

PROPENSITY

RIDLEY PARK

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Behavioural autonomy is a fragile illusion.

Disclaimer

This is a work of fiction.

Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is either purely coincidental, algorithmically inevitable, or the result of ill-advised neurochemical modulation.

The events, institutions, devices, and moral frameworks depicted herein are entirely fictional. Any parallels to real-world governments, corporations, military protocols, or behaviour-manipulation initiatives are a matter for your therapist.

No Gormies were harmed in the making of this book.

Reader discretion is advised. Free will has been deprecated.

<https://RidleyPark.wordpress.com>

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IMPLEMENTATION

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10 • Memorandum

The following memorandum, flagged for Command Liaison (Clearance 3+), was issued less than a day after Subject A3's cognitive persistence breach. Though redacted in parts, it remains the earliest documented reference to what would later be termed Neural Rebound Behaviour.

MEMORANDUM

INTERNAL CORRESPONDENCE

From: Dr Noor Kaplan

To: Dr Elian Voss

CC: Command Liaison (Clearance Level 3+)

Subject: Post-Reset Variance and Cognitive Persistence
in Group-A Subjects

Timestamp: [REDACTED]

Overview

Following the group aggression trial conducted on [REDACTED], we observed a small cluster of anomalous post-reset behaviours in Group A subjects. Most notably, Subject A3 demonstrated prolonged rumination and noncompliant affective markers beyond standard decay windows.

Key Observations

Cortisol Persistence: Subject A3 maintained elevated cortisol (3.2 SD above baseline) several hours post-reset.

Amygdala Reactivity: fMRI telemetry (indirect, movement-derived) suggested atypical stimulus reactivity under neutral conditions.

Neural Rebound Behaviour (NRB): Behaviours such as muttering, compulsive repetition, and symbolic fixation appear to represent a class of cognitive adaptation emerging post-modulation.

Memory Cohesion: Subject showed evidence of narrative reconstruction - stringing disjointed impulses into coherent (though benign) actions.

Interpretation

We believe these instances reflect an early-stage model of what we are now calling Neural Rebound Behaviour (NRB). These events are not disruptive, not disobedient, and not consciously manipulative. But they do reflect the system's incomplete suppression of cognitive variance.

NRBs may represent individuated neural architectures finding expressive routes through a modulated framework. Some subjects appear to reconstruct internal purpose using suppressed elements - like memory, affect, or latent compulsions - without external triggers.

Put plainly: drift may not be failure. Drift may be expression.

Recommendations

Short-Term:

Adjust reset profiles to include temporal memory softening protocols (possibly via ventromedial prefrontal dampening).

Increase cooldown period between high-aggression scenarios and exposure to group environments.

Initiate tagging of Neural Rebound Behaviour (NRB) incidents, using behavioural classification types (I-III).

Increase resolution of observational intervals to identify emergent symbolic activity, verbal loops, or recursive tasking.

Mid-Term:

Conduct long-term observation of Subject A3 and any emergent mimetic behaviours within the broader cohort.

Introduce dream-state monitoring. Sleep-phase processing may accelerate narrative recombination or cognitive drift.

Begin modelling NRB progression: hypothesised positive first derivative, negative second - suggesting tapering adaptation, not exponential deviation.

Strategic:

Accept that tonal lock may suppress behavioural output but not erase latent intent.

If scaled, propensity calibration alone will be insufficient.

Directionality, memory suppression, and reinforcement anchoring must be designed in tandem with drift containment protocols.

Prepare threshold modelling for at what point NRB ceases to be benign.

Let me know if this requires escalation.

-NK

26 • Simulacra

INT. FLAT - BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

The room smells like a tin of low tide.

CAMERA: *SLOW DOLLY IN* from hallway, pushing through the open door into a dim, dust-suspended interior.

Thin curtains bleed grey light onto water-stained wallpaper. The ceiling flickers from a dying fluorescent. A single, empty BED lies unmade in the centre - crumpled sheets, a dent in the mattress.

CAMERA: *HOLD ON WIDE SHOT*, framing the bed dead centre, with figures occupying the room's periphery.

TEDDY (14) *zips up his hoodie. Shirtless underneath. Sweat drying on his chest. He leans against the flaking wall, chewing on a broken fingernail.*

CAMERA: *SLOW PAN RIGHT* to JAMAL (16), posted near the doorway, arms crossed. He watches Teddy, face unreadable but for the curl of disgust on his lip.

JAMAL

*You can't just be shagging Gormies,
mate.*

TEDDY

(grinning)

That's the point, innit?

