

Concision. A word. A word one thinks of when writing a, how shall we put it, non-concise essay. Can concision even refer to an essay? How might an essay be concise? Is each though, put on paper, not enough? Is 5000 words to express a thought less concise than two words to express two thoughts? Fuck. Yum. Two words. Two thoughts. Both concise. Or are they? Already you can use "Fuck" to mean dozens of things. There have been entire books written just on that subject. More attention will be paid to that word than will be paid to this essay, that's for fucking sure. Who will even read this? Will I? Will you? I bet you will, you fucking weirdo.

This is mostly an interesting essay for me, because concision and time are not correlated. If anything, they are opposites. I write concisely. It can take me days to bang out a single serviceable sentence. In fact, right now I should be writing a very simple essay for CNN about hidden (but not really) stuff around the world (fuck, I hate this essay. Also, notice I parenthesized instead of connected by dashed (which was my first instinct) the phrase "but not really" in order to get the two extra words that not connecting by dashes brings).

But this essay might be different. I am already 228 words into it (God bless Microsoft Word. The fucking thing counts words as they go. How crazy. Never would have thought back in the old word processing days). I've been typing, mostly to procrastinate, for maybe 5 minutes. I'm procrastinating another thing where I am missing concision. An op-ed I'm writing with Matt Green. Should be 750 words, but we're about 120 words over.

Anyway, what an interesting exercise. Do you know how long 5000 concise words take for me to write? A fucking long time. Like, a fucking long, long, long, long time. And, speaking of word processing, there's another trick I could do. I could just pull a dumb stunt like writing concision five fucking thousand (notice no dashes still) times in a row. I wouldn't even have to type it. Just cut and paste. Boom. One word sentence. Concise. Another one word sentence. Concise. I could just do this one thousand times in a row and call it an essay. Would that be a dick move? Questions, questions, borders, borders. You'd probably even accept the five thousand word essay consisting just of "concise" over and over again. In fact, I best somebody has even tried that very trick. You'd better have more than one of these things. If someone beats me to this by doing that trick, I'm going to be fucking pissed. Banana. Another one word sentence. CON-FUCKING-CISE WITH DASHES MOTHERFUCKER. OK, this stream of consciousness thing is going to get me to perhaps 500 words. Still, that's five hundred more words of stream of consciousness than I've ever written before. It's not so tough. In fact, my fingers can't keep up. Turns out what we put on paper is way more concise than what is in our heads. At least for me. Maybe not for you. But you'd have to be a really fast typer and really dumb person, methinks.

Conciscity. A word? Spellcheck says no. Let's try again. Conciseness. A word? Spellcheck agrees. Spellcheck is the arbiter of our written lives, it appears. You know I'm just doing this for the frame, right? Fuck. (One word sentence. Concise.) I was going to try and save that for when I was three or four thousand words into this and hope maybe you wouldn't notice. Maybe you still won't. Maybe you only

read the first 500 words. You'll probably read the last sentence though. The last sentence will be "Monkey Balls." For real. This will be the case. Dunno if it's concise, it is two words, but it is what came to me in my stream of consciousness stylings.

So. (one word sentence. Concise). Back to the issue at hand. But first an aside. I use a lot of one word sentences in my writing. Or otherwise very short sentences. In fact, while going through copyedits for my book, I constantly had an issue with my copy editor. He or she (don't know which) would combine two sentences into one and totally fuck up and ruin my flow. I would respond thusly: "Stet. (one word sentence, concise). Don't combine short sentences. It's just a style and voice, and rhythm thing. But that's all we really have now, isn't it? I wonder if my voice is the same in these stream of consciousness stylings as it is in my meticulous, CONCISE, writing that takes me so long. If it is I will feel severely fucking ripped off. All that time making sure it's perfect and it's all a waste. I could have just banged it out like this. Eight hundred and twenty three words in about fifteen minutes. That's a short chapter. Do you know how long it usually takes me to write that much? Days. (one word sentence. Concise. I had that lined up right around when I was typing "could have banged out." My head is still ahead of my hands. STILL CONCISE THEN. Not, like, 100% concise. More like 7% concise. That's what's getting left out from when it goes from my head to my hands. That's really just a guess. It might be, like 93%. Who really knows? I'm too new at this to tell. But I think it's getting less and less as I type. I now have a goal. To achieve true non-conciseness by the time I have reached five thousand words. I doubt it will happen. Plus I just hyphenated a word, and, therefor, cost myself a word. It's OK. It doesn't take much to write a word. Bunny. (one word sentence. Concise). I wrote that in a fraction of a second. Boom. (One word sentence. Concise). Bunny again. BUT THIS TIME IT'S TWO WORDS AND NOT AS CONCISE I SUPPOSE.

