

SHARE

PHILOSOPHY SHARING FOUNDATION

Issue 12

September 2019



An Interview with
Cartoonist Steve Bonello

Is Suicide ever Rational?
The Top 5 Philosophy Documentaries

A.I and Philosophy

Deflating the Ego

€ 2.99

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PHILOSOPHY SHARING FOUNDATION**ISSUE 12 - SEPTEMBER 2019**

Completing this twelfth edition of Philosophy SHARE, the editorial team feels rather enthusiastic about the fact that the magazine is slowly starting to build a legacy in terms of continuity. Although the readership is still a rather small one, the magazine has and continues to bring together some very interesting articles and interviews from people in Malta and around the globe.

As the magazine evolves, we are still experimenting with a few ideas as we prune off some elements and formats here and add some new ones there. More importantly, suggestions or ideas by our readers would be most welcome and if you have something that you would like to see, or see more of, in the magazine please get in touch with us by sending us an email on philosophysharingmalta@gmail.com

In this issue we have a very interesting and in-depth interview with Steve Bonello about his views on Maltese society and culture seen through his eyes as a cartoonist for over 28 years with the Sunday Times of Malta.

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SHARE MAGAZINE

Philosophy Sharing Foundation

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Cover Image: The Market at San Lorenzo by Steve Bonello

A Note to Future Humanity

Archeologists, historians, anthropologists, and researchers of the ancient cultures, even those pertaining to opposing philosophical schools of thought, would all implicitly agree on the fact that our past has left us enough clues and gems of wisdom to build a sketchy but reasonably good picture of ourselves as humans.

No matter how unprecise historical or archeological facts and theories might be, there is still sufficient material out there to abstract a general sense of what makes us who we are. The ebbing and flowing of civilizations, the grand political plots, warring nations, stories of people who thrived even in the most terrible of times, and all the other footnotes of history, have left the anecdotes for us to weave a story of Man.

Philosophy needs also to be preoccupied with this story, particularly what it tells us about our present but, more importantly, where we could possibly be heading in our future. For many, it seems that a glimpse into the future is a grim one. History, as the saying goes, repeats itself. Yet what is the main contributing factor that makes it so? Is it the incorrigible nature of Man to succumb to his basest unconscious drives, and remain in a state of amnesia, constantly forgetting the lessons, individually or collectively? Is it in us as individuals, who are too entranced in the madness of material life, to have the ability to break free from our shell of conditioning and limitations? Or perhaps has it also got something to do with us not writing or reading our own story of humanity to yield the right dose of knowledge from the past and the wisdom to get bearings on our future?

I believe, the last question, although it might sound obvious to many, is not a superficial one, and it is one that philosophers should be paying more attention to.

We think we know a lot about ourselves but do we? Are we honestly asking the right questions, addressing the right strategies and looking at the important issues for our future generations? These are questions relating to wisdom.

It is no armchair philosophising to say that our present world is experiencing a great deficit in wisdom. It's not the knowledge, archived information, or the technology to harness it that we lack, but the disposition or the will to use it in the right way. We have lost the culture of the wisdom keepers that pass on the lore to future generations through story-telling and myth. These stories were not figments of some elder's imagination.

When examined closer, one can see that these fire camp stories and myths were implicit answers to the right questions and addressing the needs of all the generations within the community while acting as a compass for navigating into uncertain times and future destinies. They were indeed, leaving a note to future generations that unlocks itself deep within the psyche of the listener once it comes alive again in some folk gathering or a meeting between tribes of people.

In our deep amnesia, we have forgotten the power of the story. We have disconnected ourselves from our ancestral line of wisdom keepers. We have become deaf, dumb and blind to the threads that weave the communal tapestry spinning and binding one generation to the other. In so doing, we entered into a state of suspended animation - detached from ourselves, our surroundings, past, present and future. We lost the stream of continuity that the story so greatly upholds.