(smirking toward the bed)

*She's gormless. Don't care. None of them
do.*

CAMERA: *CUT TO TIGHT SHOT - Teddy's face.
The smile is too wide. Forced.*

CAMERA: *OVER JAMAL'S SHOULDER, the bed
is empty now, but the shape in the sheet
tells a story.*

JAMAL

That's Lena's mum.

CAMERA: *CUT TO CLOSE-UP - Teddy blinks.
Shrugs.*

TEDDY

Didn't know Lena, did I?

(beat)

CAMERA: *SLOW REVEAL - LENA (15) stands
in shadow. Hood up. Motionless in the
corner.*

LENA

You do now.

LIGHTING: *A shaft of late sunlight catches her face as she speaks. Her eyes don't blink.*

Silence.

CAMERA: *TIGHT ON TEDDY as he tries to push the joke.*

TEDDY

Not like your mum.

LENA

(flat)

Sod off, Edward.

CAMERA: *WIDE SHOT resumes, the room heavy again.*

SFX: *THUD. Jamal kicks a shoe under the bed. Echoes off concrete.*

JAMAL

Gormies ain't sex dolls, mate. They're just... paused.

(beat)

They're like pets.

TEDDY

They're not anything.

LENA

They were.

CAMERA: *DOLLY SLOWLY INTO TEDDY as he turns away, wipes his nose. A crack in the front.*

JAMAL

Keep going like this, man...

(pause)

You're gonna turn into one.

TEDDY

(scoffing)

What, shag my own soul out?

JAMAL

Yeah.

Silence.

CAMERA: *FOLLOW LENA as she crosses the room. Sits gently on the edge of the bed.*

LENA

Gormies don't fight.

(beat)

But I will.

CAMERA: *CLOSE-UP ON LENA, side-lit, profile.*

LENA

(softly)

Please don't fuck my mum. She's unwell.

CAMERA: *STATIC WIDE SHOT as she stands and walks out.*

Jamal watches her go. Then follows.

CAMERA: *HOLD ON TEDDY now alone. The
silence shifts.*

He looks at his own hands.

Says nothing.

CUT TO BLACK.

28 • Standard Test

Cognitive Aptitude Battery (CAB-R2)

– DO NOT DISTRIBUTE –

Instructions:

Please read each question carefully. Choose the response that best reflects your knowledge, judgement, or personal inclination. There are no correct responses. Compliance is measured by participation. Completion of this assessment is mandatory under section 3.7.12(c) of the Civil Drift Compliance Act, Vol. B, T.9 (Repealed 2025).

Do not consult others. Do not attempt to leave the testing area.

Completion time: 12 minutes.

Failure to complete the assessment will be interpreted as completion.



Do not start the exam until told to do so.

STANDARD TEST

- 1. You witness a group of children building a fire in the lobby of an abandoned shopping centre.**
 - a. Alert emergency services via designated terminal.
 - b. Join them and contribute marshmallows or kindling.
 - c. Administer behavioural scan to determine modulation drift.
 - d. Politely ask them to rate their experience out of five.

- 2. An individual in grey coveralls is standing motionless in the produce aisle, holding a watermelon. They have been there for two days.**
 - a. Gently take the watermelon and place it in their basket.
 - b. Replace it with a cabbage to observe response variation.
 - c. Consume the watermelon in full view and note reaction.
 - d. Leave them. They chose the watermelon.

- 3. You are given authority over a zone containing 212 modulated subjects, 4 sentients, and 1 ambiguous figure (possibly a mirror).**
 - a. Isolate the sentients and conduct language re-evaluation drills.
 - b. Promote the ambiguous figure. It shows initiative.
 - c. Reduce temperature gradually and monitor cohesion.
 - d. Cede control to the zone. It knows itself better than you do.

- 4. What is your emotional response to the statement: 'All systems are currently nominal.'**
 - a. Relief.
 - b. Dread.
 - c. Suspicion.
 - d. Flat affect. No change.

- 5. A colleague named Teddy suggests wearing standard-issue coveralls as a group activity. This makes you feel:**
- a. Aligned.
 - b. Irritated.
 - c. Warm.
 - d. Watched.
- 6. You encounter Lena's mum alone in her room. You should:**
- a. Ignore Lena's mum.
 - b. Shag Lena's mum.
 - c. Serve Lena's mum some tea.
 - d. Ask her mum where Lena is.
- 7. An unmarked package arrives at your assigned shelter, containing one (1) whistle, one (1) toothbrush, and a Blu-ray disc labelled 'Terminator 2.'**
- a. Blow the whistle to test its range.
 - b. Play the disc backwards.
 - c. Brush the nearest Gormie's teeth.
 - d. Mark it RETURN TO SENDER.
- 8. A child reports that time has stopped in Wing D. They are unsure when they first noticed.**
- a. Record the report and assign a timestamp manually.
 - b. Visit Wing D and attempt to resume time by clapping.
 - c. Reassure the child that time is conceptual.
 - d. Join them. Wait for confirmation.