Back to the issue at hand. Again. (one word sentence. Concise). Conciseness. (one word sentence, concise). Fuck. (One word sentence. Concise). By the time I had typed my aside I had lost what and forgotten what I was going to say about conciseness. So I suppose the ration is more than 7%. Maybe as much as 93%. Or ever 94%. Whoa. (one word sentence. Concise).

Let me explain this theory of the conciseness ration I have. Here goes. So, my stated thesis is that conciseness is not solid state of being. Something is not either concise or isn't. It's a sliding scale. Let's see if I can do an example while still keeping up this stream of consciousness thing going on, as I'm now at one thousand one hundred thirty nine words and STILL GOING STRONG BABY YEAH WHAT THE FUCK IS WRONG WITH ME. So. (one word sentence. Concise). Here we go. This sentence that I am typing now is not concise. This sentence is more concise. This is concise. Holy fuck, I kind of did it. So, you see, that conciseness is a sliding scale. And, for purposes of this essay, I am equating conciseness with the amount of thought that makes it from my brain to the page. Now, in my everyday writing (and probably yours) this is taken as a virtue. You don't want to read the five thousand word meanderings of an insomniac, bored thirty seven year old urban planner and housing policy analyst who is still at work and using writing a (mostly) completely pointless five thousand word essay as a procrastination tool for who even knows what (although, actually while that was probably what this started as I am now actually doing this mostly as both a personal exercise and also just to kind of see what it feels like. It's interesting. Two

word sentence, not that concise. Well, no. (also a two word sentence, not that concise). I take it back. Because that was actually a three word sentence that was turned into a two word sentence with use of a contraction – which is, holy shit, a tool of conciseness now, isn't it? BOOM. (One word sentence. Concise). Monkey Balls BUT I'M NOT DONE YET THOUGH. BUT I CAN STILL TYPE MONKEY BALLS BOOM. (not a one word sentence even though I almost typed that as "boom" usually is in my writing style. Not here though. It still fits with my voice. It all makes sense in my head).

And yes. (Two word sentence, not that concise). Voice. (one word sentence. Concise). That's all we really have now in our writing, isn't it? It's that je-nue-said-qua that makes us, us, at least when it comes to the written word. Is our voice our struggle for conciseness of thought? Not Keruoc's. (Two word sentence, not that concise). His was the opposite. And that brings me back to the conciseness ration (and it's about time, right?).

So. (One word sentence. Concise). If this essay is, priam facia, a struggle AGAINST conciseness it manifests itself as such. Given. (One word sentence. Concise). The LEAST concise you can be, at least while writing, is to have every thought somehow manage to make it onto the page. And given. (Two word sentence, not that concise – holy shit though, I almost didn't put a period after "given" back there before starting the next sentence which would have TOTALLY fucked my running motif. Or would it have? Would you have even noticed? I wonder. I'm going to fuck it up on purpose once and see if you notice. I fucking bet you actually will too you weirdo. I bet you read this whole fucking thing. And I bet you think it's actually brilliant. You are going to come up to me when I see you next and go "Moe. (one word sentence. Concise. But you're not going to say this part). That essay was fucking brilliant.") That the MOST concise you can be is to take every thought you have ever had and express them all in one word. Maybe one syllable. Wait. (one word sentence. Concise). This is written. So it would have to be even more concise. It would perhaps have to be one letter. And maybe even the Letter I. In the correct, sand-serif (did it with dashes, lost the word, but MADE UP FOR IT IN THE PARENTHETICAL THOUGH) font of course, so it's narrow as possible. Or maybe even just a period (I actually typed "pyramid" just then, which I think is a good sign that I am actually making brain and hand come together, I didn't have time to adjust when I thought "pyramid" instead of "period," although, I dunno, I actually am thinking this is less concise or less of a mind-body flow somehow. Wait. (one word sentence. Concise). Less concise is actually MORE of a mind-body (with dashes, once again making up for the lost word in the parentheticals LIKE A CHAMP) flow, right? I think that's my thesis, yeah, that's it.

