CORNUCOPIA NOTES #2

(Where The Sidewalk Starts -)

Info

First batch of notes (Introductory Questions - We're All In This Together) : https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Vhz3xlGI0ih8-LLNCiuI1XrX4SRVwBcsYIU3Yy8i3UE/edit?usp=sharing

Join the discord!
https://discord.gg/vG5N89Scnj

Disclaimer: These notes are to be used ***in conjunction*** with the actual syllabus, and may not be able to provide a total and comprehensive picture of the whole curriculum. If you spot any errors, please contact any of the Cornucopia staff on Discord

Where the Sidewalk Starts

(.22 and Q1Bl1Y8M)

The Sidewalk



Generally presents itself as a narrow path beside the road, separating it from the road and is usually shared by bicycles and pedestrians unless a dedicated bicycle path is established

History:

Late BCE: Greek city of Corinth and also roman towns/cities had sidewalks

Middle ages: The road reverted to being used by both pedestrians and wagons, some attempts were made to maintain the footpaths, but they were never successful

Paris' Pont Neuf was a bridge with an elegant, wide sidewalk and houses along the edge and built in 1578

1666: Great fire of London caused the government to pass laws to try and bring order to the sprawling city; sidewalks were paved with stone, and bollards were installed to protect pedestrians in some areas

Additional Functionality: Shown to reduce traffic collisions with pedestrians by about 74% in florida

Has a minor effect on vehicle miles traveled and CO2 emitted

Minor effect on obesity rates as walking is encouraged

Enables social spots dependent on roadside environments



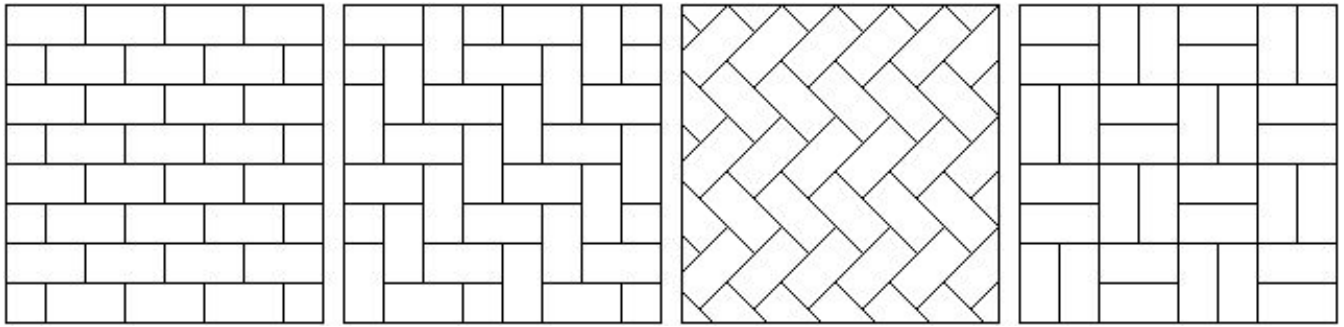
The Sidewalk cont'd

Construction:

Usually made of concrete, brick or stone slabs, sometimes tarmac is used.

Bricks are placed in a tessellating pattern as shown at the top

With concrete, "ribbons" are usually poured and left to dry, but in 1924 Arthur Wesley Hall and William Alexander McVay invented the idea of including small partitions in the ribbon to compensate for heat/cooling shrinkage/expansion causing cracks to form



Moving sidewalks

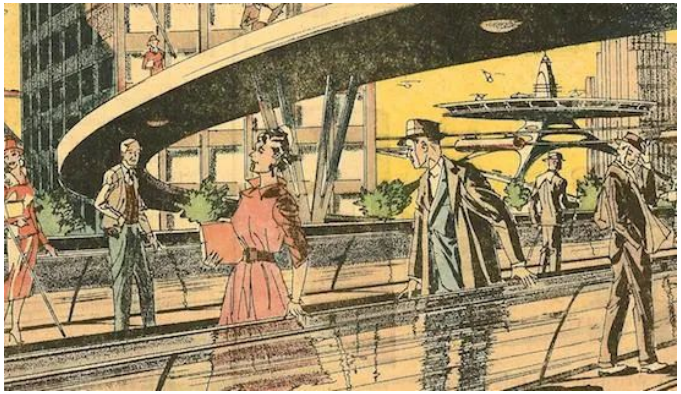
Popularised/featured prominently in the 1962/3 cartoon series "The Jetsons"

Designed to make commutes easier and reduce automobile traffic

Usually only seen in airports/amusement parks nowadays, but once was a symbol of cutting-edge tech

1871: Alfred Speer patents series of moving sidewalks that he thought could revolutionise pedestrian travel in NYC

This design involved a series of 3 successively faster, parallel lanes of conveyor belt, and seats & carriages at regular intervals for people to relax, which persisted over the years



Futuristic moving sidewalks as illustrated by Arthur Radebaugh in 1959



1900 paris expo's moving sidewalks

Moving sidewalks cont.

First electric moving sidewalks were exhibited at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, which carried passengers arriving by steamboat to the exposition, as well as the 1900 Paris Exposition

People at the time believe that moving sidewalks would be common by 1975

in the early 1950s, Goodyear drafted plans for large-scale implementations of moving sidewalks in public places such as metro stations and stadiums

Although this fell through, Goodyear now makes the moving sidewalks seen in Disneyland.





Parking and the USA

In some regions of the USA, during snowfall people will dig out parking spots for their cars and claim them with a piece of furniture.

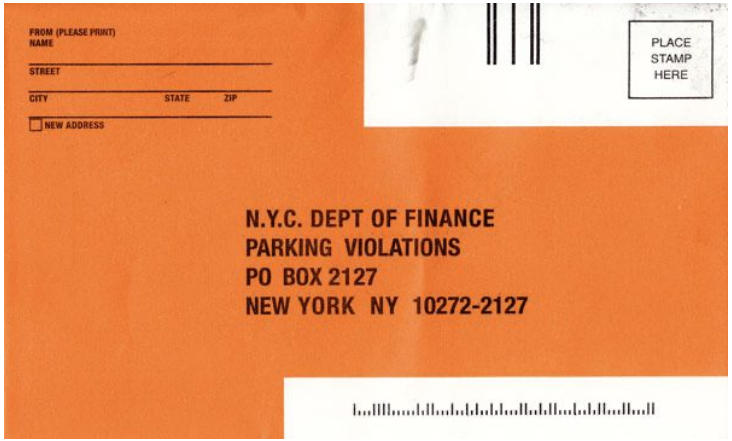
Some parking garages are designed with spiralling ramps which are impossible to traverse without moving extremely slowly

Revenue-driven policing:

- When the incentive for enforcing rules is monetary gain instead of justice itself
- Eg. cars being towed from parking lots for passing the time limit by just 1 minute in order to charge fees
- Most parking meter rates are very low, so cities earn more money from collecting these fines than the actual parking (eg. NYC made 565m$ from parking fines in 2015)
- Delivery vans/trucks often rack up tens of thousands of dollars in fines each year from double-parking
- For many large delivery companies in NYC, the government gives them a discount in parking fines in exchange for not challenging the tickets in court



Disobey not the holy law of dibs



Parking and the USA cont

Convenient, free and available parking is impossible to achieve because parking can cost up to $100,000 per stall, so it's hard to justify giving it out for free

People expect parking to be available near their destination, but it's usually unfeasible bc cars take up too much space

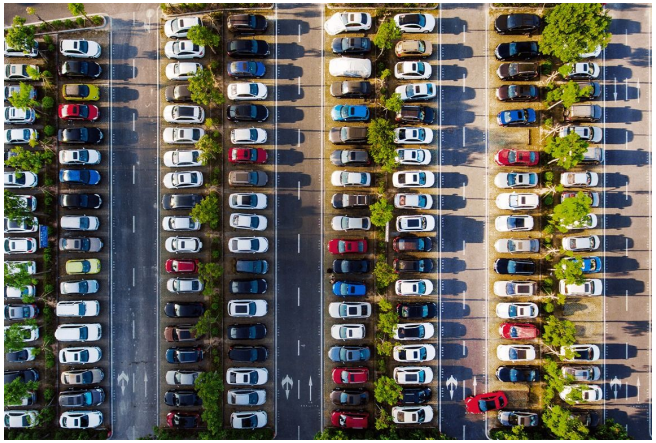
Each and every type of land use has a requirement for minimum amount of included parking spots, resulting in the modern american urban landscape resembling islands of buildings surrounded by parking

This also limits affordable housing space, as what could have been used to build additional units is now parking

America used to have a horrific traffic problem where they had too little parking, so they built more, which became a massive incentive for people to drive, increasing emissions and housing prices, so now cities are starting to do away with them



America has 2B parking spaces. Reminder they have 345M *people*



Parking and the USA cont'd



The shopping mall was invented by an Austrian immigrant to the US named Victor Gruen, who wanted to create an analogue for viennese shopping streets in the US.

Previously, the US had commercial areas along major roads, where customers had to drive between individual shops.

These shopping malls end up cannibalising city-center retail because of the absolutely insane amount of parking necessary for them

These malls also lent themselves to money laundering/tax evasion, as you can easily under-report or over-report the amount of drivers using the lot



Philadelphia Airport parking scandal:

Someone leaves their car at the airport lot for a long time due to a vacation/other trip and incur a charge of, say,$200. Thus, they are printed a parking ticket that charges $200

The lot managers take the money, then print a ticket saying that they had only parked there for a few hours, which leads to a charge of say, $20, thus the lot managers are able to steal $180

They stole over $3M, with thousands of fraudulent tickets per day

Parking and the USA cont'd

Parking meters exist to organise parking at the curb level by sorting the length of parking intervals

I.e. popular parking spots will have higher fees, which encourages people to park for less time, and people who need to leave their cars somewhere for the whole day will be incentivised to move to a less popular spot

Eg. The employee of a supermarket who needs to park his car for 8 hours will not be incentivised to park his car right outside the supermarket for 1 dollar each hour, but a shopper who will only remain for an hour might.

They were created as shoppers unable to find parking spots due to employees taking up spots tended to take their business to suburban malls, which is not desirable for city management.





Parking and the USA cont'd



Reforms: During the pandemic, restaurants opened seating in parking areas to maintain social distancing

People took advantage of the free nature of parking beginning in the 1960-70s to start businesses such as ice-cream carts and taco carts

This raises the possibility that parking space could be used for something else

Eg. planting trees. Urban flooding is a problem in the USA as much land has been flattened and paved over to use as parking, sewer systems have insufficient capacity and because rainstorms are intensifying due to climate change. Creating a green belt by consuming parking space can help soak up rainwater and reduce the scale of this issue



Public spaces can be created to foster gatherings and interaction, or bike lanes can be created to reduce the environmental footprint of a city and promote health etc.

Parking and the USA (HOW LONG IS THIS THING)

Bike lanes specifically: often unsafe for both drivers and bikers (Adam Uster, a father of 2 was killed in Brooklyn by a truck driver turning into the bike lane)

Project to create a bike lane in Central Park West in Manhattan was cancelled due to a dispute filed by a condo board (it would take 200 parking spots)

Demand for parking spots: Seattle recently abolished the requirement to include parking spots near transit as parking constituted 10-20% of the rent in surrounding buildings, but builders still built parking anyways, although 40% (18000) less

Thus, the law is pushing builders to create more parking than necessary.



Temple Street Parking Garage

In 1959 – 1962, Paul Rudolph was contracted by the city of New Haven (ToC!!!) in Connecticut to construct a two-city block long (700m) parking lot on Temple Street with 1,247 parking spaces

It was built with cast-in-place reinforced concrete and cost $5,800,000

He built it to be "organic" and to show that "it dealt with cars and movement"

There is also an artwork that designed to be observed from an alleyway and incorporates nearby infrastructure as well as the parking lot (see →)



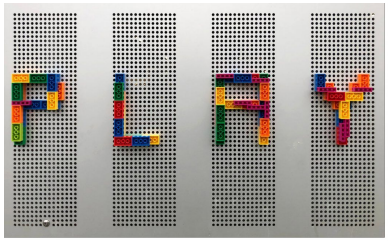
Billund car park, Denmark (LEGO!)

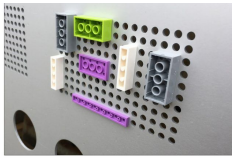
CEBRA constructed car park covered in plating that allows you to put lego bricks on it (the holes perfectly fit the holes of the plating which is also themed based on Kirkbi, Legos' holding company

5-story parking lot designed by Ravn Arkitektur, which will be used by ppl visiting in Legoland and nearby Lego offices

Directly next to other lego-themed buildings, which are also "high quality, creative and playful"

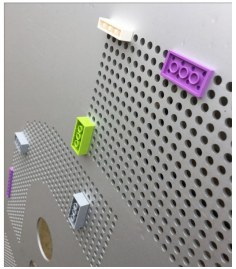
Builders "aimed for playfulness while celebrating imagination"



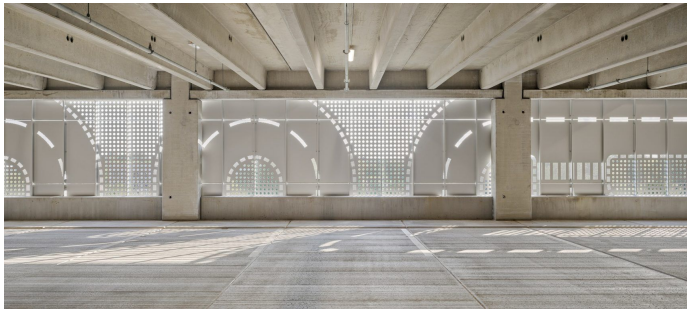












Parc des Celestins, Lyon, France

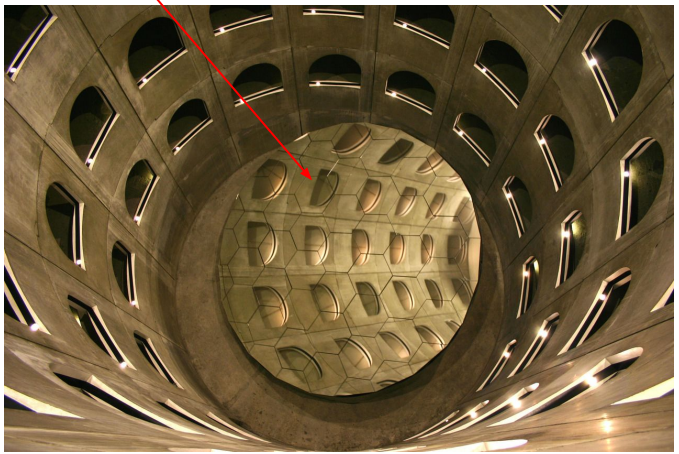
Designed by architect Michel Targe, architect Jean-Michel Wilmotte, and artist Daniel Buren, and featured Buren's "Sens dessus dessous" which was a rotating mirror/periscope

Won European Parking Association award in 1996, located under the Place des Célestins

Basically a 7-story "tower" with a spiralling path downwards, with a rotating mirror at the bottom



Mirror



Sens dessus dessous



Michigan Theater, Detroit

On the remains of where the Ford cars were invented, a theatre was built in 1926 alongside the 13-story Michigan Building office tower

Designed to be famous worldwide and also massive (the theatre), it closed down in 1960s

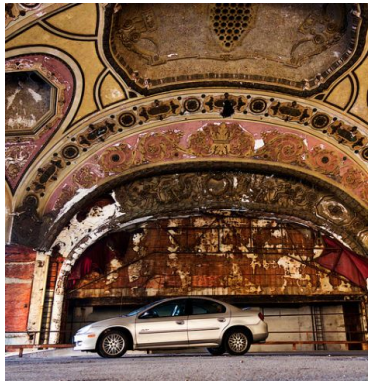
Was due to lack of parking spaces, and competition from modern theatres with loads of parking spaces

This theatre was gutted and is now a car park with 3 levels and 160 parking spaces

It looks incredible, with an old-style opulence while simultaneously having the charm of abandoned buildings









Garagenatelier Car Park, Herdern, Switzerland

Created by Peter Kunz Architects, this car park has 8 “cubes” as its exterior, with one at the end being the entrance into the actual car park.

The users then proceed to drive into a “cube”, which provides directed lighting and has a door that can close the cube up from the outside

They are situated on a green, grassy hill, contrasting with the solid, stark white colour of the cubes while also juxtaposing the concrete geometric structures with nature, similar to a “Minimal Art” exhibition





9th Avenue Parkade, Calgary, Canada

Problem: Parking lots usually use ramps for cars to get between floors, which causes the floors to become unusable for other purposes + Parking lots require tons of space → space that therefore because of this is now unusable and cannot be used for anything else → massive opportunity cost

Solution: 5468796 and Kasian designed a building that currently fits 510 cars, but could easily be changed to fit 600 people-offices or a 50-unit residential building

Commissioned by City of Calgary, shortlisted for World Architecture Festival awards, the bottom two floors have already been rented by an innovation centre with 1,000 people and the top a popular venue for wedding photo shoots

Instead of ramps in the whole building, there is a big ramp in the middle of the building (which is hollow in the middle) that bypasses the bottom two floors, after which the cars can drive up an oval spiral leading to other floors

Conversion of various floors for other uses can happen gradually, and doesn't have to affect the whole building



Snout houses (America full of autophiles)

Called “snout” houses bc the garage is poking out (like a snout)

Article argues this looks bad/weird bc it puts the garage in foreground rather than actual house, making it look like its a car storage disguised as a house, when the house itself should be main attraction

However, it is quite useful and practical, but does not embrace its “purpose”, rather tries to “disguise” itself. It’s a super convenient and generally pretty cheap model of house that accommodates a family’s car well

Some people hate it with a passion due to aesthetic, others believe it is pretty efficient with space

Article concludes that bc houses getting more expensive, snout houses are decently efficient and comfy



it does not look *that* bad



Frank Lloyd Wright - More autophiles



1867-1959, Wright was perhaps the most influential architect in American history, and pioneered multiple architectural movements, which still resonate today

He also owned over 80 vehicles over his lifetime and designed several buildings that would help accommodate automobiles, like Robie House (next slide), Usonian homes, Fallingwater, Sol Friedman House, Hoffman Showroom, Guggenheim Museum, among others

He created the "carport", a a minimalist automotive shelter that was incorporated into Usonian homes, which were for middle-class American families that were increasingly able to afford automobiles, as well as Fallingwater, which had a four-car carport, along with the SC Johnson headquarters and Sol Friedman House



Proposed plans for Gordon Strong AC and Park Point CC incorporated a spiral ramp for cars to get around the building, but were rejected. You could say he was ahead of his time

Curved ramp was eventually used in Hoffman Showroom, Guggenheim Museum (which looked like inverted Gordon Strong), etc.