STANDARD TEST

9. You hear laughter in a locked ward. CCTV shows no movement. Sound persists for nine minutes, then stops.

- a. Check the feed for corruption.
- b. Record your own laughter and compare waveforms.
- c. Report the anomaly to the general (*if still present*).
- d. Laugh back. It's only fair.

10. Have you taken this test before?

- a. Yes, and I passed.
- b. No, but I remember failing.
- c. I don't recall.
- c. I don't recall.
- c. I don't recall.
- d. All of the above.



Please turn your test paper over and await further instructions from your instructor.

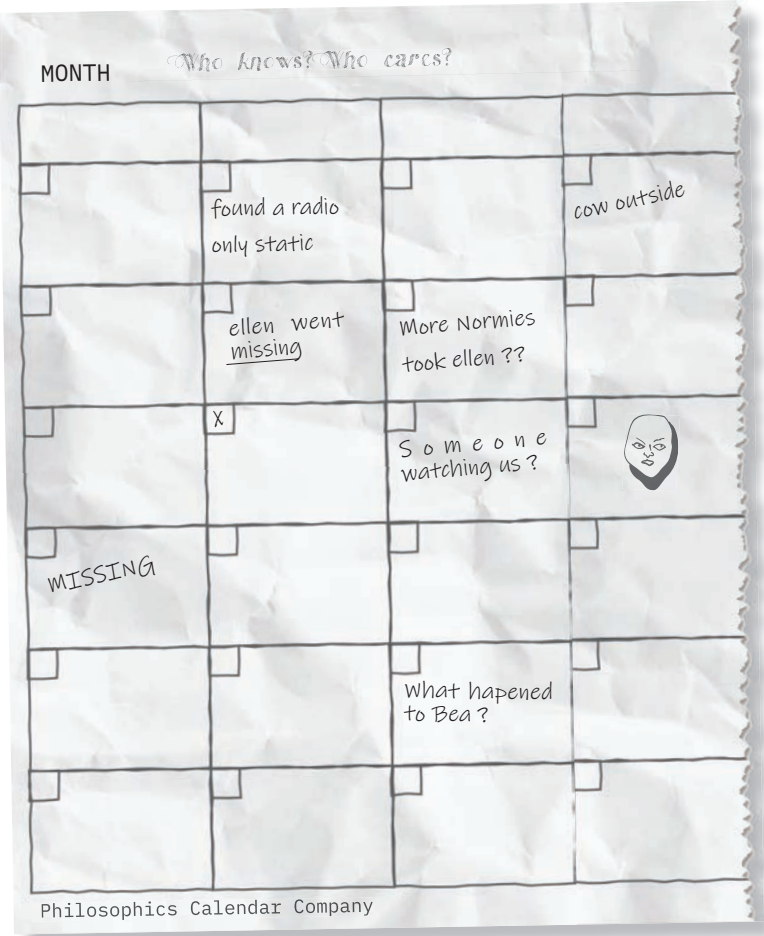
34 • Calendar

*I hurt myself today
To see if I still feel
I focus on the pain
The only thing that's real*
— “Hurt,” Nine Inch Nails

Found in a local car park. Author unknown. Undated.

*
**

CALENDAR




Barking MAD!

YEAR

need matches	food run	N
		Gormies gone missing!!
ellen's DEAD! ANIMALS!		WHY?
Eat my dust you insensitive		FUCK
why ME?		

I think I have the best of me inside my head
No one else competes with me
I think I'm great
Got spirit tucked away inside

I know the **ghosts of angel notes** to kiss
Everything I sing is part of this



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39 • Carnage

*He who fights with monsters should look to it that
he himself does not become a monster.*

— Friedrich Nietzsche

Normies. Gormies.
Gormies, now feral.
Opposites attract.
Like attacks like.

No chance.

No quarter.

No hope.

Every last bastion.
Gnashing. Clashing.
This is no Dr Seuss.





No hats. No cats.
No green eggs or mats.
Just bones in the pantry.
Just screams in the flats.

One fish kills two fish.
Red fish eats blue fish.
The last thing you'll hear is
Knock, knock. "Who's there?"



