjects who are attempting to share meaning with one another. If the subject does not exist, the concept of communication disappears with it. In this sense, communication is a co-creation of meaning between two or more individuals. However, this also means that communication is inherently limited by the subjectivity of the individuals involved. We are individuals precisely because we cannot communicate, which creates the subject-object division and enables the concept of "me" to exist.

If humans had seamless communication, like a swarm of bees or a colony of ants, the concept of "I" and "the Other" would not exist, and neither would communication. Our limitations in communicating with each other set us apart as individuals. Without these limitations, we would be indistinguishable from each other. This is a fundamental aspect of our humanity that we cannot overcome.

Perhaps we need to recognize that our communication can and should only remain on the surface. Like the RGB lights I described in the processing section, perhaps the only concept that needs to be communicated is the idea of fixing a broken light. Authoritative control over certain interpretations does nothing but make understanding more impossible. Understanding begins to be possible only after escaping from this game.

Despite all the problems, communication can only be built on failures. Helen Keller is an excellent example of this. As a deaf and blind person, she faced significant challenges in learning to communicate with others. However, through the use of the Tadoma method, which involves using her fingers to feel the lips and throat of the speaker, she was able to “hear” and speak. Although her vocal pronunciation was different from that of others, she was still able to communicate effectively. This was made possible only by the efforts of both parties involved. Keller’s speech learning was a two-way process. While Keller was learning to speak, her teacher was also learning her pronunciation. This exchange was made possible only by the efforts of both parties.

Afterword

“Who is your audience?”

“There is no audience.”

This conversation has come up countless times in the last two years. Many people are confused about my actions, and I find it difficult to provide the response they are expecting. To explain the lack of audience in my act, I would like to quote Lacan.

“I did not write *Écrits* in order for people to understand them, I wrote them in order for people to read them. Which is not even remotely the same thing. People don’t understand anything, that is perfectly true, for a while, but the writings do something to them. And this is why I would be inclined to believe that—as opposed to what one imagines when one peers from the outside—people do read them. One imagines that people buy my *Écrits* but never open them. That’s false. They even wear themselves out working on them. Obviously, when one begins my *Écrits*, the best thing one can do is to try to understand them. And since one does not understand them, one keeps trying. I didn’t deliberately try to make them such that people don’t understand them— that was a consequence of circumstance. I spoke, I gave classes that were very coherent and comprehensible, but, as I turned them into articles once a year, that led to writings which, compared to the mass of things I had said, were incredibly concentrated and that must be placed in water, like Japanese flowers, in order to unfold. The comparison is worth whatever it’s worth.”¹

Lacan spoke this passage in 1974 when he still believed in the roundabout game. He emphasized the process of engaging with complex ideas and the belief that the writings can have an impact on readers despite their initial lack of understanding. However, only a few years later, he expressed no hope of being heard when he decided to dissolve his school:

“I speak without the least hope - to make me hear in particular. I know that I do it - to add to it what that comprises

¹ Lacan, Jacques. (1974) *The Triumph of Religion*. Translated by Bruce Fink, Polity Press, 2013

of unconscious. It is my advantage there on the man who thinks and does not realize that initially it speaks. Favour that I must only with my experiment. Because in the interval of the word that it ignores so that it believes to make thought, the man muddles himself, which does not encourage it. So that the man thinks weak, all the more weak as it mad... to precisely muddle itself. There is a problem of the School. It is not a enigma. Also, I am directed there, not too early. This problem is shown such, to have a solution: it is say it - dissolution."²

Late in his life, Lacan was as reticent as the aphasia he had studied. He spent his life analyzing the workings of the human unconscious, and the more he learned, the more silent he became.

In Lacanian psychoanalysis, the question of why one speaks is a fundamental inquiry that delves into the very essence of human existence. In fact, it is not merely a question of why one speaks but a question of why one acts and, ultimately, why one lives. The act of speaking, or writing in this case, is not a mere expression of thoughts and ideas to be understood by an audience. Rather, it is a complex process of engagement with the self, where ideas are explored and developed, and the self is actualized through the act of writing.

By this, he meant that the act of writing is not for the sake of an audience. The writer does not write to be understood, but rather to be read. The reader, on the other hand, is not an audience to be entertained or enlightened, but a participant in the process of engagement with the self. Words do not necessarily convey meaning and that understanding is not the ultimate goal of writing. Instead, the act of writing is a transformative process that changes the self and the reader.

Just to clarify, you are the person who said, “I do for no audience and act without desire...” I followed up by saying, “...you are acting with desire because you are desiring to alienate.”

² Lacan, Jacques. (1980) "Letter of Dissolution." In *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, Translated by Mehlman, Jeffrey, 889-894. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006.

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file *

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stillLandscape	moving image	Mar 3rd, 2023
aVolumeLostinALibrary	installation	Nov 20th, 2022
flaseswan	print	May 5th, 2023
aBlueLight	sculpture	May 21st, 2023