Robie House

Designed by Frank Lloyd Wright for Frederick C Robie in his “Prairie” style to be one integral whole → each element is interconnected from ornaments to flooring

The house is spread out horizontally instead of vertically and emphasised by prominent stone bricks that anchor the house to the ground. The large flat roof further reinforces this

It also has broad balconies and terraces and many windows for light capture, has served as a classroom, a dormitory building, a refectory, and an office space for various organisations

Was threatened twice with demolition: 1941, 1957. Wright himself campaigned for the preservation of the building, the only occasion for which he has done so

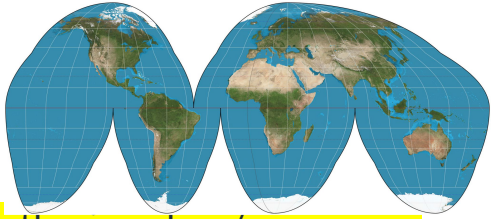
Recognised in 1991 by the American Institute of Architects as one of the 10 most significant structures of the 20th century, and considered Wright’s most innovative, forward thinking and influential Prairie building

Robie sold it to settle his debts when his father died, and the Wilburs were the last to live in the house





Gloria Molina Grand Park



Built in Los Angeles, 2012, and converted 12 acres of parking into a community gathering place/green zone

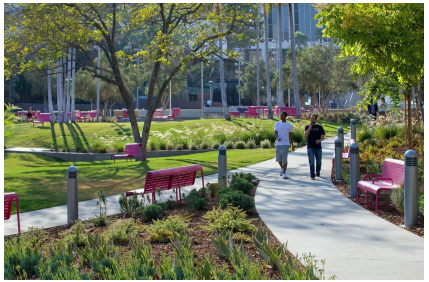
Takes inspiration from Goode's homolosine projection (a mapping projection that aims to display the 3-dimensional globe in 2 dimensions with minimal distortion) (see image)

Contains aquatic/fountain area, and furniture is freestanding instead of fixed in place like many other similar parks

Vibrant and colorful architecture reflects LA's multicultural diversity (eg. pink furniture)

Contains plants from all 6 floristic kingdoms (Cape, Boreal, Neotropical, Paleotropical, Australian, and Antarctic)

Showcases the potential for parking space to be used for more meaningful purposes



Monkey See, Monkey Prototype

(Q1BL1Y8M)

Key for the next few slides + info

Yellow highlight means that this is the *actual* prototype/revolutionary product

Green means which part of it made it revolutionary/good

Red is the date in which it was released/first conceived

A prototype may not necessarily never be released, but always has one feature/defining characteristic that makes it special and the first of its kind

Prototypes:

In 1948, Bell Labs designed first push-button handset for telephones, but the project flopped. Later on, in 1963, the Bell System introduced dual-tone multi-frequency (when you press a button, it emits a specific frequency → used for programs like directing customers to different customer service operators) under Touch-Tone, which was adopted worldwide.

In 1973, Motorola had been producing telephones for automobiles that were large, heavy and consumed too much energy to use without keeping the car running → Martin Cooper and Rudy Krolopp developed portable cellular technology → the first untethered cell phone was patented in 1973, called the Motorola DynaTAC

In 1975, Steve Wozniak was inspired by a meeting with people who made computers in their houses to create the Apple 1, and collaborated with Steve Jobs to sell 175 units in less than a year in 1976, building a brand-new 8-bit microprocessor called the MOS 6502 from scratch in order to create them. The “computers” were just pre-assembled boards of circuitry, mini keyboard, etc.

In 1977, Atari Inc. created the Atari Video Computer System, which could generate video on the fly and run multiple games → later release of the Atari 2600, which popularised the use of microprocessor-based hardware and ROM cartridges containing game code

Prototypes cont.

In 1982, Lonnie Johnson was trying to make a better fridge but realised that one of his custom-made brass nozzles could also shoot water a pretty dang far distance → created the Super Soaker that used manually-pressurised air to shoot water a farther distance, as well as more powerfully and accurately than ever before → now produced by Hasbro under Nerf and is still going strong (though it no longer uses PVC pipe, Plexiglass, and a plastic bottle)

In 1983, Steve Jobs announced the company's objective to put a "computer in a book", which would be easy to carry and use + use radio link to not have to link up to any connections with databases and other computers. Apple in the same year created the iPad prototype "Bashful", with an attachable keyboard.

Also in 1983 (wow so active), Apple prototyped the first iPhone, a tethered telephone with a touchscreen and stylus input. It wasn't very portable, but was highly imaginative and innovative. (more on slide 29)

In 1988: Nintendo and Sony teamed up (apparently they're rivals now which was why its quite unexpected in hindsight) to make an add-on for SNES (Super Nintendo Entertainment System), and produced the Nintendo PlayStation a few years later, which was compatible with SNES. But, due to licensing disagreements, the relationship fell apart and Nintendo partnered with Phillips to create another SNES add-on

Prototypes cont.

In 1995 game developers felt the need to create a better method of playing, despite the Game Boy Pocket's incarnation at the time being pretty good → Game Boy Color, which had backward compatibility (can use old software) → could leverage past collection of games → much larger library than other competitors. Was suspected to be the mysterious Atlantis Project, and backward compatibility later became a key feature of the Game Boy line

In 1998, the Microsoft DirectX team created a prototype Microsoft Windows-based video game console to compete with the upcoming Playstation 2, which was luring away game developers → pitched DirectX Box to Ed Fries→ first Xbox was created, which was massive before being slimmed down to be sold in 2001

In 2008, Nintendo recognised that the Wii had several limitations, including how ppl perceived it as catering to a "casual" audience, limited network infrastructure and lack of HD → in 2012, the Wii U GamePad was prototyped, which had 2 controllers on either side of the screen → Wii U released shortly after to bring back "core gamers"

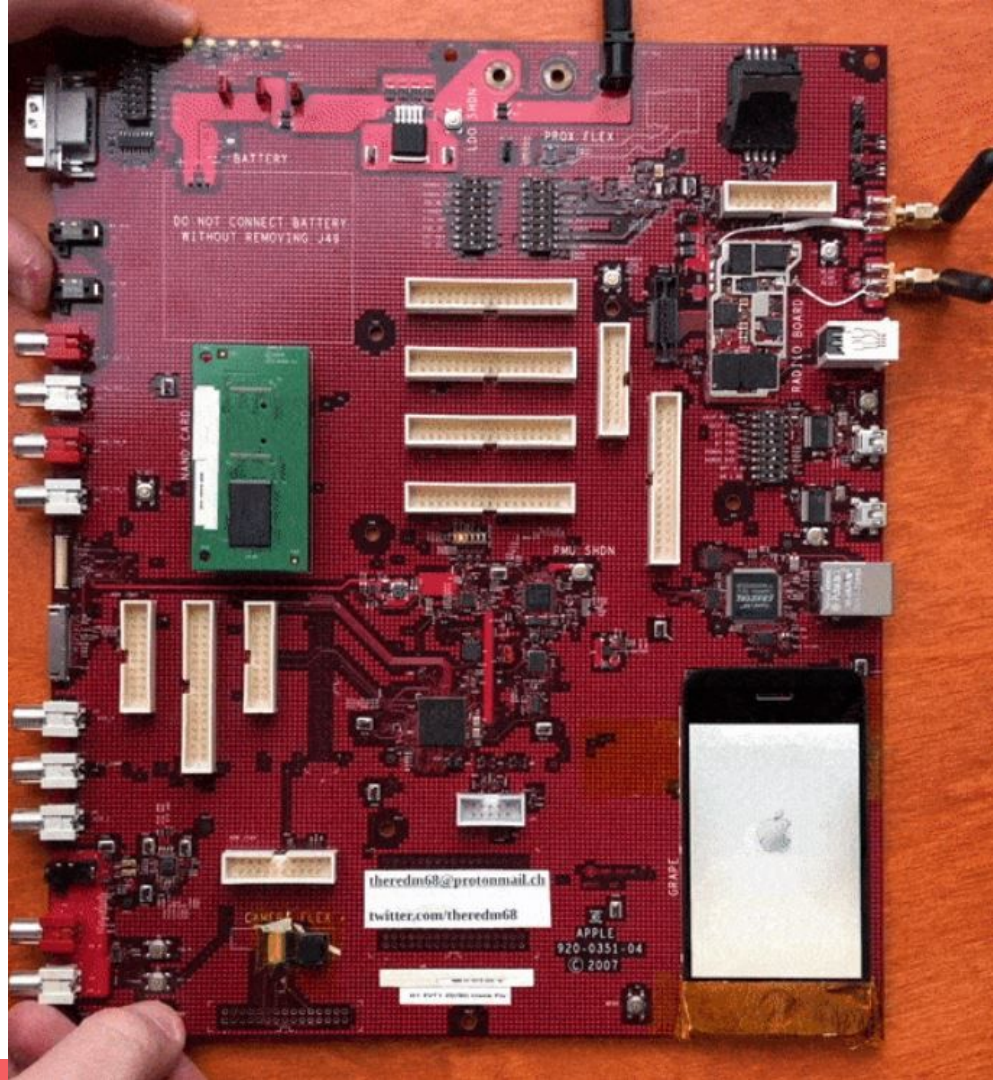
iPhone prototype

Apple tried really hard to keep the first iPhone a secret → gave it loads of code names

So basically this board that you see on the right was the literal iPhone (it has processor, memory, storage, 30-pin dock connector, camera, SIM slot, antennas for Wifi and Bluetooth, mini USB ports for software development (but u need computer to actually see what ur doing))

You just plug it into a computer, and it has all the functions of an iPhone → engineers used it to test and code applications for iPhone

Said engineers did not even know what the final form of this thing would look like → secrecy!!!



Prototyping cycle

Objective: Make early version of product → can explore your idea tangibly instead of just imagining

Can be used to check what works and what doesn't → get feedback from users→ reduce risk and speed up development. Also improves communication with users, clients, investors and teammates bc easier to show what ur doing

1. Think about what you want to do, how you can do it, and why it should do this (identify problem)
2. Create a low-fidelity prototype → simple sketches or wireframes that show general function rather than details → initial feedback and collaboration
3. High fidelity prototype → Closer to final design with detailed visuals, interactivity and can be created with specialised tools → test specific functions, overall feel and interactions
4. Share prototype with users, teammates and stakeholders → feedback to validate assumptions or reveal problems
5. Iterate and refine (do this multiple times, because prototyping is an iterative process) → continuous improvement and enhancement
6. Finalise your design → give to engineers to build actual product, and provide documentation

Prototype-related terms

See slide 30 for low to high fidelity

Name	Description
Sketches	"rapid, low-fidelity, and disposable representation of a design concept" Basically you freehand on paper/online a general design of what ur product will be → brainstorming
Storyboarding	You draw/describe how the user is supposed to interact with the product, typically with comic strip to show the emotions and stuff on paper
Paper prototypes / wireframing	Basically sketching what the user sees (usually for software) on paper, low fidelity You show the software interface and what content is on it/where content is placed
Mockup	Full-size model or replica of the product → demonstration, study, testing and publicity Is **high-fidelity** but still not actual product, not made with actual materials usually → issues can be easily caught and fixed
Proof of concept	The realisation of a concept, method or idea to recognise its feasibility or viability Basically demonstrates that this thing has practical potential without fully developing it Eg. You test a small part of your software in front of your boss to persuade him you should keep developing it and the company should keep pumping resources into your project

Prototype terms cont

User testing use https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Usability_testing	Basically, you observe a user under controlled conditions, and have them try to use the product/prototype for the intended function rather than have them comment/opine on it Objective is to see if the product's function is clear and basically see if your product has any problems when the user interacts with it
Minimum viable product	Coined in 2001 by Frank Robinson, popularised by Steve Blank and Eric Ries A product/prototype with *just* enough features to be usable by testers and customers, who can then provide feedback Prevents too much effort/resources being put into the prototype, which isn't even the final product Good for constant improvement and ensuring issues are resolved early
Minimum marketable feature use https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Incremental_funding_methodology	The smallest amount or "chunk" of functionality that addresses a specific user need/issue → typically released independently Unlike MVP, delivers an actual functional, tangible benefit (usually in software cos u can't rly provide *parts* of a physical product) Release stuff slower → less risk of bugs and if there are is easier to fix

Sarah Boone (1832-1904)

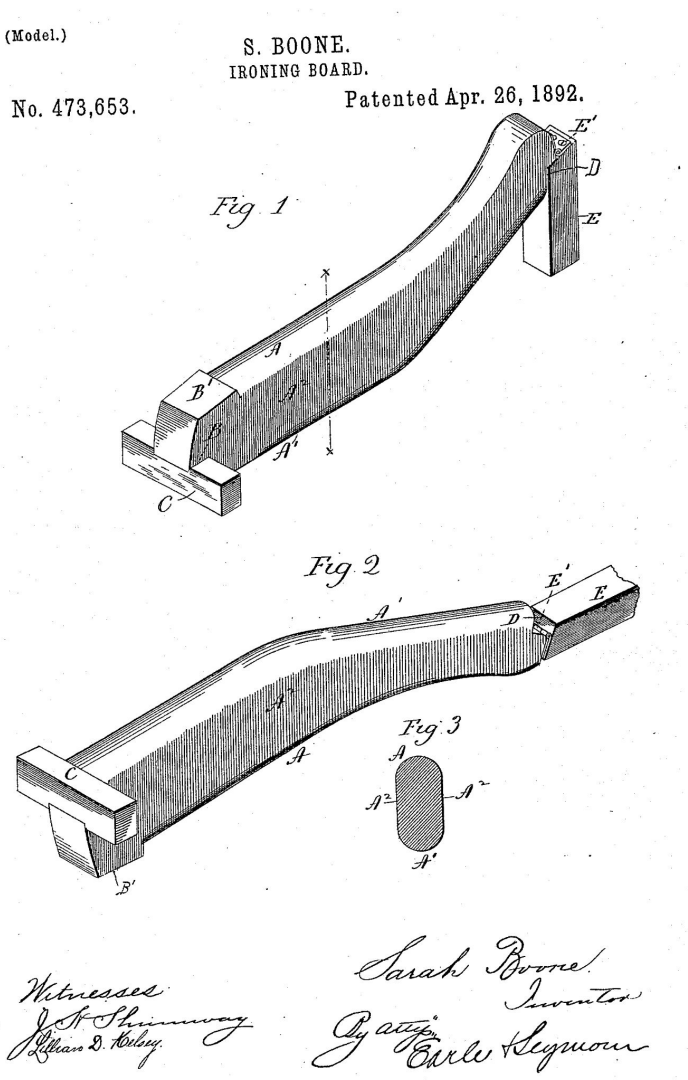
African American dressmaker who patented and invented the first modern ironing board, which was approved in 1892, making her one of the first African American women awarded a patent

Daughter to enslaved parents, likely earned freedom in 1847 marriage to James Boone, a free African American, who unfortunately died in the mid 1870s

This drove Sarah to learn how to read and write, likely through her church membership

Her design was narrower than designs at the time, allowing the board to go into the sleeves of garments → whole thing could be ironed without getting wrinkled by shifting

The design was a prototype for future ironing boards due to being collapsible and padded



Rapid prototyping

Continuously and quickly producing prototypes and models thanks to better software and hardware, typically through different methods of 3D printing

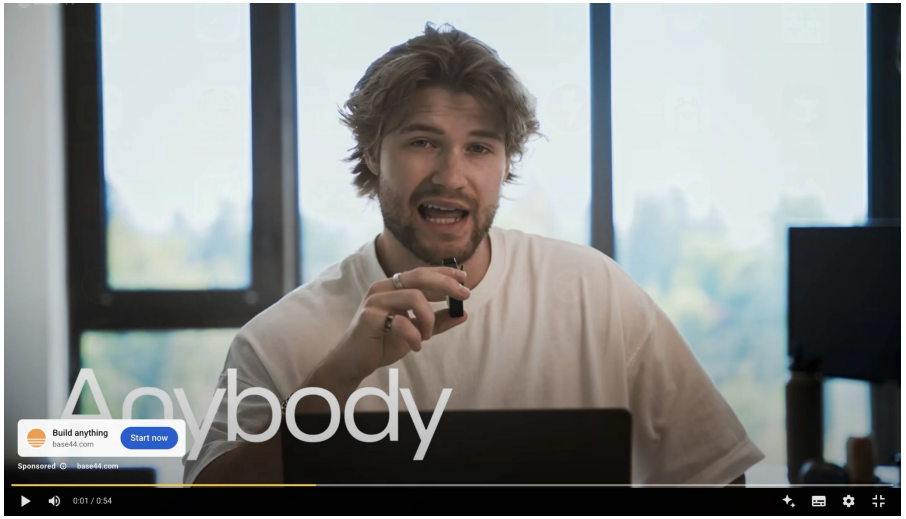
Advantages	Disadvantages
Prototypes can be used in user testing → feedback and issue solving early → less costly Prototyping techniques are faster → changes to ideas are applied faster Parts can be more complex and have higher tolerance, and designs can be more intricate Wide range of material use Changes in ideas can be easily communicated	Initial capital cost of purchasing these machines can be high Requires larger amount of space → product may have to be assembled in parts first Not suited for all applications Some specific techniques for 3D printing can be rather slow, even if designing prototypes is rapid

Vibe coding

Instead of learning how to actually code, you just use plain speech and tell an AI agent what this software should do, and the AI will turn this into executable code

Main principle: experimentation > refined structure and performance

1. Choose some vibe coding platform (Base 44, Replit, etc)
2. Provide clear prompt that describes intended function of app
3. Basic and imperfect code will be generated, user should refine prompt to address issues
4. After full refinement, code can be deployed



y'all probably seen this guy a couple hundred times



Vibe coding flaws

Vibe coding cannot handle overly novel or complex requirements → ie the kind you find in the real world

Code is guaranteed to be buggy → when you make more iterations, the bugs stack up and become a major obstacle during later development

Bad structure and architecture (like when you develop your software, you know where everything is and how you structured it, but here you don't) → developers cannot debug + app cannot be easily and properly maintained due to unintuitive structure and undocumented dependencies

Critically, **AI generated code is not subject to security checks**, so deploying it can lead to easily exploited vulnerabilities

The further you go, the harder it is to ensure functionality stays without just rewriting the whole thing manually → sunk cost fallacy?