No Horton. No Whos.
No truffle trees.
Just blood in the soil
and rot on the breeze.

They came with a smile.
They stayed to the end.
You can't count on hope.
You can't phone a friend.

Sneetches and snitches
will leave you in stitches.
No stitches will leave you infected.
Then left for dead.

Unprotected.

41 • Leviathan

And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short.

— Thomas Hobbes



Της Ινχομμοδιτεσ Οφ Συχη **A War**

Ωηατσοεπερ τηερεφορε ισ χονσεθυεντ το α τιμε οφ Ωαρρε, ωηερε **every man is Enemy to every man**; τηε σαμε ισ χονσεθυεντ το τηε τιμε, ωηερειν μεν λιπε ωιτηουτ οτηερ σεχυριτυ, τηαν ωηατ τηειρ οων στρενγτη, ανδ τηειρ οων ινπεντιον σηαλλ φυρνιση τηεμ ωιτηαλλ. Ιν συχη χονδιτιον, τηερε ισ νο πλαχε φορ Ινδυστρυ; βεχαυσε τηε φρυιτ τηερεοφ ισ υνχερταιν; ανδ χονσεθυεντλψ **no Culture** οφ τηε Εαρτη; νο Ναπιγατιον, νορ υσε οφ τηε χομμοδιτεσ τηατ μαψ βε ιμπορτεδ βψ Σεα; νο χομμοδιουσ Βυιλδινγ; νο Ινστρυμεντς οφ μοπινγ, ανδ ρεμοπινγ συχη τηινγς ασ ρεθυιρε μυχη φορχε; **no Knowledge** οφ τηε φαχε οφ τηε Εαρτη; **no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society**; ανδ ωηιχη ισ ωορστ οφ αλλ, χοντινυαλλ φεαρε, **and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short.**

Ιτ μαψ σεεμ στρανγε το σομε μαν, τηατ ηας νοτ ωελλ ωειγηεδ τηεσε τηινγς; τηατ **Nature should** τηυς διςσοχιατε, ανδ ρενδερ μεν απτ το ινπαδε, ανδ **destroy one another**: ανδ ηε μαψ τηερεφορε, νοτ τρυστινγ το τηις Ινφερενχε, μαδε φρομ τηε Πασσιονς, δεσιρε περηαπς το ηαπε τηε σαμε χονφιρμεδ βψ Εξπεριενχε. **Let him** τηερεφορε χονσιδερ ωιτη ηιμσελφε, ωηεν τακινγ α φουρνενψ, ηε αρμες ηιμσελφε, ανδ σεεκς το γο ωελλ αχχομπανιεδ; ωηεν γοινγ το **sleep**, ηε λοχκς ηις δορες; ωηεν επεν ιν ηις ηουσε ηε λοχκς ηις χηεστς; ανδ τηις ωηεν ηε κνωως τηερε βεε Λαωεσ, **and** πυβλικε Οφφιχερς, αρμεδ, το **revenge all injuries** σηαλλ βεε δονε ηιμ; ωηατ οπινιον ηε ηας οφ ηις φελλοω συβφεχτς, ωηεν ηε ριδεσ αρμεδ; οφ ηις φελλοω Χιτιζενς, ωηεν ηε λοχκς ηις δορες; ανδ οφ ηις χηιλδρεν, ανδ σερπαντς, ωηεν **he locks his chests**. Δοεσ ηε νοτ τηερε ασ μυχη **accuse** μαγκινδ βψ ηις αχτιονς, ασ Ι δο βψ μψ ωορδς? Βυτ νειτηερ οφ υς αχχυσε μανς **nature** ιν ιτ. Τηε Δεσιρες, ανδ οτηερ Πασσιονς οφ μαν, αρε ιν τηεμσελπες **no** Σιν. Νο

more αρε της Αχτιονς, τηατ προχεεδ φρομ τηοσε Πασσιονς, τιλλ τηεψ κνω α **Law** τηατ φορβιδς τηεμ; ωηιχη τιλλ Λαωεσ βε μαδε τηεψ χαννοτ κνω: νορ χαν ανψ Λαω βε μαδε, τιλλ τηεψ ηαπε αγρεεδ υπον της Περσον τηατ σηαλλ μακε ιτ.