The story of Man even if totally vocalised through mythical, only partial historical anecdotes, still carries more power and authority than just dry historical facts in documents. It is because the story holds within it a transmission from the collective past that stimulates the imagination to guide us into the future. This was particularly so in the oral traditions.

The story of Man should be a living note to future generations that is encoded with those pearls of wisdom resonating with every human in every epoch, reminding us of our common past and destiny within this grand human journey. It should also be a story of hope, of encouragement, but more importantly, a reminder of how fragile we are and that only we are responsible for our own future survival.

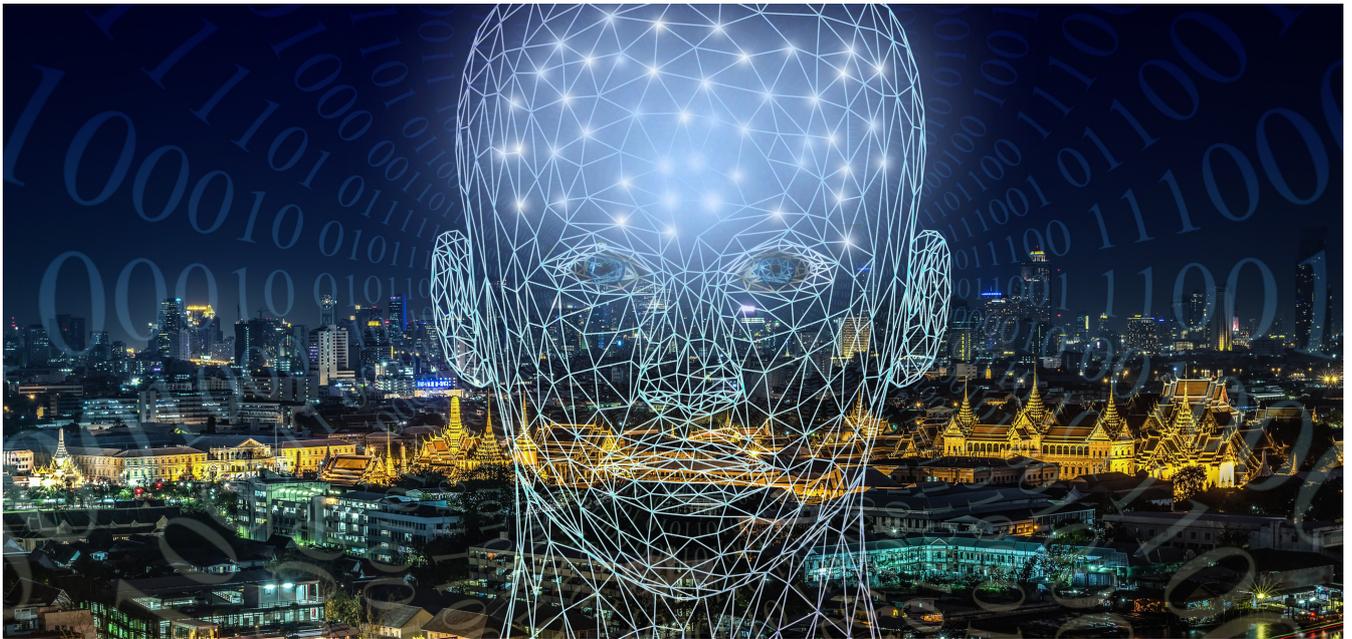
This story should not be lectured or simply written. It should be lived, celebrated in groups, sung and acted out. It is a story that doesn't talk about wars won or lost, or of shifting borders, but an inspiration of hope and a reminder to future humans about our strengths, our weaknesses and to never stop dreaming as a species. The story is a flowering of human consciousness and potential. It is up to us to stop gazing at our navel, and start putting our awareness beyond our immediate problems and circumstances. It is high time we start writing that note to future humanity, primarily through example and by living out the story.

Send us your entry for the next article writing competition!!