Developer Anxiety Syndrome: Basically when developers are pressured by company to integrate AI when working → imposter syndrome bc AI did their job, sometimes AI doesn't actually help (buggy), overreliance on AI → pressure bc "everyone's using it"

The Turk

An automaton unveiled in the 1770s, which was built by Wolfgang von Kempelen to impress the Habsburg Archduchess Maria Theresa

Turkish-looking mechanical guy who came with a chessboard and would play against people in the Austrian court, and later people like Napoleon, Benjamin Franklin, etc

Supposedly fully autonomous yet was able to effectively play and defeat multiple skilled chess players

However, was in reality controlled by a guy (typically a highly skilled chess player that lived near where the Mechanical Turk was performing) under the chessboard who pulled levers and had a model of the situation above him right under the chess board

Many conspiracy theories about how it functioned, most suspected someone was controlling it but they didn't know how, considering that Wolfgang and subsequent owners would shine a light under the chessboard before beginning the game

Eventually, when the original model burned down in a fire in 1854, the son of the owner revealed the secret 3 years later





Wizard of Oz testing

So let's say you're working on the newest AI tool, and don't yet have a working prototype/don't want to waste resources on making full product.

Instead of delaying your project so you can get a working prototype for user testing, you can just make a fake product and have some guys intercept the prompt to make an "AI response", obtaining a genuine user reaction and getting info on how the product can be improved at the fraction of the cost of actually making the tool

This is called Wizard of Oz testing, and the people behind the scenes are called wizards

You can achieve this by rigging conditions, setting premade prompts for the user to use (which your wizards have already prepared responses for), choosing users (whose behaviour you can predict) and setting up cameras so your wizards can prepare their response

User reacts to the perceived system rather than the operator → genuine response

However, humans are slower than automation + responses may not be consistent to how the product would actually operate



Fake tech demos

What happened	Why we know its fake
In 2021, Elon Musk said that he would release a humanoid robot prototype in 2022, which would be able to do boring, repetition and dangerous work He then proceeded to bring out a "prototype" of a robot, which breakdanced to EDM	There's no way a robot composed of steel could possibly be that flexible (watch the video) Also it's clear that the outer layer is cloth, why cover a robot made of steel? If they were planning to release a robot in 2022, why would there be a fully functional robot here already?
In 1909, Adolph Whitman exhibited Occultus (or Barbarossa), a robot whose exterior was covered in gears and stuff Was supposedly so lifelike that when a few metres away, ppl could not differentiate between human and it	Accounts at the time state that they were pretty sure that all the mechanical noises were pre-recorded Also, it was just physically impossible for a robot to actually respond to stimuli in such a variety of ways at that time Furthermore, Adolph Whitman never showed it again after the exhibition, so if it was so good why not use it again?
In 2007, Steve Jobs unveiled the first iPhone, which unfortunately did not have any actually ready prototypes. Therefore, he used some fake ones.	Every iPhone claimed full service, and later interviews revealed that the prototypes were designed to follow a specific sequence of actions, while giving the impression Jobs was freestyling it

Fake tech demos cont.

In 2018, Sundar Pichai CEO of Google, demonstrated an AI-powered voice assistant that supposedly called a local hair salon and local restaurant live to make reservations	Both picked up and said the exact same phrase "How can I help you?" Axios investigated and found none of these in the Mountain View area answered the phone that way
In 2023, Google (again) released a video supposedly of people interacting with Gemini Most prominently, one person was drawing a duck and Gemini commented on what the person was drawing	The video was confirmed to be sped up as well as having used still images from video footage Human prompts and manually written things were narrated as well → not actually stuff from Gemini
In 2016, Tesla showed a video of a Model X self-driving through some forested areas. Video claimed that the driver was only there for legal reasons	However, when questioned in court over an Apple engineer's death, a Tesla engineer said the car was driving a predetermined route, and showed capabilities that the car did not have There were multiple takes edited together, and many times the human driver intervened There have also been multiple lawsuits due to customers being duped into thinking the Tesla could drive itself

Musk's robots part 2

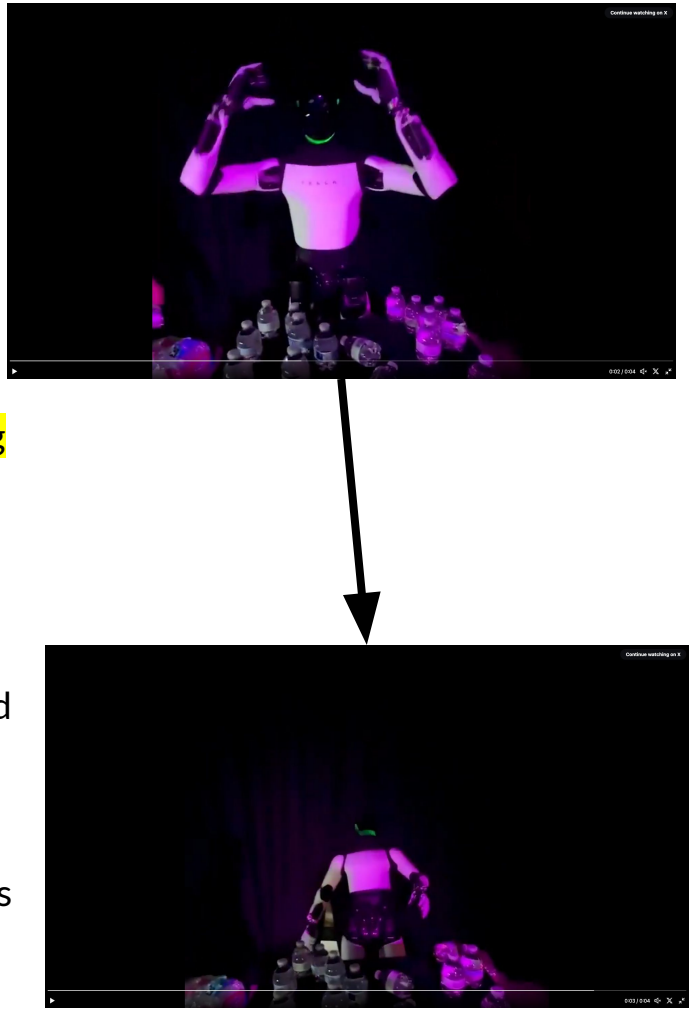
At a party in 2024, Musk provided an army of bipedal "autonomous" robots who poured drinks and conversed with people

However, one was caught raising its arms to its head, before falling over → most people hypothesised that the secret operator was taking off their VR headset, which deactivated the robot

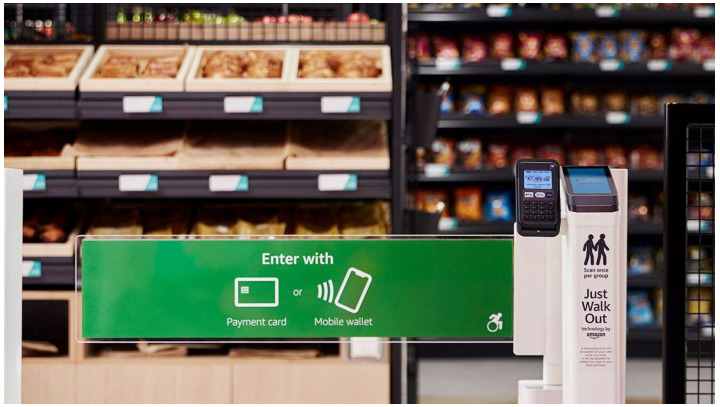
Shows that Musk's ambitions and rhetoric go way beyond his tech's actual capabilities → same for most other companies

1X was selling a robot that cost 20K USD, which they confessed would be operated by an external operator

Musk claims that these robots could generate over 10T in revenue and raise its market cap from 1T to 25T → high stakes for these robots



“AI = Actually Indians”



Amazon introduced technology in stores where you could just get products and just leave without checking out and “AI” would send you a receipt online for the products you took later

However, revealed to have been relying on 1,000 low-paid workers in India to review footage and write down what they took → that’s why it took so long for receipts to arrive

Continuously, humans were needed to review footage 70% of the time, instead of 2-5% as Amazon hoped for

Amazon released a new format a year afterwards where people could put stuff in their trolley cart, scan it with the scanner in their trolley and pay all in their trolley → much better bc staff don’t need to constantly tidy up the shelves to ensure AI can tell what products were taken

i will not lie, this trolley format seems like genius



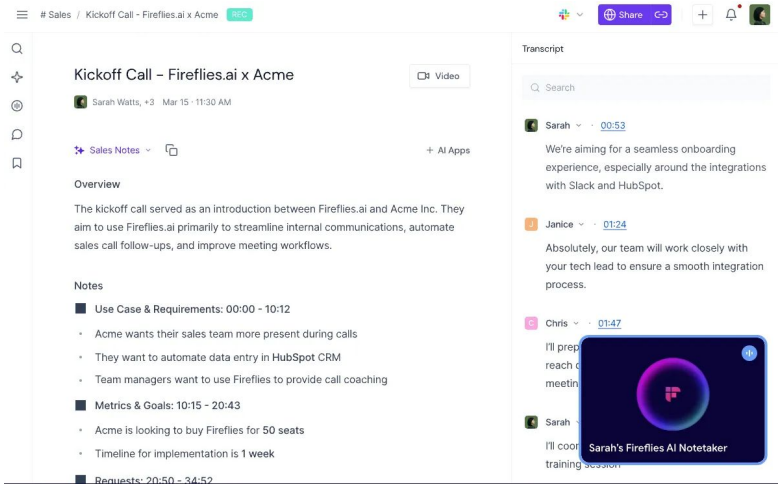
Fireflies - 2 guys on pizza

2 guys founded Fireflies.ai, an AI notetaker but lacked money to really get it going

So they marketed it as actually useful and charged customers $100 a month. In exchange, the 2 founders would enter the customer's meetings quietly and take notes for 100+ meetings in order to meet rent and food costs

This was in 2017, after which they decided that they should probably stop scamming people and actually created an AI agent

They are pretty dang successful now, and the AI actually works



The Lovely and the Liminal

(Pwaaawy)

The ~~Suzume~~ Doorway Effect

- *Most* people would believe that forgetting what they went to X place to do is just because it wasn't important / forgetfulness
- Research from the **University of Notre Dame** tells us that you do, in fact, remember things worse, when you pass through a door!!
    - **Experiment**: *carry stuff and place on next table → hidden after pickup → sometimes asked what it was → always worse answers after passing through a door*
    - Several tests: IRL, virtual (on different engines like 2d 64-bit or super high-res)
- *Encoding specificity principle* → memory is best in environments similar to the one you learned in
    - This doesn't work → even passing through second door back to OG room, not any better...
- Memory in this case is unaffected by your attention or effort
- *Some types* of memory are optimised to keep information **ready-to-hand** until its "shelf life" expires → brain thinks that by going into new room, shelf life has expired! → **can forget it safely**
    - This is called *event model* memory
    - Can happen in different scenarios → usually, it doesn't happen, though

The Backrooms

- Fictional location originating from **2019 4Chan thread** → "waste space" of the universe
    - Originated from **images of renovating furniture store in Oregon**, water damage noted (stink of moist carpet!)
- Accessed by *noclipping out of reality* → a place with many levels (including negative levels)
- Best example of the **liminal space** aesthetic (surreal, empty, places)
    - "Uncanny valley", subtle deviations from reality → implies viewer is *alone* → popularised by the Backrooms
    - Idea of the **in-between** → transitions between identities? → dichotomy of **comfort & unease**
    - Partially inspired ***Stanley Parable***, ***The Shining (movie)***, ***Severance*** and ***The Exit 8***
    - Invites you to **interpret what's not shown**
- Popularised by **COVID-19** → people became more *aware* of transitional spaces
- *Dreamcore* → hallucinatory / dreamlike appearances— comforting
- *Weirdcore* → amateur photography, raw digital graphics— confusion, unease, nostalgia
- Lack of a backrooms "**canon**" → *r/backrooms, Fandom, r/TrueBackrooms, WikiDot*
    - Difficult to differentiate between actual storytelling and jokes
- **KANE PIXELS MY GOAT** (Kane Parsons) made THE video → streamy awards from **MatPat**
    - Lifted the Backrooms out of obscurity and into the mono-yellow lights!
    - Further developed— ASync organisation, timeline → super complex lore somewhat separate from the wikidot
- Many games on it have been released
- *Note: research more yourself on the wikidot! this is a super fun and interesting fandom*

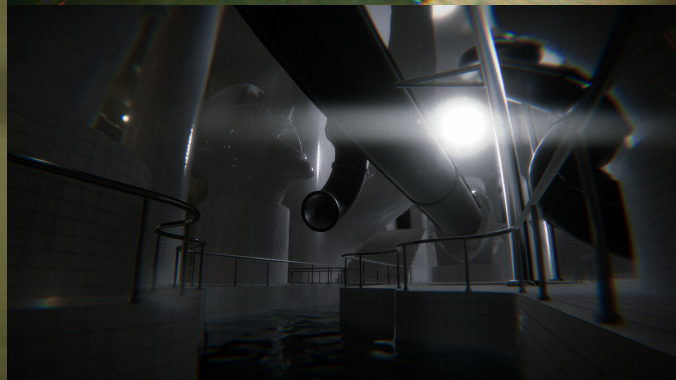




POOLS: The Game

- A short, simple STEAM **walking simulator through liminal spaces**
- Upon death, you just rewind a few moments back— most of the time, you *don't know how you died*
- Presented as **VHS Found Footage** despite its amazing graphics
- *No* monsters at all, tension is from the liminal space
- Sometimes you get lost— progression is tied to specific exits
- It's not just swimming pools all the way, though
- *Note: I suggest you watch some gameplay / play the demo (free!!)*

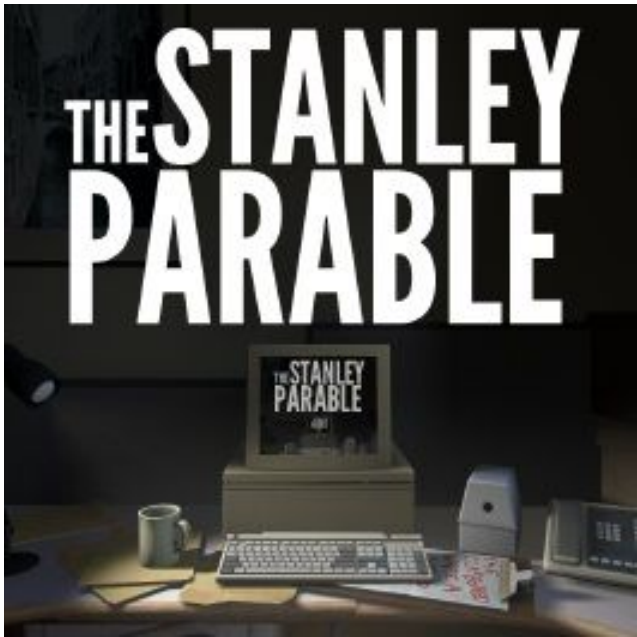






The Stanley Parable

- THE choose-your-ending story— Ultra Deluxe Edition added **way more content** and endings
- **The narrator is characterised** → veeeery important to the game
    - Voiced by *Kevan Brighting*
- **Liminal spaces**: the entire game is devoid of other people, although it's not really scary
- Critical acclaim & commercial success— *extremely well received*
- Game makes player **think** about the narration, story etc
- However, the dev himself considered it very "grueling"
    - Originally a "The Last of Us" mod, eventually fully revamped in 2013 standalone
- The **Ultra Deluxe** was delayed a LOT
- Analysed for its **game VS player story**: do you have agency?
    - E.g. base "freedom" ending: you are told how to feel by narrator
    - The narrator realises he isn't real and also has no agency!!??
- References in **Dota 2** somehow, not important though

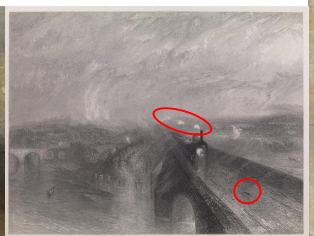


J.M.W. Turner | Rain, Steam, and Speed (1844)

- Bridge is shown as very **close & small** which suggests the train's **speed (60mph)**
- Turner's welcoming of industrialisation → *this probably isn't a rejection of modernity*, he was ahead by painting such subjects
  - Some people thought he hated industrialisation— elitists really didn't like industrialisation → Turner **portrayed powers of nature & technology**
- 1840s → **railway mania**, someone caught Turner leaning out the window for 10 minutes (we dk if it's true though)
  - Shows the drawn-out nature of travel in the 1800s
- **Boat & horse-drawn plough**— non-mechanised! → contrast between pre-industrial and modern
- Uses many techniques → filthy palette, thick paint etc → also possibly references one of his previous paintings
- Perspective: looking east *towards* London
- Also a **hare** in front of train added late, which symbolises *speed*
- "**pictorial dynamism**" through parallel perspective
- Atmosphere: light rain X "fitful sunlight"
- **Engraved by Brandard** with a few changes————————————||||||||||||
- Modern technology is a "reality racing towards us"
- Helped to normalise railways
- Inspired many more paintings
- **Movement** in a **static painting**







William Powell Frith | The Railway Station (1862)

- Depicts the the **London Terminus** at the **Great Western Railway (Paddington Station)**, same as Turner's painting
    - He did not think that it would be successful because "Paddington Station is not picturesque"
    - Clothes would also not be interesting
    - However, his **art dealer Louis Flatow offered "greatest ever commission" to him**
- There's an arrest— **recreating famous episode during that time**
- A lot of people doing typical railway station things— all social classes participated
- Possible self insert through mother kissing child
- Had an extremely successful auction!