Back to the thesis now that I've reminded myself that this once kind of, just a little bit, had a point. Will I manage to make it (NOT THE POINT, another aside. But since I am struggling to eliminate conciseness from this essay since it was in my head and started to come out my hands I'm just GOING WITH IT BABY HERE WE GO) will I manage to make it. Wait. (one word sentence. Concise. How many of these one word sentences are "wait" and "boom" and WAIT. THIS IS A SEGWAY. THAT IS NOT SPELLED RIGHT IS IT, THE WORD IS NOT THE VEHICLE I THINK. ANYWAY. (one word sentence. concise). The Segway (if that's not it I'm sorry but I'm not checking, OH SHIT I AM ACTUALLY RIGHT NOW CAUGHT IN A CIRCULAR META ESSAY LOOP I'M GOING TO BREAK IT NOW THOUGH).

OK. Slow down. NO WAIT DON'T SLOW DOWN THAT'S EXACTLY OPPOSITE THE POINT. What the point was that I was trying to make is that back there was the first time I looked back at my word for reference (although now I remember that I'm wrong and it was actually the second time, the first time was when I said I was thinking of something back when there was a sentence a couple lines before, I looked back to reference that.) But at the time, I thought it was the first time I had looked back to reference my work. That, in and of itself, and the search for consciousness. To refer to one's work against one previous work, one's thought against one's previous thought, and see if there is any reference, and thing, that can be consolidated. Oh man, I'm slowing down. My brain is starting to come out of the zone. The question of "can I make it" that I raised what seems like so long ago is starting to be answered. So. (One word sentence. Concise. "So" is another one I use a lot. So is Boom, which I covered. But I actually forgot the other one I referenced for a minute, but by the time I got to typing the sentence about forgetting I had remembered, it was "wait" although I actually forgot a second time for just a split-second. I was going to say for just a second, but now a second seems so long, comparatively. I can feel my thoughts going by and slipping away over somewhere that isn't my fingers. Lost to conciseness. Conciseness is everywhere. It's in the air all around us. It's where all our thoughts that don't make it into firmament go to. And that brings me back to the conciseness ratio. But first, to answer that questions I had posed but didn't get to, which is goals. I think, just as an aside, that I have misspelled "concise" or (especially) "conciseness" more than any other word in this essay. Of course, that is due in no small part to using these words more than most, in any, others. Yes, in another nod to two thousand and thirteen (all spelled out, no dashes, got to get those extra words in there), I have been noticing the red lines and going back to correct. Consistently and continuously. I could have left it alone, and I suppose it would have made this less concise, which is my goal. Or would it have? Would it maybe just have been a misinterpretation, something that does not affect the conciseness ratio either one way or the other? I don't know. Anyway. (one word sentence, concise). I had a goal, which was to bang this out in one shot, just a massive "bang out the five thousand word essay, not problem, here you go chief." I had felt my mind slipping out of this zone a little while ago, but now it's back in it a little bit. But I kinda have to pee, and my fingers kinda hurt, and it's late and I'm still at work and have spent almost an hour typing by now (Jesus Christ) and should really fucking go home already. But what if I do take a break here? I've actually passed my other goal, the one I came up with as a backup, which was to make it to 2500 words and then do it in two shots. But it doesn't really work like that now, does it? It's like hiking – you go for a while, and then when you start to take rests, the rests become closer and closer together. It's a curve (fuck, I glanced up and realized I didn't write out "twenty five hundred" just now and cost myself two words, but AGAIN I'M MAKING IT UP IN THE PARENTETICALS LIKE A MOTHERFUCK CHAMPION (imagine that pronounces with a soft ch as in "champaign" and in three syllables with the last one coming out as "-own" as in "motherfucking champ-e-OWN" with the emphasis on the last syllable). So yes, it's a curve. The first time I stop, I'm not banging out the same word count the second time, now I am I? My brain detaches from this groove I'm in, I have to get back in it, maybe I never get back in it. It might be a problem.

On the other hand, the second half of something sometimes goes faster than the first. What if this is like climbing a mountain? The first half, going up, is tough and takes a while, but the second half, coming

