

9-3-25

12pm

I am here to write about Emergent Strategy as a way to ground myself in my practice— to re remind myself why I am doing this astrology, to know that it is all part of something that I have been, it is all the result of discoveries I have made, of research I have done, of ethics I have developed, of deep serious contemplation and analysis I have absorbed myself in. It is the result of a system of ethic I developed for myself – which is about the only thing I really did in my undergraduate degree— discovering what it may mean to be a human alive on earth as a contributing member of society— of what it means to live a good, right, correct life.

But despite all of my study in humanity and the antithesis of it, I have still found myself, these last five years, lost and gripped by the allure of the digital matrix. The quick dopamine hit— my brain has found it every day. My childhood addiction to television, which I worked hard to break during my four years of college, has returned full force with the help of my iPhone. I used to be plugged into trees, facilitated by literature- now I find myself plugged into the grid, facilitated by pain. It takes my power, my attention, every day. And facilitated by nature or poison, I'm not sure, my hormones fluctuate wildly every month. Two weeks up, two weeks down. Two weeks up, two weeks down. Again and again and again for the past seventeen years. When I am down, I plug in to the grid,, it steals my power, and I forget who I am.

But let me pause here to honestly thank everything that is that I have not outsourced my brain to Chat GPT. I have never used that shit. I have been trykng to figure everything out on my own— and perhaps I really have been preserving something.

I had no idea how quickly the art of writing, of learning, of critical thought- would be so completely lost.

I weep because I feel like I lost myself. I thought I would study forever— be an academic, devoted to the process of discovery, of critical analysis, of understanding, of telling.

Perhaps I am realizing that I have in fact been preserving my brain. Not the best way — yes, I am on social media all the time. Yes, I get lost, lost, lost, in the scroll. Yes I feel like my brain is mush. Yes I feel like I don't know what thoughts and beliefs are my own. Yes I feel separated from myself due to the inundation of endless information from endless sources of debatable reputability. But look. There are my words. This is me. These are my em dashes and semicolons, this is real, this is how I have written, this is my writing style and it has not changed in 9 years. It was curated through the reading of texts. The reading of texts. Philosophy. Philoophy. Philosophy.

I don't understand how you all think you can ask Chat GPT what Aristotle said. What Plato said. And Think you're learning philosophy.

Have you seen the movie Arrival? Where the linguist needs to learn how to communicate with Aliens by learning their language, and in doing so, her perception of reality actually shifts because the language is a fourth-dimensional language?

Have you learned a new language and dreamt in that language? Have you allowed it to become internalized? If you have, you know that your brain can kind of be on a different wavelength in that other language. Reality, perception, is kind of different. We come up with words because we need to describe sensations. Words shape the brain shapes existence.

To read the summary of a text IS NOT THE SAME as reading a text. You simply do not gain the same information.

Because writing is a way of expressing and mapping the brain, the experience, the thoughts. And when we read the constructions of

someone else— when we follow their words— we learn. You need to be absorbed. You need to go on the journey. You need to be there in the words. Words shape reality, understanding, perception.

These are my em dashes. This is how I think. This is my practice.

There are many things I have outsourced, accidentally, to the digital matrix. It does feed on my attention, which has always been an easy target.

But it will not take my creativity. It will not take my mind. It will not take my words. It may find fuel in them, but it will not take away from me. My brain. My brain. My brain.

I love the heart, and I am moved by it most of the time. I have wept because I believed I lost my brain. But I haven't. I haven't.

It is mine. I have a brain. And it is beautiful.

Why did I come here to write about Emergent Strategy and I find myself writing instead about education and critical thought? I am thinking, evidently, of academia this morning. Of being smart. I miss being smart.

But look: there is nothing to miss.

There is nothing to miss.

The words pour out.

I am still here.

-Ali
12:27pm