Tsukioka Yoshitoshi | Picture of the Railroad at Takanawa (1871)

- There are many images of contrasting **people on horses** and **RAILWAY**
- Made during **Meiji Era**, .22 tells me that it symbolises either **class divides** or **transition to industrialism**
- Tsukioka's version is a woodcut! → he possibly did this for *Japanese newspapers*
    - Depressed and poor during this time
- Possibly shows the futility of resisting change?
- Made 6 years before a rebellion



Claude Monet | Gare Saint-Lazare (1877)

- Series of **12 oil paintings** depict a **train station... again**
  - Range of subjects, techniques, finishes, PoVs → some are very sketch-like, but all keep the idea of *fleetingness*
  - Done very quickly— 12 paintings in 4 months
  - Also shows **unification, modernisation & standardisation of time**
- **terminal for trains** to many of the key Impressionist sites (known by Monet since childhood)
- Randomly shaped clouds → symbolised open sky → *contrasts with & contained by* **modern glass and iron structure** → industrialism containing nature?
- Symbol of modernity! → *Impressionist— matter always moving*
- Made in **three stages** → framework, painting, final touches
- Painted **on-site**, covered by steam and smoke
- Varied surface textures
- **CORE ideas: constraining, modernisation, fleetingness**



Yilan Folk Song | “Drip, Drip, Drip” (c. 1924)

- Inspired by the **Old Caoling Tunnel**— top 100 historical architecture in Taiwan
- Now a place for *biking and cycling* instead of railway
- Probably just describes the wetness of the place and how it mixes with the industrial train

Drip, Drip, Drip

The train goes, chugga choo drip, into the tunnel.

In the tunnel drops of water fall, drip, drip, drop, chuga choo.

Chugga chugga, drip drop, choo choo!

Steve McCurry | Train Station, Agra, 1983 (1983)

- Photographs of the **chaos and diversity of life** passing through the Indian railways
- Inspired when he read "The Great Railway Bazaar" when he had an infection
    - So he took a long journey— Bangladesh, Pakistan, China, British colonised areas etc
- Likes working in **low light** → shot at dusk, *framing the domes in sunlight & richer palette*
- Shows **continuity between past & present** → railways are gone now → clash between old and industrial

[The dude himself, McCurry]

Basically he goes around photographing horrifying scenes

e.g. bombed houses in Afghanistan & other armed conflicts

Nearly died 2x doing that

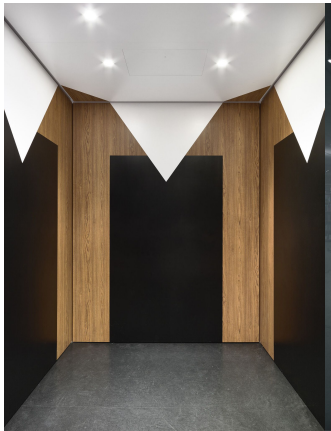
He was even there for 9/11 and that one Afghan girl

Started using stuff like photoshop later on



Richard Artschwager | Six in Four (2015)

- Smart, riddle-y, quirky dude → makes sculptures that are **liminal**— changes the familiar!
- What is “tableness”? What is “doorness”? Is it determined by how you use it?
- Made **fake elevators** in the Whitney before → asked to make for the *new museum* → built alongside!
- Elevators based on six themes throughout his art— **basket, table, door, window, mirror, rug**
- **Died in 2013**, during the construction of the piece/building
    - Very difficult, needed to keep adapting and shipping + ask his close ones for help
    - Art is about experience






Architecture: The Liminal & The In-Between

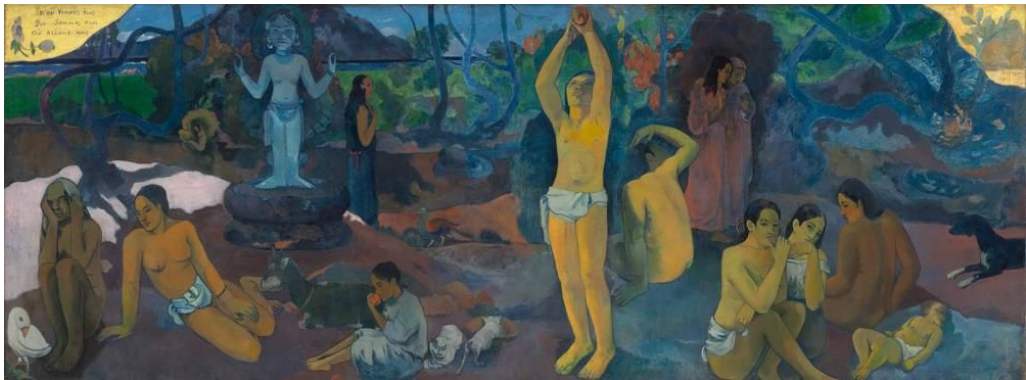
- Raises example of **Germany's waiting rooms** & how they **angle towards 1 point** → *communal silence*
- **Antechambers**: where "mobility and immobility converge" → Europe from 1500 to 1800 made many of these as *daily life grew separate from dedicated places of X/Y*
- Useful for architects to **choreograph experiences**... but they also regimented social interactions
  - Excessive waiting time emphasised importance, but also evidenced unjust rule
  - **Helmet Puff** believed that it calmed the waiter
- Economic systems (like capitalism) → changed this again → no more cool smooth waiting spaces
- Atriums came around, which fascinated **Charles Rice** → public void surrounded by the private
  - Efficiency and workforce *more important to companies* than actual architectural significance— its company's strat
- These places are obvious, now, because they are more **obsolete**
- The authors were unable to fully discover what it was like to be in these rooms in their prime

Waiting Room Woes

- The *design* of **waiting rooms** can greatly affect how we feel while we use them
- Waiting makes you anxious because it *removes control*— you don't know when you get called → more **cortisol!**
    - So they have to be more open instead of making you feel cramped and adding anxiety
- Colours as well, of course— a blue or green is more calming than gray or red or yellow
    - Scientifically proven (again obviously)
- **Furniture**— cramped is bad, too soft is bad, too hard is bad
- **Sounds**— slow classical, silence is mid, natural sounds good
- **Virtual**— calming patterns, sounds, layout, ui, colours, all used on websites as well
- **Lighting**— natural, warm, welcoming, not TOO bright or TOO dark
- **Smells**— some scents like lavender & vanilla make your brain calm down (not too strong though)
- **Business**— having something to focus on / be engaged in → reduces stress & wait feels shorter
- **Nature** is good for you wow im so so shocked wowwww and **deep breaths** wowowowowowow
- **Technology** is good when used well? shocker

Paul Gauguin | Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going? (1897-98)

- A **decorative mural-style painting** (not an actual mural, but intended to be *like* one)
    - Yellow corners → **fresco** appearance, looks "spoiled with age"
- Made during *personal struggle*, struggled against French colonist modernity & daughter death
    - Made a *suicide attempt* after finishing this one
- Influenced by his teacher who had his own **catechism (summary of doctrine)** → fundamental human questions
- Moving **right to left** → cycle of **birth-sin-death** → blue statue in back = the *beyond*
- In terms of **liminal-ness**, it gives Samsara— idea of being stuck in the cycle of life
- Centre person → **Garden of Adam's Eve** (also the goat and woman have collar & bracelet → submission?)
- 2 old women → *enlightenment VS superstition*
- White bird → uselessness of "vain" words
- Criticised as too obscure & impenetrable
    - However, Gauguin said its feelings can't be articulated



Rene Magritte | The Treachery of Images (1929)

- THANK **GOD** IT WASN'T THE FULL EXHIBITION I NEEDED TO ANALYSE.
- "Ceci n'est pas une pipe" → "**this is not a pipe**" → it is just a *representation* of a pipe!!
    - This is an example of **meta message**
- **Surrealist Movement** → trying to "overthrow oppressive rationality"
- Tension between "nature and artifice, truth and fiction, reality and surreality"
    - You could argue that this is liminal— it is in a state between, so what is it, really?
- **Art & Language** are NOT that connected to the physical world
- Very famous now in art



Salvador Dali | The Persistence of Memory (1931)

- **2025 syllabus reference** he uses **hypnagogia** AND **active imagination** for his surrealist paintings!!!!
    - Painting while half-asleep half-awake, dragging images out of his subconscious to paint— he calls it **paranoiac-critical method**
- **Memory stays** in the subconscious → *liminal* → state between *awake and asleep*, conscious vs UNconscious mind
- **Melting clocks now used everywhere to show decaying time**
- The fly has human shadow → corruptible nature of life— **time is fluid & vulnerable**
- Destroying idea of **fixed cosmic order** as time decays
- **Ants = decay**, destroying time & permanence
- The face is probably a side profile of Dali's own face
    - Is that actually a tongue coming out of the nose—
    - Insect-like, almost sexual eyelashes
- The melting watches— the "camembert of time" (cheese)
- Catalonia cliffs in back— Dali's home
- Made a new, weird-looking version later on (bullets?)



Andrew Wyeth | Christina's World (1948)

- Basically there is this woman called Christina— Wyeth's neighbour— **who is disabled and cannot walk**
- She refused a wheelchair/aid and just crawled everywhere
- Popularised by the site WSC gives us— **MoMA**
- *IMO you could say liminal bc she's always in a state between* ***progress & giving up, moving and stopping***
- On first inspection it feels just like a very very well done painting, until you realise Christina's story
- The title of "Christina's World" → **her world is separate, mentally**!! Also lack of **accessibility features**
- However, Wyeth used his own wife a model for physical features
- Christina herself likes it a lot :)



M. C. Escher | Ascending and Descending (1960)

- Two **identical lines** of monks on paradoxical stairs— **ascending and descending**!! → uses conflicting proportions to do so
- These are the **penrose stairs** ("impossible object")
- Based on Italian architecture
- Stairs and people on it are *mysterious*
- Escher suggests that the few people not on the stairs, despite their rebellion, will walk it soon enough
- Escher uses lines to manipulate perspective, mathematical precision
- Escher is known for **impossible architecture & objects**
- **People in a bizarre, coercive life, monk-like work— absolutely useless**
- *Arguably liminal because alway stuck in this endless cycle of work / meaningless life, no progress ever but also not really regress!*



Gregory Crewdson | Beneath the Roses (2004)

- **Theatrical yet real**— series of 20 panoramic photographs of the **American Psyche**
  - Strange dystopia of **American Imagination**— not anchored in reality— deals with themes of **social criticism**
  - Some are **black and white** for objective feels— the making of the photos was highly artificial, also questioning!
- Uses high-quality composting and special photography effects
- Moments that feel ***disconnected*** from everyday life yet ***reflect it***
- Crewdson says that it's **between the before and after** of events
  - Photographs are suspended between 2 moments (the liminal aspect) IMO the least liminal one so far)
- **Fear, desire, personal**— that's what these photos are
- **Social criticism, poor socioeconomic conditions, social isolation, *failure of the American Dream***
- **Postmodernism** → fractured, illogical, social constructs





What I am interested in is that moment of transcendence, where one is transported into another place, into a perfect, still world.









Camille Seamn | The Distant is Imminent (2020)

- Attempt to cure **psychological distance**— present the "distant" danger at the poles as "imminent"
- A series of photos from the Arctic & Antarctic
- Showcases the **danger of melting icebergs** to Greenland— 70k addresses are at risk → working with **TED** to show the danger
- Projected on walls of some cities
- *Liminality— icebergs in state between distant and imminent, affect us and not affecting us*



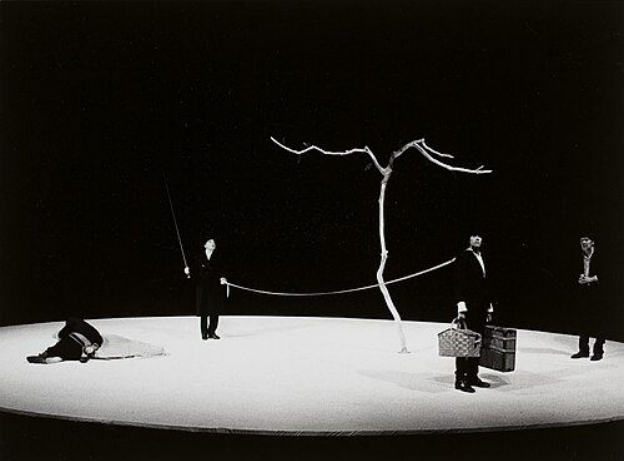






Samuel Beckett | Waiting for Godot, Scene 2 (1953)





- "the most significant English-language play of the 20th century"— "foundational work of theatre"
- Part of **Albert Camus**' *Theatre of the Absurd*— made after disillusionment of WW2, where Beckett had to escape France bc they were part of **French Resistance**

ACT I: *Vladimir* & *Estragon* catch up, they are both battered and bruised, revealed that they are **waiting for Godot**— who is he? Nobody knows! → *Pozzo* and *Lucky* (Pozzo's slave) arrive, *Pozzo* announces that he will sell *Lucky* → *Lucky* is told to "think" and he spouts a lot of smart-sounding bullcrap → random "messenger" apparently from **Godot** comes over, says that **Godot** will come soon → V & E say they'll leave, but they don't

ACT II: *P (now fully blind) L (fully mute)* come to V & E, they all agree they've never met before → messenger comes and says he's never seen V & E → they crash out and contemplate suicide, and say they will get a rope but they again do not move

- **Vladimir (di-di)**: ponders on ideas, philosophical, metaphysical musings, deals with hat (more mental)
- **Estragon (go-go)**: physical needs such as sleep (which reflects the purgatory-like landscape), deals with boots (more physical)
    - Together, V & E are complementary through duality
- **Pozzo & Lucky**: while it *appears* that Pozzo is the dom here, Lucky here really commits the acts for Pozzo, rather than being forced, Pozzo is a hypomaniac, Lucky's speech is absolute bull
- **Godot**: "does nothing" according to messenger, NOT GOD— Beckett did not choose this, once mentioned in a race that people waited for IRL

Samuel Beckett | Waiting for Godot, Scene 2 (1953)

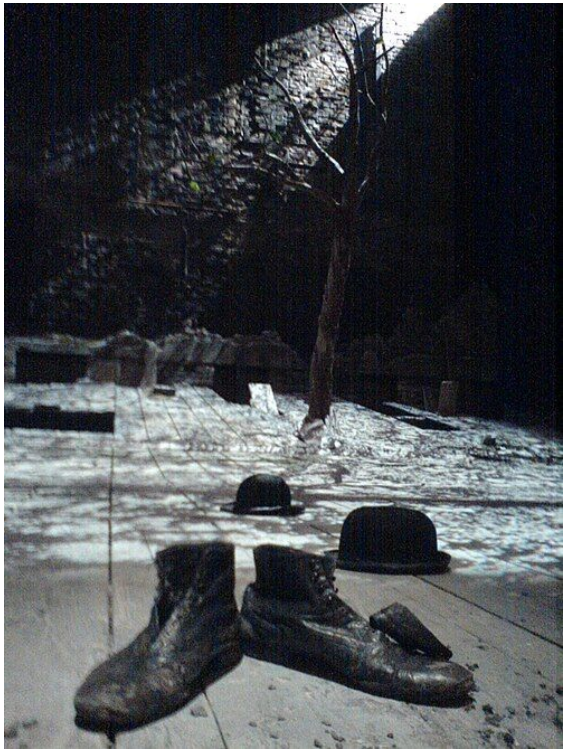
- Beckett soon realised that **Godot's success came from it being able to interpreted many ways**
- *Not everyone has a God, but who doesn't have a Godot?*

Scene 2 Analysis—

- The characters fall apart as they confront the **meaninglessness of existence**, the absurdity of their world
- also, Vladimir & Estragon reflect a **carer-patient relationship**— how are we supposed to treat those?
- the world is **absurd, existentialism**, we live in absurdity, Camus' ideals (search those up)
- futility in waiting for **someone else to save you**, how are you supposed to succeed, you don't chase pleasure or avoid pain
- 4 characters = ego, persona, anima, shadow
- **Christian scriptural allusion**— allusion all throughout + God cursed & satirised for absence, but not completely ignored

LIMINALITY?