down, is easy and doesn't take as long. Maybe it's just easy sailing, nice cruising, from here on in. But I don't think so. I'm starting to get a headache. I'm at about twenty eight hundred words now, and, while I wouldn't say I was "struggling," it is getting a little tougher. Plus I think I already caught my second wind and it's died down (reference earlier, I'm pretty sure that part came out my fingers). So yeah. Three thousand words might be it, and then I'll need a little break. Hit the bathroom, catch up on Facebook, crack my knuckles a bit. Is three thousand words my limit? Perhaps this is like running – you just need to train. Maybe I could do seventy five thousand words, a while fucking book, no sweat, just bang it out, if only I trained myself. Like training for a marathon. Type three thousand words consistently, then go for a ten thousand word "run" on the weekends, slowly building up the word count, then at the penultimate make do a forty thousand word novella, and then carbo load, have a nice spaghetti dinner (YUM I'M FUCKING HUNGRY TOO AND DID NOT EVEN FUCKING NOTICE UNTIL NOW WHOA) and then get up nice and early, head to a favorite coffee shop, sit down and BANG OUT A FUCKING BOOK BOOM (once again, "boom" not being a stand alone sentence. Hmm. (one word sentence. Concise). How long would that take. I've been at this a little over an hour at this point, and am on a little over three thousand words. So thirty thousand would take 10 hours, sixty thousand 20 hours, and seventy five thousand 25 hours. Holy Shit! (two word sentence, not that concise). It would take you approximately a day to "marathon" writing a book. Someone should totally do this. Sit down and do "the twenty four hour novel" and just write straight for twenty four hours and write a book. How amazing would that be. I put the odds at 15% that someone has actually done this, or at least tried to. That would be the most fucking concise book ever written! Or, actually, wait. I think I'm mixing it up. The whole concept of "conciseness" is actually now even set in my head. Is it when the thoughts get to paper all together? That would probably be the twenty four hour novel, there is no way you could bang out a seventy five thousand word or so novel in twenty four hours or so unless you did it like I'm doing now, just total sit down stream of consciousness, go baby go, and don't fucking let up, foot on the gas, pedal to the metal, straight ahead rock and fucking roll writing BOOM MOTHERFUCKER BOOM BOOM. Like that. (two word sentence, not so concise). That's how you'd have to do it. Conciseness ratio: 100%. Or 0%, I'm mixing myself up again. But can you even do that? Again, I feel like between 7% and 93% conciseness ration is actually the limit. I don't know which one. Maybe somewhere in between, like 44%. But there is a limiting factor. I think even the most skilled person, with incredible training, could not manage to make all his or her thoughts flow from their brain through their fingers without losing some to the ether. That's where conciseness lives. The ether. (Two word sentence, not so concise. Where did my one word sentences go? Haven't had one of those in a while. Maybe they go when I get in to the groove with this thing. Conciseness falls away, and the concise one word sentences with them) .

Now, just when I thought I might actually have the resolve to finish this up, I come to a peculiar thing. I have the motivation to go on. I can typity, type type type for the rest of the one thousand five hundred and change words I have left to write. No sweat. (two word sentence, not so concise. I could do it through tired devices like this, although remind me to tell you about the "humor curve" sometime, which might have an illuminating effect on these things). But my problem is this. I have the motivation. I can make the thoughts come out of my fingers for another ten twenty, however many minutes it'll take to finish. But I don't think I have much more to say on conciseness. I've explained the ratio thing, and also a few other points I've wanted to make. I'm just cruising now. The essay is really over. I have failed.

I am still concise. Three thousand five hundred forty four words and I am still fucking concise. I have said in these words what I was supposed to say in five thousand words. That leaves me a conciseness ration of 70.88% I think I calculated that right. I'm pretty impressed with myself that I was pretty much able to not completely keep this stream of consciousness thing one hundred percent going, but pretty much going pretty strong, and still calculate the ratio. I managed to figure that I just need to double the word count, because then I'll turn five thousand into ten thousand, and the doubled word count will be easily turned into a percentage from there. I know this sounds really, easy, but when you're writing stream of consciousness and making your thoughts come out your fingers without pause is what your brain is currently committed to, it's pretty fucking tough to tear away a corner to do math, not matter how simple it may be.

OK. That little aside took me to just over three thousand seven hundred words. I'm struggling now. I'm counting words. I have nothing left to say about conciseness, and precious little else to say about anything else. I'm getting drained. Tapped out. (two word sentence. Not so concise). But I can't stop now, I'm within spitting distance of banging out a fucking five thousand word essay on a whim, all for a picture frame (I already spilled that this was about the picture frame, right? At least initially. Now it's about something else, who knows what. Actually, I think I do know, or did, I think I talked about a few things – goals, to see what my brain is like doing this, maybe some other stuff I forgot, earlier in this essay, right?).

I mean, I'm already thinking about typing "Monkey Balls." Not even four fifths of the way there, and I'm already thinking about those last two words. OK. (One word sentence. Concise). I'm going to start the next sentence with the words "Conciseness – a continuing essay," and see if inspiration hits me from there.

Conciseness – a continuing essay. Well, this all started with one word being three. Conciseness ratio, 33 (or is it 66?) %. But no. (two word sentence, not so concise). That's not it at all. Now, your little project, having spawned this and, who know, maybe some other nutcase's five thousand word stream of consciousness essay, is not concise at all. I mean, the ratio has gone way down. But, perhaps that was your point. So now we have another interesting fact. The conciseness ratio is not stable. It is, or at least can be, affected by future action on the part of another person. If you write notes in a book, is the conciseness of the book affected? What about our wiki-esque era?