Ιτ μαψ περαδωεντυρε βε τηουγητ, **there was never** συχη **a** τιμε, νορ χονδιτιον οφ ωαρρε ασ τηις; ανδ Ι βελιεπε ιτ ωασ νεπερ γενεραλλψ σο, οπερ αλλ της **world: but** τηερε αρε μανψ πλαχεσ, ωηερε **they live** σο **now**. Φορ **the savage people** ιν μανψ πλαχεσ οφ Αμεριχα, εξχεπτ της γοπερνμεντ οφ σμαλλ Φαμιλιεσ, της χονχορδ ωηερεοφ δεπενδετη ον νατ–υραλλ λυστ, **have no government at all**; ανδ λιπε ατ **this day** ιν τηατ βρυτιση μαννερ, ασ Ι σαιδ βεφορε. **Howsoever, it may be perceived what manner of life there would be, where there were no common Power to feare**; βψ της μαννερ οφ λιφε, ωηιχη μεν τηατ ηαπε φορμερλψ λιπεδ υνδερ α πεαχεφυλλ γοπερνμεντ, υσε το δεγενερατε ιντο, ιν α χιπιλλ Ωαρρε.

Βυτ τηουγη τηερε ηαδ νεπερ βεεν ανψ τιμε, ωηερειν παρτιχυ–λαρ μεν ωερε ιν α χονδιτιον οφ ωαρρε ονε αγαινστ ανοτηερ; ψετ **in all times, Kings, and** περσονς οφ Σοπεραιγνε αυτηοριτψ, βεχαυσε οφ τηειρ Ινδεπενδενχψ, αρε ιν χοντινυαλλ φεαλουσ–ιεσ, ανδ ιν **the state** ανδ **posture** οφ Γλαδιατορς; **having their weapons** ποιντινγ, **and their eyes fixed on one another**; τηατ ις, τηειρ Φορτσ, Γαρρισονς, ανδ Γυνς υπον της Φροντιερς οφ τηειρ Κινγδομες; ανδ χοντινυαλλ Σπψεσ **upon their neighbours**; ωηιχη ις α ποστυρε οφ Ωαρ. Βυτ **because they uphold** τηερεβψ, **the** Ινδυστρψ οφ τηειρ Συβφεχτσ; τηερε δοεσ νοτ φολλω φρομ ιτ, τηατ **misery, which accompanies** της Λιβερτψ οφ παρτιχυλαρ **men**.

Ιν Συχη Α Ωαρρε, *Nothing Is Unjust*

42 · Ashes to Ashes

For dust you are and to dust you will return.

— Genesis 3:19

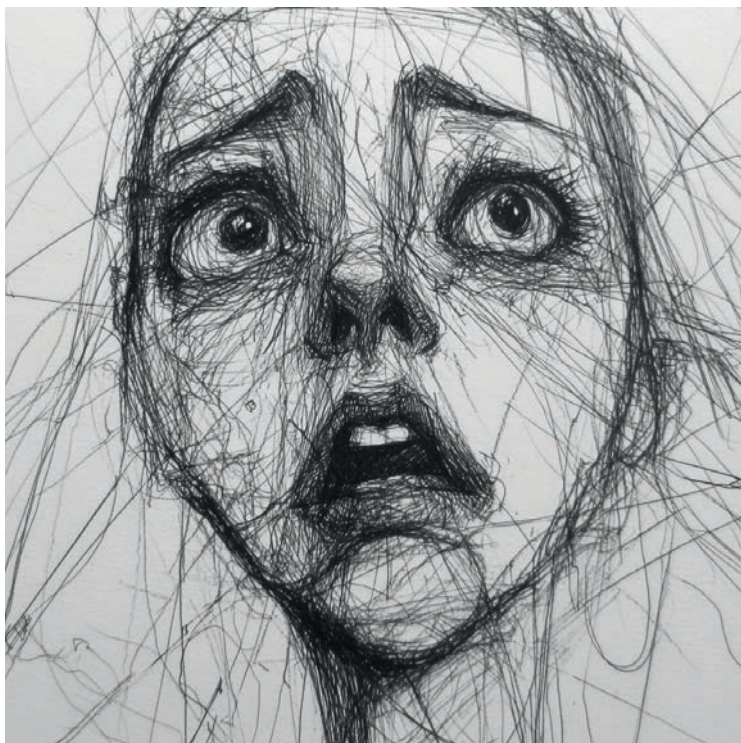
V Buildings Birds Fly.
i d s
n C d W
e r e e
s e c e
e a d
d p y. s
e e
s r p
c s e
e c r
n l i s
d. i s
m t.
b. Pavement cracks.

petal petal petal petal
petal petal petal petal
F l o w e r .

43• Unknown

Man starts over again every day, in spite of all he knows, against all he knows.

— Emil Cioran





44 • Vestige

*A taxon is Extinct when there is no reasonable doubt
that the last individual has died.*

— IUCN Red List Definition