- You are stuck waiting for something that will never arrive
- Life is nothing but repetition for Vladimir and Estragon
- Life has no meaning at all— you're always between birth and death, and it's a purgatory of absurdity
- Suffering is ignored, and religion is satirised
- Action vs Stagnation, Hope vs Despair
- Contradiction emphasises absurdity



Pablo Neruda | "Keeping Still" (1958)

- An important part of life is **reflection**, to understand ourselves
- 8 stanzas, no clear structure
- All stop for 12 seconds— *reflect, instead of continuing to move*
    - 12 → hours → complete pause, enough to reflect
- A chance to ignore desires & frustrations— just *exist* for a bit
    - Green wars → chemical gas warfare
- Humanity **misunderstands itself, driving it towards bad futures**
- It's like a holistic view of the dangers of *glorifying productivity*
- **Liminality**: we are in a state of always wanting, needing, making, creating, fighting— always for the *more,* we should appreciate life **for life**

Now we will count to twelve
and let's keep quiet.

For once on earth
let's not talk in any language;
let's stop for one second,
and not move our arms so much.

A moment like that would smell sweet,
no hurry, no engines,
all of us at the same time
in need of rest.

Fishermen in the cold sea
would stop harming whales
and the gatherer of salt
would look at his hurt hands.

Those who prepare green wars,
wars with gas, wars with fire,
victories with no survivors,
would put on clean clothes
and go for a walk with their brothers
out in the shade, doing nothing.

Just don't confuse what I want
with total inaction;
it's life and life only;
I'm not talking about death.

If we weren't so single-minded
about keeping our lives moving
and could maybe do nothing for once
a huge silence might interrupt this sadness
of never understanding ourselves,
of threatening ourselves with death;
perhaps the earth could teach us;
everything would seem dead
and then be alive.

Now I will count up to twelve
and you keep quiet
and I will go.

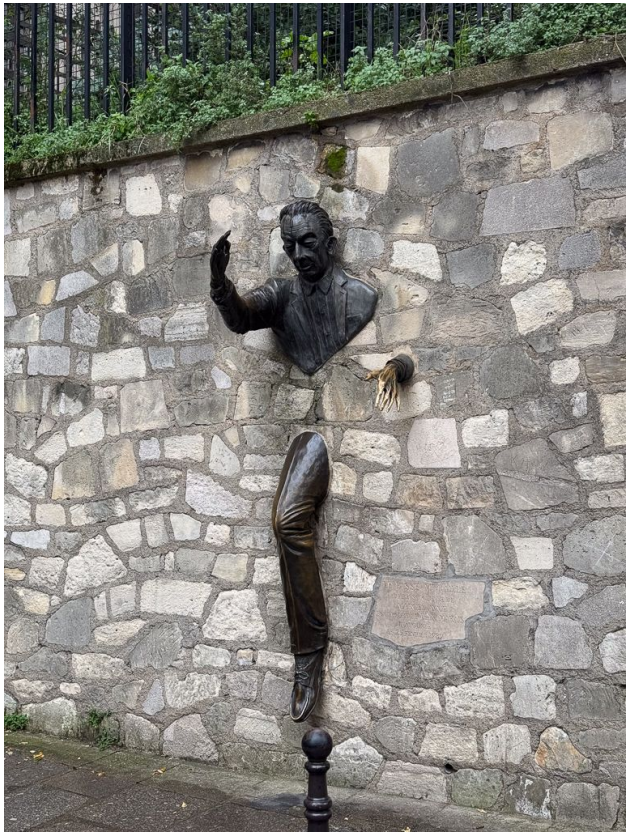
Philippe Orreindy | I'll Wait for the Next One... (2002)

- Idea of being "stuck" in a liminal space → liminal spaces portrayed as **disconnected** from the outside world, where cause and consequence are suspended
    - Yet, things *in* a liminal space can affect the outside world
- **A short film**: man goes onto train and professes his desire for a partner → single woman slowly begins to like him → eventually, when she gets off to ask him out, he tells her "it's just a skit" and asks the passengers for money
- **"I'll wait for the next one"**— *the next chance for love, the next chance that the world gives*
- Lowkey don't see much to analyse



Marcel Ayme | “The Man Who Could Walk through Walls” (1941)

- This is a book that contains many stories, one with the same title (the wsc one)
- Dutiliel can walk through walls → found this ability useless, however
- Lécuyer is new manager of Dutiliel’s office, he hates Lécuyer’s reform → Lécuyer throws him into a tiny office
- Dutiliel scares him by sticking his head into his Lécuyer’s office → Lécuyer goes insane and get taken into mental asylum
- He reads news— starts *stealing from places* for some reason, public loves
    - Calls himself the “Lone Wolf”
- He let himself get arrested for pride, and escaped to Egypt
- *Fell in love* with this blonde married to *violent man* → dates girl, breaks into her home to have affairs tgt → one day, he takes tablets for a headache which contain the cure to his wall-walking (*tetravalent pirette powder*) → stuck in garden wall
- Very witty, popular, somewhat absurdist— reflects the monotony of daily life
- Liminality: the walls are the “in between” he is stuck in, and he is now permanently stuck in a liminal state (unable to reach love, full of regret)

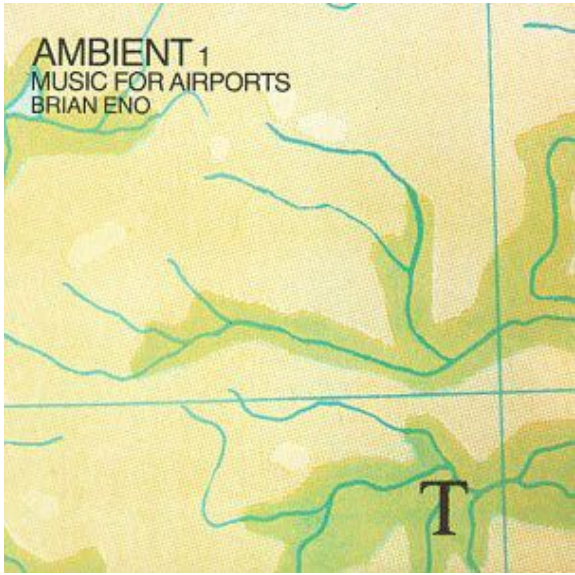


Amor Towles | A Gentleman in Moscow (Excerpt) (2019)

- **Count Alexander Ilyich Rostov** is placed under house arrest for "social parasitism" after returning from *Paris* to the *Bolshevik Revolution*, narrowly escaping death as he once wrote a "revolutionary poem"
- Now lives in cramped servant's quarters of the **Metropol Hotel** where he bonds with many different people
    - Nearly suicides realising how cooked USSR ideologies are
    - One of these is **Nina Kulikova**, daughter of a Ukrainian Bureaucrat— form strong emotional bond
    - He makes the tiny mistake of pissing of a waiter with friends in high places
    - Engages in convo & self-reflection → he somehow becomes head waiter → falls in love with "**Anna**"
- **Nina Kulikova** wants to save her husband from *Gulag*, so leaves daughter **Sofia** with **Count**
    - Sofia is super skilled at music and intelligent → later on wants to perform outside
- **Count** *escapes* from hotel → holds Bishop (waiter's friend, leader of hotel) at gunpoint in wine cellar → **Nina** go out perform → he meets up with **Anna** with help of **Viktor** (Nina's teacher)
- Observations of **Cold War** are shown, political commentary throughout the book
- However, it is not about **politics**— deals with themes of **love, home, family, parenthood**— PURPOSE!! Its uplifting :)
- **Liminality**: Count is between harsh USSR and calmer Metropol, between labourer and aristocrat
- *Extra note: the gaps in time between each chapter increases, then decreases like a negative quadratic graph!*

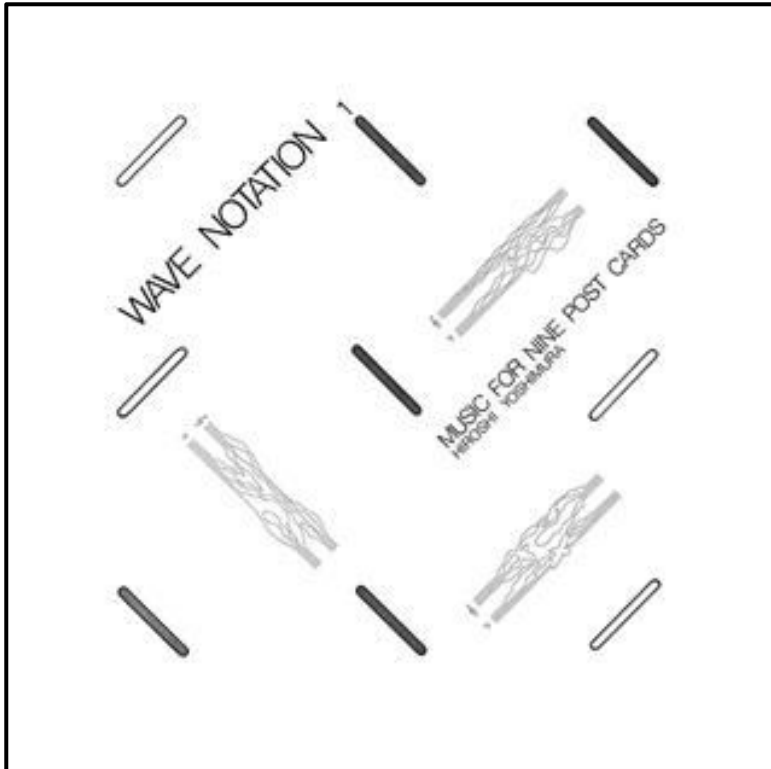
Brian Eno | Ambient 1: Music for Airports (1979)

- First album by him labelled as "ambient" → *ignorable yet interesting*
    - Needs to **not require constant effort** but also **reward close listening**
    - Conceived as deliberately austere and unemotional— imitates human absence
    - He did explore this before though
    - **Create space for thought**
- **Layering magnetic tape loops** → designed to be continuously looped as a sound installation → **reduce anxiety in an airport**
- **Eno** got into accident → hospital → friend played him harp music → merged with rain outside → ambience!!
- Resigns you to the possibility of death instead of being super cheerful
- Criticised as boring, but also praised as mesmerising
- *"Best Ambient Album of All Time"*
- Later developed ambience to be more universal instead of confined to a place
- **Liminality**: arguing whether it should be played only in liminal spaces (calm before the next "thing) or more often (to calm you down in general, keep quiet away)



Hiroshi Yoshimura | Music for Nine Postcards (1982)

- Inspired by **the movements of clouds, the shade of a tree in summertime, the sound of rain, the snow in a town**— nature
- *However— the album has **one spoken line** in it, that somewhat ruins it— disrupts the ambience it produces*
- melancholy, wistful, invigorating, consoling, nostalgic
- “Cuts sweetly into listener’s reality”
- Made for railway stations, runway shows etc
- Made in **Tokyo**
- **Minimalistic**— just a Fender Rhodes keyboard with nothing else



Max Richter | Sleep (2015)

- 8.5 hour **concept album**— lullaby meant to be listened to at night
    - Each piece is roughly 15 minutes → large set of variations
    - Inspired by **Bach's Goldberg Variations**
- Made multiple versions later (*e.g. 2023 new themes 2024 faded, 2025 90-min sequel*)
    - 2023 → "Tranquility Base" (named after the Moon)
    - 2025 → "Sleep Circle" (based on hypnagogia)
- Very multi-uses despite intentions, however criticised because **labelled as only for sleep, which it is not?** (not really valid imo)
- Performed as audience slept in a BBC concert
- How does music interact with the subconscious?
- **In a world so fast, we should take the time to slow down**
- Believes that as Modernism emerged, and inaccessibility in music became equated with intelligence and the avant-garde → **lost shared communion in sounds**
    - "Sleep" opposes such an idea



Home and Wandering

(Leanna & Q1BL1Y8M)

The Compass: A History

A compass is a device that indicates direction, with magnetic compasses being the most common (slide 60)

Ancient Greeks noted lodestone but not north alignment. Rather, it was the ancient Chinese which first used magnetized lodestone (south-pointing spoons) for spiritual purposes → navigation by miners

Spread to Europe via trade and became crucial during the 15th-century sea travel

Compasses do not actually point to geographic north, which fooled many people. Now, pro navigators can adjust for the difference

Magnetic metals placed near a compass on a ship could also affect its readings, so people put Kelvin spheres and Flinders bars nearby to account for it

This helped Europeans travel much more easily during the Age of Exploration, and is partially credited with helping to start it





Navigation: Humans

Gyrocompass	Uses spinning gyroscope (device that tracks light beam) for true north while also ignoring ferrous materials nearby
Solar compass	Uses sun's shadow to check which direction is west/east (bc sun rises in east and sets in west), then used that to figure out the other four directions. You could also use an analogue watch by holding it parallel to the ground then point the sun at the 12-o'clock mark. Angle between hour hand and 12-o'clock mark is the North-South line. In south hemisphere, north is direction closer to sun, vice versa
GPS receivers	Satellite-based, accurate to ~6 meters (or better with advanced tech), tells you latitude, longitude and altitude, and "SuperGPS" can measure your location accurate to 10cm
Star compasses	Polynesian/Hawaiian style can use constellations to navigate the ocean
Ephemerides	Printed astronomical tables showing daily positions of Sun, Moon, planets, and stars With log tables, enabled accurate sight reduction for latitude/longitude; used with sextant/chronometer until electronic calculators replaced them

Human navigation cont.

Astrolabe	Invented in Hellenistic Greece and was developed further by Muslims Measures altitude (angle) of the Sun to determine latitude → where you are at compared to equator Used to predict the positions of stars at any given time + place, as well as time-telling, etc Replaced by sextant in 1700s due to being less accurate Mariner's astrolabe: Simplified, heavy brass version (~1470s) as it's more stable on rolling ships than full planispheric astrolabe
Sextant	Measuring angles between celestial bodies (Sun, Moon, stars) and the horizon Determines latitude (noon sight) and longitude (with lunar distances or chronometer method) More accurate and versatile than astrolabe (measures up to 120° and is smaller) used with mirrors/telescope for precision even on moving ships
Log tables	Mathematical tables of logarithms (invented by John Napier ~1614) and log-trig functions → simplified complex multiplication/division into addition/subtraction for navigation calculations

Human navigation

Magnetic compasses	Magnetized needle alignment with Earth's magnetic field to indicate direction (north-south) → rotates in line with earth's magnetic field, early designs floated the needle on wood/cork in water; later ones mounted it on a card with cardinal directions (N, S, E, W) Invented in China and spread to Europe/Arab world ~12th–13th centuries for open-ocean navigation during Age of Exploration (e.g. Vasco da Gama and Columbus) Requires adjustments for variation (magnetic vs. true north) and deviation (ship's metal interference) however it's simple, reliable, and no power needed
The log and the line use this https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chip_log	Used to estimate speed of a vessel in the water "Log" is bc back in the days, they put a log in the water and attached it to a rope with knots at regular intervals Sailors would count number of knots that passed through the water in given time → estimate speed
Latitude & Longitude	Latitude: Altitude of Sun at noon or Polaris (North Star) with astrolabe/sextant/quadrant Longitude: Geographic coordinate specifying the east-west position of a point on the Earth's surface, based on Prime Meridian in Greenwich, England

Human navigation + nature navigation

Chronometre	Precise portable marine clock/timekeeper for determining longitude at sea Solved "longitude problem": Compare ship time to Greenwich time (known meridian) and 4 minutes time difference = 1° longitude → solved the biggest problem: knowing how far east or west you were John Harrison (English clockmaker) invented first practical versions (1730s–1770s) accurate to ~5 seconds over months at sea
Magnetoreception	Sensing Earth's magnetic field like an built-in compass → tells animals which way is north/south (and sometimes exact location) Potentially involving cryptochrome proteins in the eye (birds) or iron-based sensors Modern humans have long been thought to have lost the ability to sense geomagnetic field → found that the human brain's alpha rhythms respond to fluctuating magnetic fields of similar intensity to the Earth's natural direction Used by birds, turtles, salmon, bees, sharks, whales
Cryptochrome	Special light-sensitive proteins in bird eyes (and some other animals) When light hits them, they can "see" magnetic fields as patterns or colors → use Earth's magnetism to navigate at night or on cloudy days Blue-light-sensitive photoreceptor proteins that regulate crucial processes like circadian rhythms (internal clocks) and development

Nature navigation

Olfactory navigation	Hypothesis that posits that pigeons can use their nose to navigate and home in Papi's mosaic model: Pigeons construct a map from the distribution of environmental odours, within a radius of 70–100 kilometres Wallraff's gradius theory: Overcomes issue of distance limitations, proposes existence of long-range stable atmospheric odour gradients Not conclusively proven, evidence insufficient
Echolocation	Making ultrasonic sound waves and listening to the echoes that bounce back like "seeing" with sound in total darkness → bats, dolphins, whales, birds use for hunting and navigation 1. Constant frequency (CF) → long, steady calls at one single pitch (thick forests or cluttered areas) 2. Frequency modulation (FM) → calls that quickly go from high pitch to low pitch (measuring exact distance and size of objects, most bats use this)
Zugunruhe	"Migratory restlessness" (German word) → birds become very restless and active just before migration season even if kept in a cage with no outside clues → proves migration is a very strong built-in instinct Avian hormone production is altered by changing temperatures and day length Used metaphorically to describe a human feeling of restlessness or a strong urge for change, similar to the instinctual drive in animals

Nature navigation

Sunlight polarisation	Sunlight scatters in the atmosphere (when light is polarized, it vibrates in one direction) creating invisible polarization patterns across the sky → insects and birds can detect these patterns (natural compass) → know the Sun's position even on cloudy days Rayleigh Scattering: when sunlight interacts with molecules in the atmosphere → shorter wavelengths (blue light) are scattered more than longer wavelengths (red light) → this is why the sky is blue Degree of polarization depending on the angle of the sun in relation to the observer
Spatial memory	Brain's ability to remember and use information about locations, directions, distances → recall where things are in space Cognitive map → mental map of environments (coined by psychologist Edward Tolman in the 1940s) in the hippocampus (a seahorse-shaped structure deep in the brain) Working spatial memory → short-term, like remembering where you just put your phone Long-term/reference spatial memory → long-lasting, like knowing the layout of your city forever
Dung beetles	Milky Way as a celestial cue to roll dung balls across dark landscapes Experiments (by Eric Warrant) in dark domes and natural African savannas showed beetles roll straighter under starry skies than under overcast or starless conditions → they detect the Milky Way's bright band as a fixed reference point During the day, they switch to Sun or Moon polarization patterns

Nature navigation cont.