I mean, take Game of Thrones. Did I read the entire fucking huge long not concise at all books? No. (One words sentence. Concise). I read the wiki. Conciseness ration, probably 95% or something. Those books, at least the first one, were written without thought of a wiki. But does the wiki change the book? Does it change the conciseness ration? Is the author, affected by this knowledge, change future books to adjust for the wiki age, thereby changing the conciseness ratio of future works? This sounds like it almost may rip the whole space time continuum or something. But really it's bullshit. This shit right here is weak I'm struggling. (Two word sentence if you count contractions, not so concise). That was, I think my last little surge of meaning, and not a very good one, and now I'm just marking the words. I've managed, kind of scrappily, eek out about an 83% conciseness ratio or so. Still, kind of fucking weak.

But is it my fault? I'm a concise writer. This is new. Maybe the five thousand word goal affected me unconsciously. Maybe I could have banged out fifty thousand fucking words no problem if I had set myself that earlier goal of the twenty four hour novel. Oh. (one word sentence. Concise.). I remember one of those thoughts that slipped out in to the ether of conciseness that I'm now snatching back. When I first calculated the words to be written in twenty five hours I realized right away that I was only one hour off from a day. But I initially thought a day was twenty six hours. Can you believe that? Crazy right? (two word sentence, not so concise. I originally typed that as "two sentence word" before catching it, I wonder if I did that before?).

Struggling. (One word sentence. Concise). Constantly checking the word count. Digging for thoughts. I wonder if I stop typing, just let my brain slip out of this stage for thirty seconds or so, I'll already be behind my thoughts again. Wait, have I won? Am I behind my thoughts? I can't be, or I'd stop typing. Wait – I guess it would be am I ahead of my thoughts, not behind. How could that even be possible? That's not it. But it is something. I'm somewhere. (two word sentence, not so concise. By the way, I remembered about sneaking that two word sentence without that parenthetical by you. Did you catch it? Did I do more than one by accident I wonder?). I don't know where I am, but it's somewhere different from when I started, or was in the middle. I'm a little bit, just a tad, not really even there but just a little, struggling for thought. That's an alien place for me. Thought is here, of course, it's still flowing, but I'm having to grasp for it just a tad. The flow had a few rocks breaking the current. I can't just drift down then river, now I have to swim every once in a while. Just a lazy stroke here and there, nothing major, but it's different. OK. (One word sentence. Concise). Just a few hundred words to go. I wonder if I have anything left to say on the subject to conciseness. Nothing profound of course, just little last fart of thought pooting it's way out of my brain and out my fingers onto this virtual computer page before my five thousand words are up.

I am being concise. Fuck. (one word sentence. Concise). I realize I've been doing it a while. I fail (two word sentence, not so concise). My thoughts are there, my brain is still flowing. I have misread the struggle. I am tired now, not going full throttle after the thoughts that threaten to fly off in to the ether or conciseness. I have become content to let them go without a struggle, because my brain is tired. It is conciseness by laziness. Not laziness, that's not fair, exhaustion. And I am exhausted. I wonder what it's going to be like when I stop, and stopping soon. I'll probably have a headache. I'll notice how much my fingers hurt. I'll pee (it's not so bad, not like those times on the tour buses that were SO SO SO AWFUL AND WILL STAY WITH ME THE REST OF MY LIFE, just a little inconvenient right now). I'm almost there. And I just froze. For the first time, I really, truly, froze. Just second, but it was there. Is that the place I've been searching for during this almost two hour typing marathon?

If someone else does this, I won't be surprised I think. I can't be the only one who wants that picture frame! But if they get it in as quick as me I will be surprised. And pissed (two word sentence, not so concise.) And if they cheated and cut and pasted "concise" five thousand times or whatever, and you give them the thing, you're a bastard. And, actually, I can't imagine I won't keep the three words in the frame (and I might have always meant to, this whole "I want the frame" thing might just be me being weird and not genuine, I can't tell right now) not after doing this whole thing.

It's funny. For the first time I'm just a little bit watching my word count, worried about running out of room before I say what I have to say, even though I don't really have that much more to say, if anything. This is dovetailing nicely. I'm slowing down, easing myself out of this. I kind of want to drop it all at once, but that's not quite how it's going, and I think I'm OK with it. Still in the zone, but typing slower. It's hard to drop. The end will be as interesting as the process, I think. Monkey Balls.