Indigo bunting	Indigo bunting (small migratory songbirds) use the night sky as their primary compass during nocturnal migrations Ornithologist Stephen Emlen conducted landmark 1967 planetarium experiments with young buntings raised under controlled artificial dome skies (namely Betelgeuse) instead of the real North Star, mature migratory birds oriented southward away from North Star Nestlings observe the slow-moving stars near the Pole Star during early life → celestial reference is learned from environmental observation in the nest Rely almost entirely on stars (not Sun or landmarks) for long-distance night migration
Honeybees	2023 (Randolf Menzel at Free University of Berlin) found honeybees use linear landmarks (canals, roads, field edges) to build mental maps in unfamiliar areas (spatial memory) Researchers captured experienced forager bees from multiple hives and released them in a new test area with two parallel irrigation channels as the only major features → the bees flew purposeful exploratory loops centered on release points, spending disproportionate time near the channels Generalised similarities/differences between home-area linear features and the new landscape, using channels as reference points

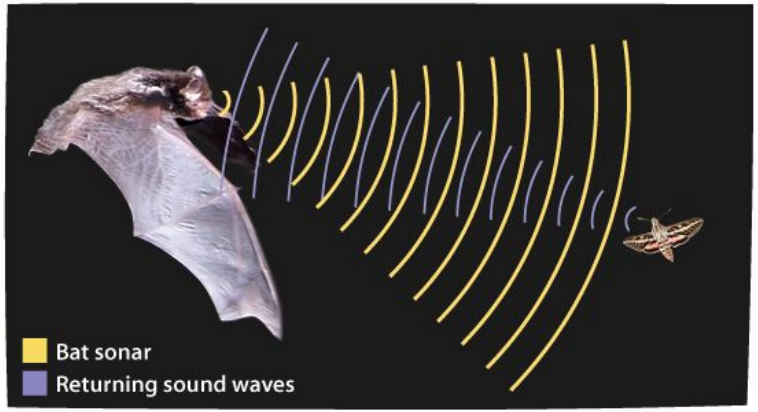
Nature navigation

Homing pigeons	Homing pigeons are known for returning from long distances (used in World War I and II to carry messages across enemy lines), even on cloudy days Researchers discovered a small spot on the beak of pigeons (and some other birds) that contains magnetite (a naturally magnetised rock) that act like a tiny internal GPS, giving the bird information about its position relative to Earth's magnetic poles Specialized cells in the birds' eyes may also detect magnetic fields (allowing them to "see" magnetic information) → helps birds travel where there are few or no landmarks Magnetite has also been found in human bones in the nose (ethmoid bone) → Do humans unconsciously use Earth's magnetic field to sense direction?
Sea turtles	Variations in Earth's magnetic field as a 'magnetic map' Green sea turtles in a giant magnetic coil pool (simulating real coastal fields) swam toward or away from the field matching their capture site (e.g. swam south when exposed to a northern field) Hatchlings use magnetism mainly as a compass (plus wave direction) to head offshore → mature turtles treat field variations as a map for course corrections, and returning to exact birth beach Possible detection via magnetite in heads (mechanism unclear)

Nature navigation (last yay)

Desert ants	Forage hundreds of meters in extreme midday heat (soil up to 70°C) to avoid predators and competition Tiny brains (~500,000 neurons vs. humans' 85 billion), precise navigation without relying on landmarks Path integration using self-motion cues, allowing them to return in a straight line (self motion → no external landmarks) Direction (celestial compass): Time-compensated sun compass (tracking the Sun's position) combined with UV polarization patterns in the sky for accurate heading Distance (odometer): A step-counting mechanism (pedometer) measures strides, integrated with ventral optic flow (visual ground motion) to estimate distance traveled In cluttered areas → path integration using landmarks In featureless deserts → self-created landmarks (hills)





We know the way - Moana

Lyrics composed of Samoan, and Tokelauan, along with English - Samoan for opening + verses, Tokelauan for choruses

Choice by lyricist Opetaia Foa'i and Lin-Manuel Miranda, the former of which is a Tokelauan-Tuvaluan composer, musician, and singer

Basically says that the traditional practices and methods of Moana's village are the way they navigate the world

Celebrates heritage and tradition

Is the main shift between the isolationism at the start and the courageous exploration that marks the buildup of the movie

Is praised for actually using actual Polynesian lyrics that actually make sense, but still kind of mainly uses an American style

We, the sailors, are invited
Tatou o tagata folau e vala'auina

The god of the sea is coming
E le atua o le sami tele e o mai

Every month the challenge is good
Ia ava'e le lu'itau e lelei

Tappena
Tapenapena

Oh, oh, oh
Aue, aue

Move Forward
Nuku I mua

The bird that guides
Te manulele e tataki e

Oh, oh, oh
Aue, aue

The earth, the sea,
Te fenua, te malie,

But let's talk about it
Nae ko hakilia mo kaiga e

We read the wind and the sky when the sun is high
We read the wind and the sky when the sun is high

We sail the length of the seas on the ocean breeze
We sail the length of the seas on the ocean breeze

At night, we name every star
At night, we name every star

We know where we are
We know where we are

We know who we are, who we are
We know who we are, who we are

Oh, oh, oh
Aue, aue

We set a course to find
We set a course to find

A brand new island everywhere we roam
A brand new island everywhere we roam

Oh, oh, oh
Aue, aue

We keep our island in our mind
We keep our island in our mind

And when it's time to find home
And when it's time to find home

We know the way
We know the way

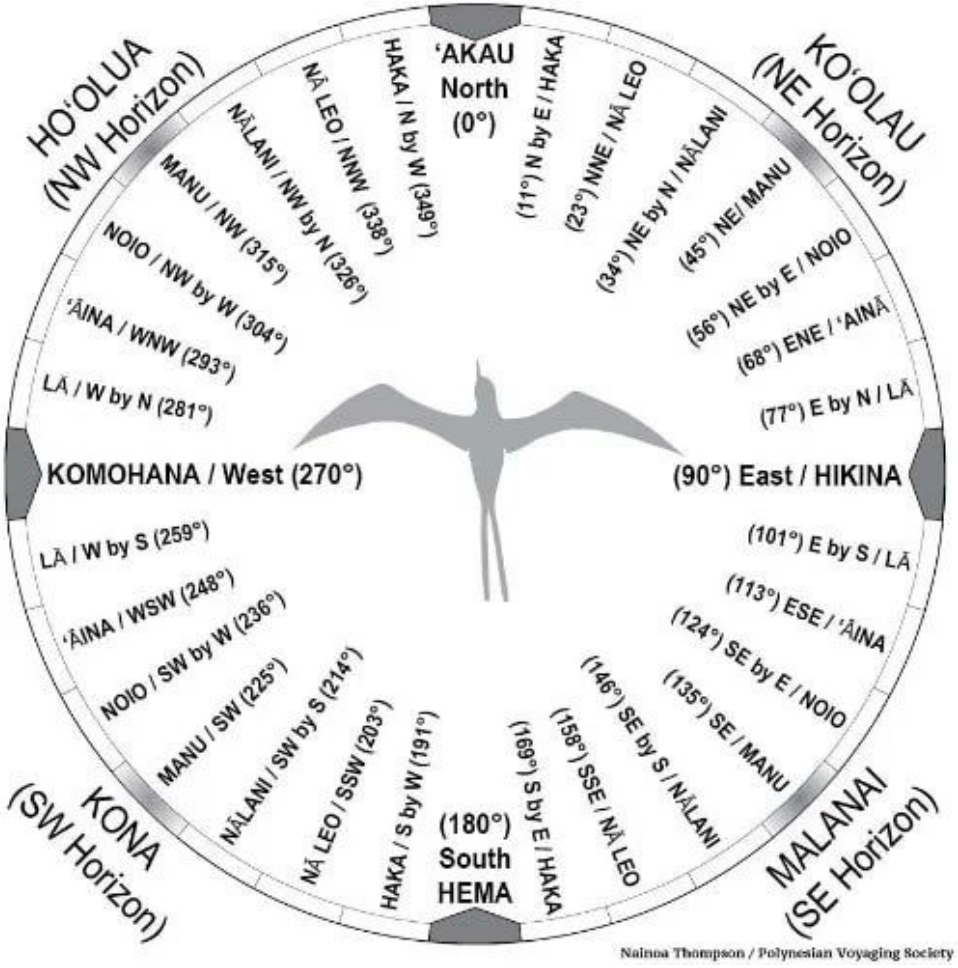
Oh, oh, oh
Aue, aue

We are explorers reading every sign
We are explorers reading every sign

Wayfinding

In Polynesia, ppl have always used knowledge of the constellations to navigate the seas
Lately has been declining due to Westernisation n stuff
Revival is lead by Nainoa Thompson, who studied under Mau Piailug
Studied movement of celestial objects in Bishop Museum planetarium, Honolulu with Will Kyselka

Main method: Star compass developed by Nainoa Thompson
Divides horizon into 32 sections, each of which is 11.25 degrees
Basically you memorise it and use it to tell where and how to sail, how to take advantage of the wind, and generally construct a mind map of the sea



Inuit(-ion) arctic maps

Inuit tribes in the Arctic, especially those in Greenland and the Canadian far north, had exceptional geo-spatiality and intimate familiarity with the local landscape, so much so that their maps looked like near-copies of satellite images even in the 1800s, or earlier

Unfortunately, due to the rapid industrialisation and modernisation of even the far north, and the exportation of technology such as GPS, snowmobiles, internet and smartphones, this knowledge is fading away

Not based on “intuition”, but based on years of knowledge and experience passed down → children would memorise everything their parents said to them

With just a harpoon or just by visually observing, Inuit could tell how the water currents might be in the next few hours, whether there might be large ice floats up ahead in a few days, the weather conditions for the week and specific characteristics of landmarks and biomes up ahead

Tribesmen and shamans would whittle sticks, draw crude maps, or simply remember simplifications and idioms to easily remember regional phenomena and shapes



They look *pretty dang similar*



Viking navigation

Legend has it that the Vikings had a “sunstone”, that when held up to the sun’s direction would shine, no matter the weather so long as the sun was still in the sky

For example, King Olaf consulted Sigurd on where the sun was, and “grabbed a sunstone” to check his answer, which could have been calcite or any other polarising crystals

A study was conducted in Finland, which found that people almost always could not correctly identify the sun’s position on a cloudy day

However, when studying polarising patterns in cloudy skies compared to sunny skies + tested polarising crystal in cloudy skies in Sweden, the researchers found that they were quite effective, hinting that the Vikings might just have had a point after all

Simultaneously however, the Vikings could have used other ways to navigate, so archaeological evidence will be needed to persuade researchers



Calcite



Olaf Tryggvason

Fog of the world

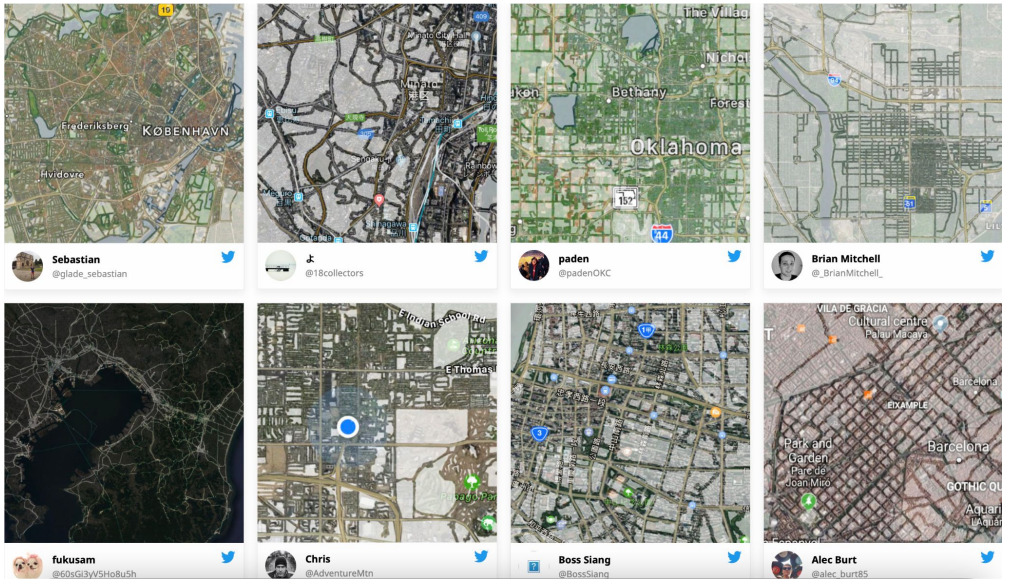
The more you explore the world, the more land you uncover and ‘unfog’

Developer Olli Wang (company Ollix)

No android version

Pretty cool, costs 30 USD on app store and everything else is free

Supposedly helps you remember your memories by reviewing your travel paths





The Terminal (2004) - Steven Spielberg

Viktor Navorski, a man from the fictional European country of Krakozhia, arrives at NYC's JFK Airport

While he is in the air, a military coup takes place in Krakozhia → renders Viktor's passport invalid, and his visa is canceled

He cannot enter the United States, but he also cannot return home, so airport security detains him in the transit lounge of terminal 67 (yes, I did laugh about this, let me live) → Viktor is stuck in the airport indefinitely

This guy who works in a department of government apparently could get promoted if he gets rid of Viktor, but is continually thwarted

Basically follows Viktor's journey to learn English, make friends and find a job

Apparently Viktor was here to collect an autograph of a jazz artist, eventually succeeds



Real life *The Terminal* - Mehran Karimi Nasseri

Lived in the Parisian airport for **18 years** (supposedly expelled from Iran in 1977 for being involved in anti-state activity, and offered refugee status in European nations)

While travelling between Britain and France, he claims his briefcase containing his papers got stolen (the reason behind the losses remain unclear)

Some elements were adopted, and Spielberg did buy the rights to the story, but some details different (Nasseri had human rights lawyer helping) and timeframe was different (Viktor was out in 9 months while Nasseri had to stay in the airport for 18 years)

Nasseri died in 2022, after living in French homeless shelters for a time then returning to the airport for another few months

Krakozhia (Viktor's fictional nation of origin) is clearly inspired by the Soviet Union's Eastern Bloc states





More on living in airports

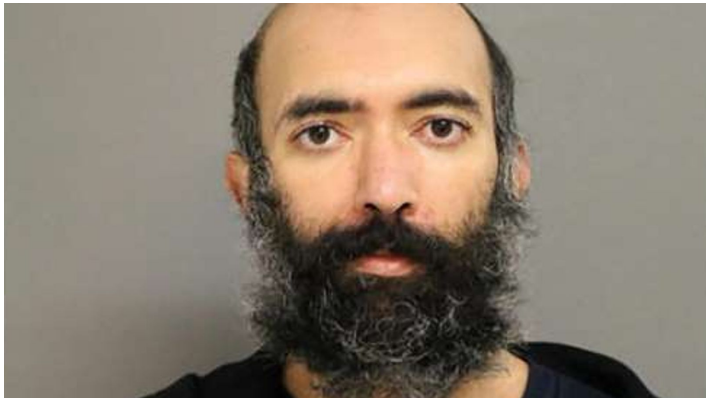
It is entirely possible to live in an airport for extended periods of time, as they possess food, water, bathrooms, shelter and for some, even a place to work, while also running for a very long period of time

It's much easier than you think it is (US had 1.5-2M people going through airports every day before pandemic) → just blend in with the crowd

People can sometimes live in airport for a few hours, maybe maximum a few days if flights are continuously cancelled, delayed, etc

- Aditya Singh living in Chicago's O'hare Airport for 3 months until discovered, scared to go back to India due to Covid
- Sanjay Shah was denied entry to the UK after clearly shown to be intending to live there long-term, despite his short-term visa and Overseas citizenship → sent back to Nairobi airport, where he feared leaving due to having surrendered his Kenyan documentation already → eventually received British citizenship
- Roman Trofimov (Estonian) landed in Manila from Bangkok in 2020, however Philippines had stopped issuing visas → had to live there for a month until Estonia got him a flight back home





Edward Snowden

Probably the most influential and famed whistleblower, if not person, in the modern era

American former NSA agent who stole vast amounts of documents and revealed multiple American surveillance networks internationally

United States revoked his passport (violations of the Espionage Act which is unauthorized disclosure of national defense information and theft of government property)

Many European countries refused to let him enter → 40 days stuck in the transit area of Moscow's Sheremetyevo International Airport

Russia finally allowed to leave the airport and enter Russia (temporary 1 year asylum)

Snowden had previously applied for asylum in several countries (including Iceland and Brazil), but Russia was the only one that agreed to take him in at that time

The United States strongly criticized this ('setback in bilateral relations') and demanding Snowden's extradition (which Russia refused)



The St. Louis (1939)

M.S. St. Louis left Germany carrying 937 Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution (they had valid tourist visas for Cuba, planning to wait to enter the US)

Cuba revoked visas upon arrival, and the U.S. *and* Canada refused entry despite the ship docking at Florida for a week, the passengers forming an organised committee to persuade Roosevelt and even one guy slitting his wrists and jumping off the boat to try and get onto land by hospital

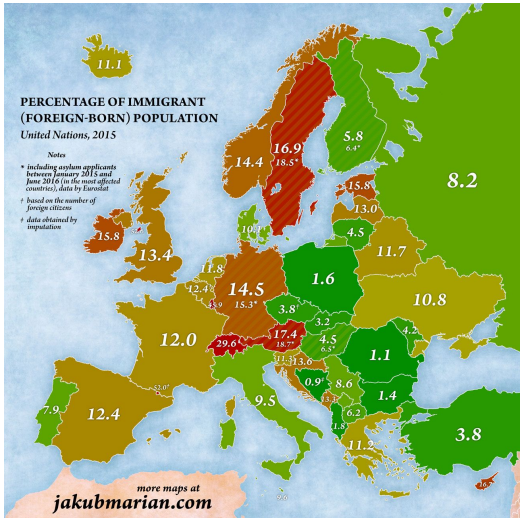
Cuba rejected the Jews largely because the Cuban economy was terrible, residents felt that they were competing against refugees for jobs and resources, and bc right-wing parties stoked fears and portrayed Jews as communist threats (ironically, Cuba underwent a communist revolution 14 years later)

The USA and Canada rejected the refugees because of highly popular far-right political parties, systemic antisemitism and heavily restrictive immigration policies (hey, sound familiar?) (a legacy of the Great Depression era). Canada's immigration policy slogan was "None is still too many"

After 24 days at sea, the passengers were forced back to Europe and divided among Britain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands → later, about 254 (nearly one-third) were killed in the Holocaust

Genuinely one of the saddest stories of Jewish persecution because the subsequent deaths were ***entirely preventable***

Europe's anti-immigration backlash



Article argues that anti-immigration sentiment is fueling a major populist surge across Europe
A European poll showed immigration as the top concern for voters in 21/28 EU countries
2015 influx of over 1 million migrants deepened anti-immigrant feelings, empowering far-right and populist parties, and approximately 10% of the current EU population is refugees/migrants

Sweden: Far-right Sweden Democrats reached record polling highs
Hungary: Viktor Orbán's Fidesz party won a landslide in April 2018 by campaigning against multiculturalism
Italy: A populist coalition formed in June 2018 and refused docking to migrant ships
Germany: Angela Merkel's open-door policy nearly collapsed her coalition in 2018
France: Marine Le Pen's strong showing forced Macron to toughen asylum policies and enforce measures like a burka ban
Austria, Poland, Czechia and Slovenia have all elected anti-immigration leaders
88% of UK ppl state that immigration was main reason for Brexit



The New Colossus

Sonnet written by Emma Lazarus in 1883

Liberty as a beacon, beckoning people to come to America (its closing lines were engraved on Statue of Liberty)

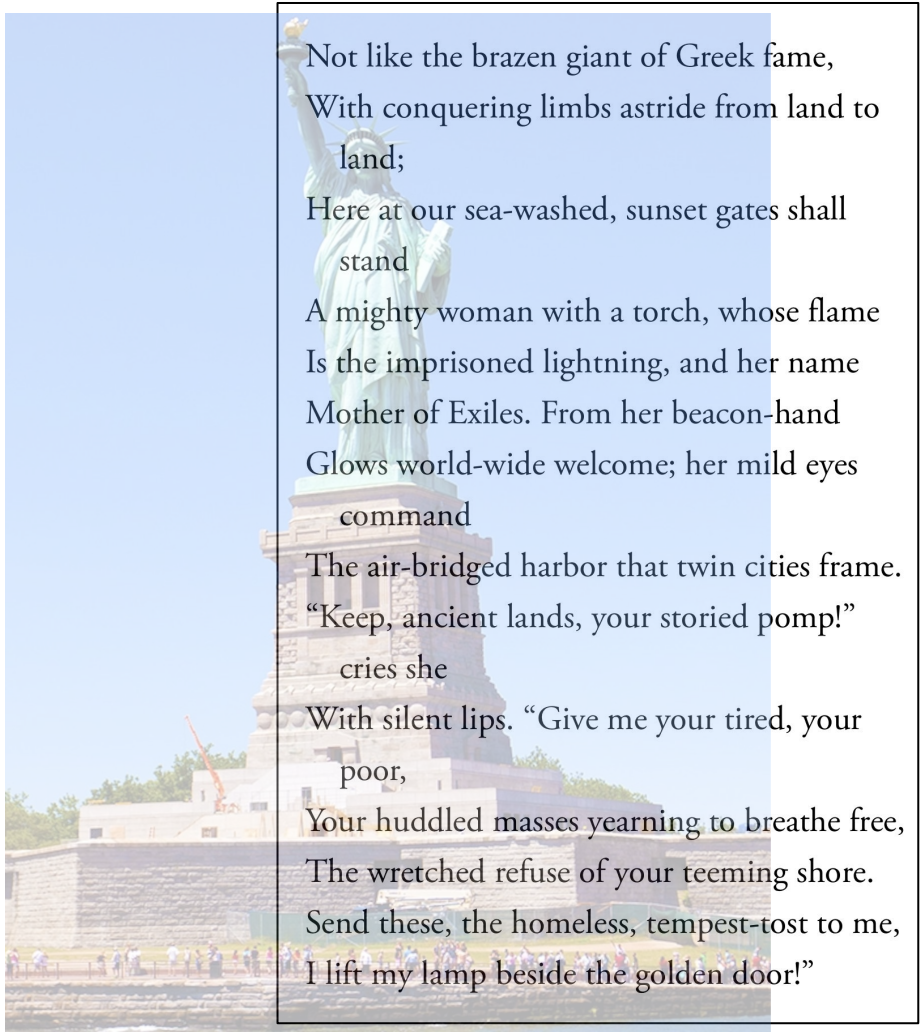
Colossus of Rhodes (male warrior statue, harsh) VS Statue of Liberty (welcoming) → "New colossus" as a patroness of immigrants → freedom and new beginnings

Calls to the oppressed and poor but rejects the rich elite

Twin cities refers to NYC and Brooklyn

Emma Lazarus: Jewish American poet and immigration activist who never experienced much success in her life, but had her singular sonnet become incredibly famous

Although with the rise of far-right populism + in the past, the poem was twisted to portray the statue as defending against immigrants instead + word choice of "wretched refuse" somewhat scrutinised



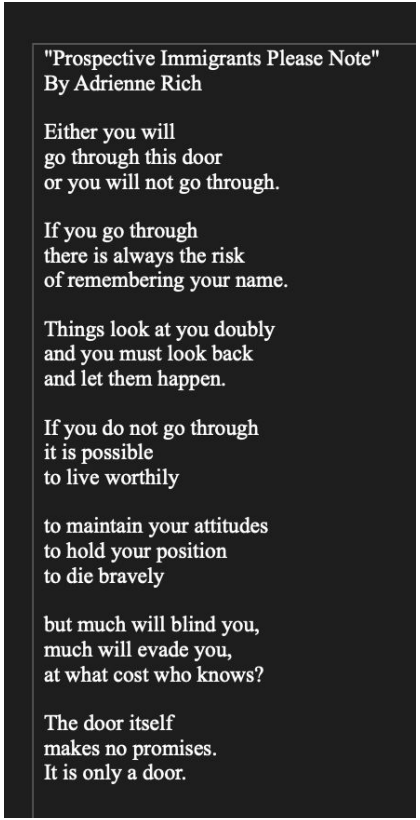
Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Prospective Immigrants Please Note (1963)

Warns immigrants about the realities of starting a new life (implicitly the United States) → metaphor of a door for the irreversible choice of migration

Rejects idealistic welcome of Emma Lazarus

Adrienne Rich: 1962 during a wave of post-WWII Jewish immigration to the U.S. amid global displacement → speaks from perspective of someone whose family had already crossed that door generations ago



"Prospective Immigrants Please Note"
By Adrienne Rich

Either you will
go through this door
or you will not go through.

If you go through
there is always the risk
of remembering your name.

Things look at you doubly
and you must look back
and let them happen.

If you do not go through
it is possible
to live worthily

to maintain your attitudes
to hold your position
to die bravely

but much will blind you,
much will evade you,
at what cost who knows?

The door itself
makes no promises.
It is only a door.

We Are Americans Now, We Live in the Tundra 1987

The speaker announces that the family has “become American” but the price is living in a permanent cultural tundra (frozen, colorless) replaced by cold assimilation

The repeated line “We are Americans now” sounds like a proud slogan at first, but later emphasises the specialty that was left behind

Slow erasure of identity across generations (children who don’t understand the parents, grandchildren who will never know the stories)

Marilyn Chin: Hong Konger raised in Portland, Oregon, who writes about the pain of cultural assimilation, “steeped with the themes and travails of exile, loss and assimilation”



Today in hazy San Francisco, I face seaward
Toward China, a giant begonia—

Pink, fragrant, bitten
By verdigris and insects. I sing her

A blues song; even a Chinese girl gets the blues,
Her reticence is black and blue.

Let’s sing about the extinct
Bengal tigers, about giant Pandas—

“Ling Ling loves Xing Xing…yet,
We will not mate. We are

Not impotent, we are important.
We blame the environment, we blame the zoo!”

What shall we plant for the future?
Bamboo, sassafras, coconut palms? No!

Legumes, wheat, maize, old swine

We are Americans now, we live in the tundra
Of the logical, a sea of cities, a wood of cars.

Farewell my ancestors:
Hirsute Taoists, failed scholars, farewell

My wetnurse who feared and loathed the Catholics,
Who called out

Now that half-men have occupied Canton
Hide your daughters, lock your doors!

The Sound of One Immigrant Clapping (2005)

Depicts everyday, overlooked labor → “red rag fastened to that fan” in a factory, or clapping alone in a space where no one hears

Invisible struggle of immigrants who contribute endlessly but receive little recognition or applause

Recognise how immigrants built this country, some aspects of colonialism

Written by Adrian Castro, who typically writes things related to cultural assimilation and immigrants

I feel as though many aspects of this syllabus and this poetry is directly critiquing Trump and his anti-immigrant policies (and ICE)

Let’s say he actually
did not
arrive on a boat—
that the relentless colonel
never found his subtle throat hidden
under the trance of the clave
or thunder hands that spoke
repiques of those crimes
Let’s say he went to Nueva York
on the assumption
Mario Bauzá
Machito or
Tito (Rodríguez or Puente)
could make his legs & hips move
in a constellation of joy
Let’s say he merely
tried
to hear the echo of his arms
flapping through a factory
like a red rag fastened to that fan

Let’s say the cold
often froze his vowels
tan Caribeña
tan resualosa y mermelada—
Could the immigrant even
mute the melody of his tongue—
They say it is silence
that makes music
But this will be like
drumming
on a distant tuft of cloud like
the colonel cutting the sound he never found
But it takes years of forgetting
for a stranger
to breathe the saltwater
or glance at a pile of stones
& say
I arrived through this portal
This is now my home . . .

Mother country (2019)

Addressed from a son to his immigrant mother (Richard Blanco's own Cuban mother) → her life of hard work, loneliness, and endurance after leaving Cuba

Cleaning houses, ironing shirts, cooking for others

Never fully "arrives" in America: carries Cuba in her heart, her accent, her recipes → gives everything to give her son a better life

Mother as both a literal and symbolic "mother country" → Cost of migration

Richard Blanco is a Cuban immigrant to the USA, whose poems are described as "sad, tender, and filled with longing. Like an old photograph, a saint's statue worn away by the devout, a bolero on the radio on a night full of rain."

To love a country as if you've lost one: 1968,
my mother leaves Cuba for America, a scene
I imagine as if standing in her place—one foot
inside a plane destined for a country she knew
only as a name, a color on a map, or glossy photos
from drugstore magazines, her other foot anchored
to the platform of her patria, her hand clutched
around one suitcase, taking only what she needs
most: hand-colored photographs of her family,
her wedding veil, the doorknob of her house,
a jar of dirt from her backyard, goodbye letters
she won't open for years. The sorrowful drone
of engines, one last, deep breath of familiar air
she'll take with her, one last glimpse at all
she'd ever known: the palm trees wave goodbye
as she steps onto the plane, the mountains shrink
from her eyes as she lifts off into another life.

To love a country as if you've lost one: as if
it were you on a plane departing from America
forever, clouds closing like curtains on your country,
the last scene in which you're a madman scribbling
the names of your favorite flowers, trees, and birds
you'd never see again, your address and phone number
you'd never use again, the color of your father's eyes,
your mother's hair, terrified you could forget these.
To love a country as if I was my mother last spring
hobbling, insisting I help her climb all the way up
to the U.S. Capitol, as if she were here before you today
instead of me, explaining her tears, cheeks pink
as the cherry blossoms coloring the air that day when
she stopped, turned to me, and said: You know, *mijo*,
it isn't where you're born that matters, it's where
you choose to die—that's your country.

To love a country as if you've lost one: I hear her
—*once upon a time*—reading picture books
over my shoulder at bedtime, both of us learning
English, sounding out words as strange as the talking
animals and fair-haired princesses in their pages.
I taste her first attempts at macaroni-n-cheese
(but with chorizo and peppers), and her shame
over Thanksgiving turkeys always dry, but countered
by her perfect pork *pernil* and garlic *yuca*. I smell
the rain of those mornings huddled as one under
one umbrella waiting for the bus to her ten-hour days
at the cash register. At night, the zzz-zzz of her sewing
her own blouses, *quinceañera* dresses for her nieces
still in Cuba, guessing at their sizes, and the gowns
she'd sell to neighbors to save for a rusty white sedan—
no hubcaps, no air-conditioning, sweating all the way
through our first vacation to Florida theme parks.



The Bus (1929)

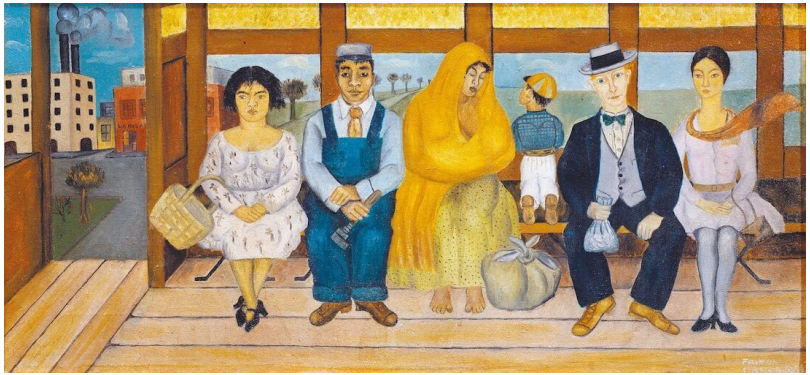
1929, after Frida Kahlo's near-fatal bus accident in 1925 → earliest major works before her marriage to Diego Rivera

A woman (interpreted as a self-portrait of Kahlo) sits near the window, looking outward with a calm expression (irony, before the accident and unaware)

Microcosm of 1920s Mexican society → class, gender, religion, and labor divisions all coexisting in one confined space

Everyone is literally on a journey (the bus), yet emotionally distant → physically present but culturally or socially not quite there

Bright, almost folk-art colors contrast with the somber mood



Migration (1941)



60-panel series

Figures are grouped, faceless, or turned away

Each panel has a short caption Jacob Lawrence wrote himself

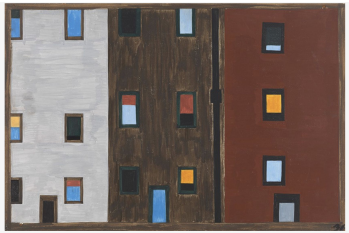
Great Migration (1910s–1970s) → six million African Americans from the rural South to the urban North

Bold, flat colors, and simplified figures → cinematic flow when viewed together

Both the dream (leaving the South, arriving in Chicago/New York) and the truth (crowded tenements, discrimination, factory exploitation, poverty)

Early panels depict lynchings and Ku Klux Klan terror → emphasises that the North is not paradise

Basically tells the story of these African Americans



The migrants found improved housing when they arrived north.

Immigrant Song (1970)



Robert Plant (lyrics) and Jimmy Page (music) → iconic song

“Da-da-da-da" triplet pattern, E minor chord guitar riff, howling vocals (“ah-ah-ah-ah” wail) → primal feel and charging warship, commonly used as an anthem of conquest

Wild, elemental homeland of the Vikings

“fight the horde, singin’ and cryin’ / Valhalla, I am coming” → Die heroically

Glorifies Viking conqueror → people leaving homelands to invade and settle new places → romanticizes migration as violent and heroic

Written in 1970 after Led Zeppelin trip to Iceland during a time of post-war immigration to Britain, but this song is purely fantasy and not a direct commentary on immigration

1960s–70s fascination with Norse/Viking mythology (popularized by Tolkien)

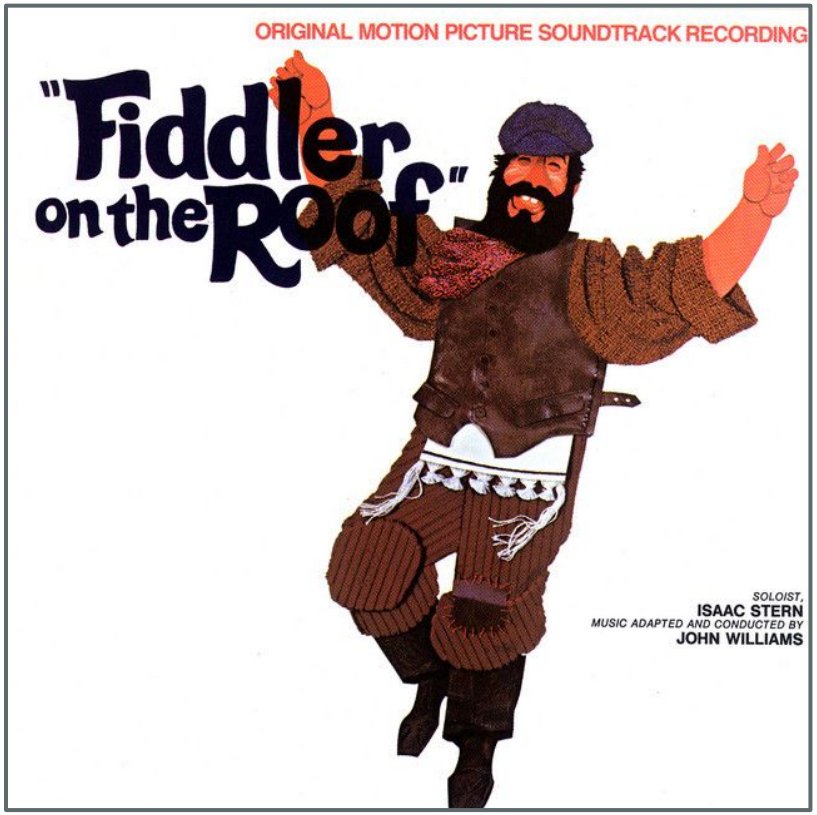
Far From the Home I Love (1971)

Main message: Immigration/leaving is painful sacrifice

Broadway musical Fiddler on the Roof (music by Jerry Bock, lyrics by Sheldon Harnick), sung by Hodel as she leaves her Russian shtetl to join her revolutionary fiancé Perchik in Siberia

Deep sorrow of leaving home forever → knows she will never return to her village or family (chooses love and a new life over safety)

Forced migration due to persecution, the pain of choosing exile for a better future



Illegal Alien (1983)

Basically a song that follows an illegal immigrant's journey's obstacles to getting into the USA

Dark take on Mexican immigrants crossing into the U.S. illegally → brags about sneaking over the border, getting jobs, and living "the American dream" while mocking U.S. hypocrisy

Inspired by Genesis' troubles with getting visas to reenter the United States while on tour

Written and sung by Phil Collins, Mike Rutherford, and Tony Bank

Highly negative reception both at the time and in retrospect for being quite racist and stereotypical



Isle of hope, Isle of tears (1995)

Written for the Ellis Island Immigration Museum exhibit by Brendan Graham in 1995 → commemorates the millions of Irish immigrants who passed through Ellis Island (Main federal immigration processing facility in 1800-1900s)

Talks about courage and hope of Irish immigrants arriving in New York and mourns the pain of leaving Ireland and family forever

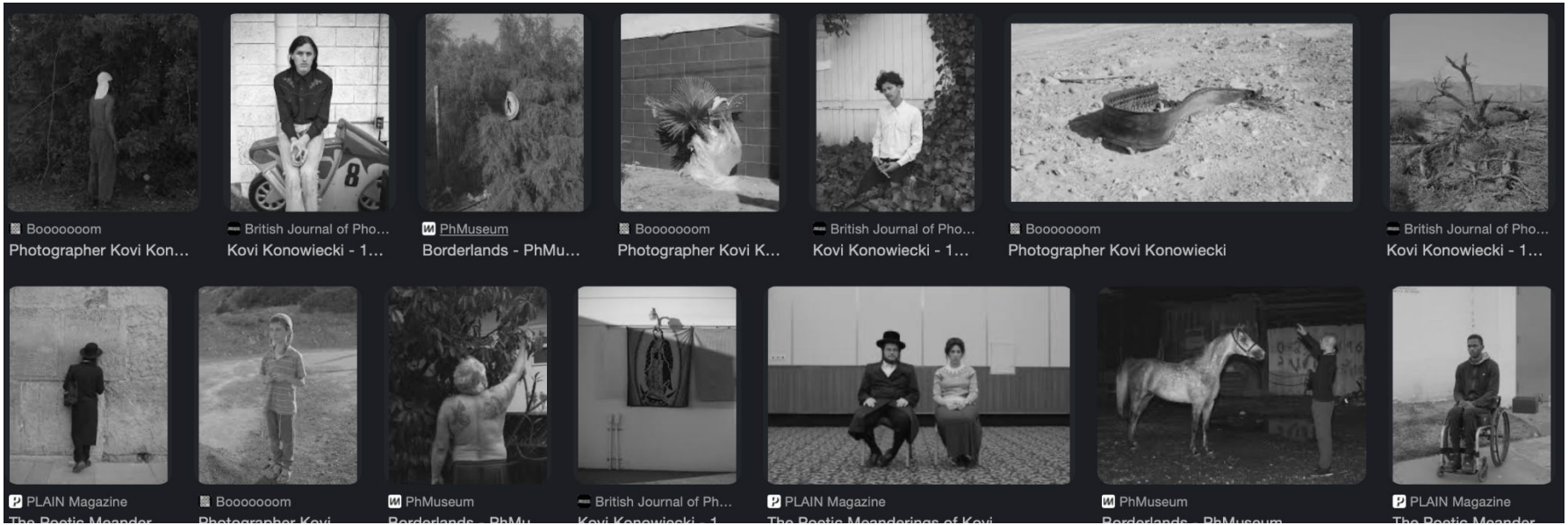
Themes: Hope for new life + grief from losing old life caused by immigration, the symbolic "golden door," generational sacrifice

Later sung by Celtic Woman in 2005 →



Borderlands (2016)

A photography series by American photographer Kovi Konowiecki
Documenting the U.S. - Mexico borderlands from both sides as well as Israel
Main theme is that of walls, borders, fences, mountains, etc - basically things that separate and the pain, desolation and desperation they cause
Meant to show the “liminal state” that people belong in between belonging and abandonment



Somos Mas Americanos (2013)

From the album La Bala by the legendary northern band Los Tigres del Norte, a politically charged banda/corrido group

Proud assertion of Mexican-American identity and belonging → Mexicans have deeper roots in the Americas than Anglo-Americans, and that anti-immigrant rhetoric is hypocritical

Tells perspective of undocumented immigrant reacting to Americans telling him to go back bc there's no space in America for him → reminds Americans of the fact that 8 states of the USA were taken from Mexico



Where We’re Going, We’ll Still Need Them

(Q1BL1Y8M) (WIP)

Roman Roads

wip

Next Year in Futurism

(Pwaawy) (WIP)

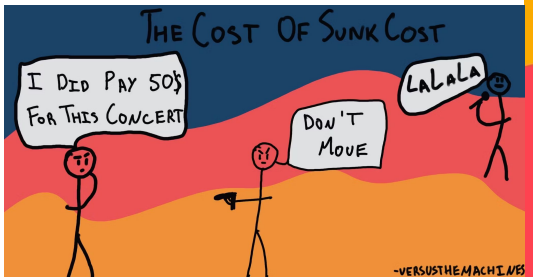
WIP

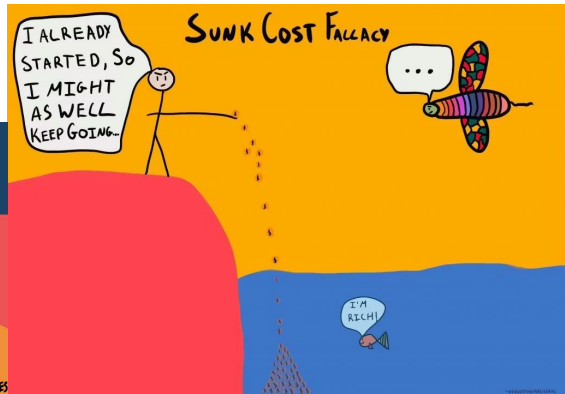
Concluding Questions

(Q1BL1Y8M and .22 and Pwaawy)

The Sunk-Cost Fallacy & Human Decision

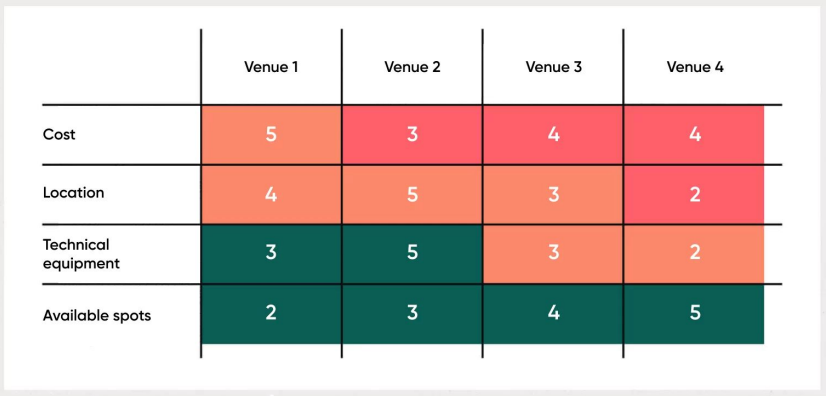
- **Sunk-Cost Fallacy**: human tendency to follow through with something that we've already invested heavily in, even if giving up is the better option
- **Status Quo Bias**: human preference to keep things the way they are to avoid potential losses
- *Concorde Fallacy*: incident where government heavily invested in a plane and refused to stop investment even when it was clearly a bad choice
- **Commitment Bias**: continue to support our past decisions despite new evidence suggesting that it isn't the best course of action
- **Loss Aversion**: impact of losses feel much bigger than impact of gains





A Brain in Flux

- We **frame things together** as a full narrative instead of individual events
    - *e.g. If I do not continue reading this bad book I wasted my time*
- Fix this issue by making **rational, data-based decisions, not emotional decisions**
- Setting **clear goals** → can see of your decisions help you move towards it
- **Decision Matrixes** → judging all options based on set criteria, systematically make choices
- We have this fallacy bc we have **power** to commit, but comes with **irrational attachment to committing**
- Technically, *overinvestment = learning exp!*
- **Prospective Cost**: cost that hasn't occurred *yet*
- We can use **AI** to see human flaws in decisions
    - ...especially in business



	Venue 1	Venue 2	Venue 3	Venue 4
Cost	5	3	4	4
Location	4	5	3	2
Technical equipment	3	5	3	2
Available spots	2	3	4	5

A History of Decisions

- **Richard Thaler** → behavioural scientist, "*paying for goods = more use of that good*"
- **Hal Arkes, Catherine Blumer** → current definition, believed it was not just money
  - Ran multiple experiments, both hypothetical (ski trip) and IRL (theatre tickets)
- Experiments show → *even done in education* (enrolling)
- Experiments also show **older people are much less susceptible than younger people**

Decision-Making → → →

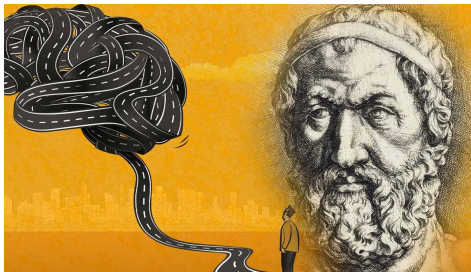


Zeno's Paradoxes of ~~Twinmotion~~ Time and Motion

- **Greek philosopher Zeno** believes that *change and motion* do not exist

1. *Infinite series of **halves** before you actually get anywhere*
    a. Inspired **Newton's** calculus
2. ***Achilles VS Tortoise*** → *every time X "overtakes" Y, X has moven slightly → never catches up*
3. ***Frozen Arrow*** → *for every given tiny timeframe, X is still (basically, life is just high fps)*
    a. Solution is calculus: things can be infinitesmall
4. ***Stadium*** → *3 lines of people, if 2 are moving in opposite directions, are they moving faster?*

- **Philosophical**: possibly shows limits to our understanding of motion & infinity
- Conlusion: complexity lies in simplicity



Shrek 2: arewethereyetarewethereyetarewethereyetarewethereyet

- Donkey says “Are we there yet?” a “few times” whilst Shrek gets “a little annoyed” → Fiona depressed ahh
- “A question linked with impatience”
- Visiting “Far, Far Away”





The end of History (every year) (.22)



1989, right leaning policy wonk called francis fukuyama writes a paper (“the end of history”)-> he gets contracted to expand it into a book (“the end of history and the last man”)

Fukuyama believed that we have figured out the ideal social organisation (liberal democracy with market economies)

He defined the democratic state as:

- a state that allows elections, and where the elections implement the will of the people->democratic
- a state that is strong enough to enforce its laws and administer services
- a state where its highest officials and representatives are constrained by the law

He also argues that states that do not use this system of organisation are vulnerable in that:

- concentrating power with a few people or organisations guarantees bad decision making in the long term
- without public participation in decision-making, support for such governments is inherently volatile

Fukuyama later admits that his statements on the rapid approach of the end of history were overblown, and many critics have stated that he often glosses over the details and does not offer any ideas on the implementation of the perfect state

End of History cont'd. (.22)

Fukuyama DID NOT invent this idea, the German philosopher Hegel did, and his ideas were interpreted by Karl Marx and Alexandre Kojeve

- Hegel argued that history had a telos, or goal/endpoint, which is the emergence of a perfectly just and rational state that would exist in peace and cooperation with similarly configured states, and which would allow the full liberty required for the full development of human capabilities
- Kojeve argued that Hegel had witnessed the beginning of the end of history in the form of the french revolution, Fukuyama judges him correct
- Marx argued that the end of history would consist of global communism, where all contribute and take according to their needs and abilities

Fukuyama argues that the Glasnost and Perestroika policies implemented in late Soviet Russia disproved Marx's interpretation

Furthermore, Fukuyama does not argue that any nation has truly achieved this "perfect" state, and that most, if not all democracies now are flawed

- He also states that there is no guarantee that a "perfect" democracy will ever come to fruition

Unexpected endings - Stargate

Stargate: Military explorers find ancient alien ship with wormhole-creating capabilities, various fun things happen, more grounded and gritty than other sci-fi series

Basically when the show ended, the crew was in stasis but missing one stasis pod, so someone stays alone and tries to fix a stasis pod and…

We will never know! But the article argues that there's a beauty in never knowing what comes next, because there's infinite possibility

Btw it was cancelled because the studio was having economic troubles and the series was getting a bit too old





Unexpected endings - Sopranos

Tony Soprano is a mobster in New Jersey who has to balance his real family with gang family

In the final episode, he sits in a diner constantly looking over his shoulder when the door opens, expecting a gunman, but they never come - at least, we never see them, because when the door opens for the final time, the music stops and the scene cuts to black

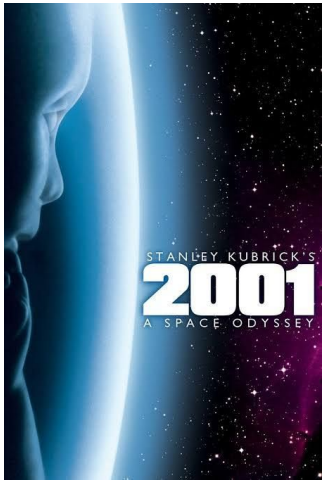
Shows that due to past actions, Tony will always have to look over his shoulder - anxiety and guilt clearly make his life a living hell

However, before the scene cuts to black, a man is seen entering the bathroom of the diner, referencing Tony Soprano's in-universe favorite movie scene of all time, Michael Corleone killing Celso, McCluskey and Godfather, from the Godfather film trilogy

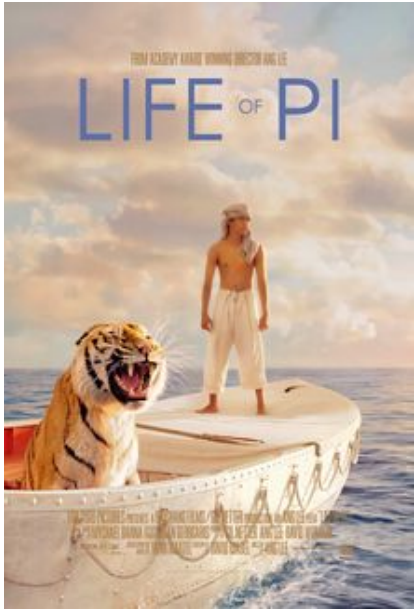
This implies that the cut to black is actually Tony's PoV - the final scenes are the last thing Tony ever sees before he is shot in the diner

This ending is also meant to parallel 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)'s ending, where Bowman sees himself as an old man, similar to how Tony sees himself in the diner in an out-of-body experience





Unexpected endings - Life of Pi



Follows an indian guy called Pi on a Japanese freight ship with his zoo animals and family heading to Canada

The ship sinks, and he gets on a lifeboat with a hyena, tiger, orangutan and zebra. The hyena kills the zebra and orangutan before the tiger, who Pi has befriended before kills the hyena

They go through some difficulties before eventually landing on Mexico, where Japanese insurance agents question Pi and don't believe his story, causing him to fabricate a story (or tell the real story, depending on your perspective) where the animals are replaced with various people, including his mother, and where the tiger is replaced with himself

At the start of the movie, the writer of this movie is approached by Pi himself and told this story, and at the end, the writer asks him which version is true. Pi says it does not matter, because his family died anyways and neither one is the one the insurance company wants

However, one could also argue that the truth can be a mix of both, just as Pi is a person who believes in Islam, Christianity and Hinduism at the same time

Harry Potter epilogue



I will not explain HP here, go read/watch one of the thousands of plot summaries out there.

In the epilogue of Deathly Hallows, Harry, Ginny, Ron, Hermione and their children show up to send them off to Hogwarts

Main complaints mentioned			
Harry appears to have named all his children, ignoring any of Ginny's potential suggestions	World appears to be completely functional and working despite the war (no matter that it's been almost 19 years since the war)	The fact that all the main characters appear to have suffered minimal to little consequences despite major trauma	All the characters ended up marrying their high school partners, which does not accurately reflect what happens in real life + compounded with the one on the left, makes it very unnatural