A 900-1000 word article with the title "Is Euthanasia an Ethical Choice?"

Your article submission is to be sent to philosophysharingmalta@gmail.com and the best written article will be published in the next issue together with the winning price which is a book on Philosophy and a free Philosophy course.

THE HUMAN-LIKE DESIGNED INTELLIGENT AUTOMATA DREAM OR A NECESSITY?



By Alexander Lazarov,

Apparently, we experience the last stage of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) advancement when the machines perform autonomous analytic-synthetic and Deep Learning capacities in laboratory conditions, thus still being designers' control dependent. Soon many AI systems will start operating in open environment, so our challenge is to discover paths for mutual productive collaboration, recognizing that the intelligent equipment strongly exceeds our mental abilities in data analysis and generating conclusions (patterns recognition). In a philosophical discourse, this perspective requires:

1. Philosophers joining the AI design creative process as all debates on human nature can provide engineers and software developers with crucial expertise.

2. Philosophy should also describe the approaching extraordinary change: the AI advancement and introduction to practice, positions everybody within never experienced circumstances of humans losing the privilege to be the only top-intelligent actors. We must anticipate a partnership and competition with automata, which (hopefully) will not cause injuries or destructions.

3. Evidently, a human-like AI design seems best to synchronize ours with the machines' targets, so such framework corresponds to a necessity, rather than to a dream.

These issues discussion needs awareness on autonomy, intelligence and on the difference between AI and robotics.

Autonomy is a term having been undergoing hot philosophical debates. However, the latest disputes sound like reaching agreement that despite of the various approaches applied, autonomous means the opposite of externally driven.

Among the variety of descriptions on intelligence, I recognize Hanson's[1] views as best serving the human-machine comparison. He claims that intelligence is a capacity of making predictions on future events, produced to react adequately to oncoming changes of state. According to him, we should recognize understanding of processes in any case the generated forecasts happen indeed. Evidently, the successful predictions number and complexity is a criterion to assess biological and automata's quality.

Wissner-Gross[2] advances Hanson's views by stating that as dealing with probability (considering diversity of scenarios to appear), besides foreseeing, intelligent bodies act to maximize the number of options possible to conduct in accessible futures. He insists that intelligence involves also a set of keeping freedom of action and opportunity choices in a time horizon.

In my opinion, in addition to Hanson's and Wissner's analysis, highest intelligent performance is also expressed in efforts to shape the future. Everyone plans tomorrow, next month, next year. At the same time, we aim "driving" the global climate changes, prolonging human life, designing AI and our relations with it, etc. Therefore, a top-quality AI should combine a comprehensive predictive function with general goal direction, targeting autonomous manipulation of processes, thus influencing their accessible future. If successful, immediately a challenge arises: our "autonomously modeled future" and AI's one will relate to common physical and social environment. Therefore, it makes sense to investigate what else is common between "them" and us:

- Any digital equipment unavoidably embodies hardware-software correlation provoking a parallel to the human Mind-Body Problem as discussed by Descartes.

- AI is memory dependent like humans. Machines experiencing memory failure appear non-intelligent as an amnesia-suffering patient.

- Computers' networking is constructed to exchange data and share tasks emulating human social correspondence.

- In any case, AI is copying our informational processing, including: data income (human perception); goal development and orientation (analogous to raising ideas and targeting); informational product autonomous generation via computer modeling and mathematical logic (copying human planning to realize ideas). Finally, we "granted" the automata our practice to choose whether to keep the "in-form" in privacy, make it visible virtually by "per-form", or providing direct real "trans-forms". Human and machine performances cause no substantial environmental changes but require a difference to the performance, for an intelligent observer to "read" it. Alternatively, conducting transformations results in changes of state, regardless if being perceived by others or not. However, providing trans-forms requires engaging periphery. This makes the difference between AI and robotics. Robots operate peripheral tools but need AI to generate the "in-form" to realise. On the contrary, if AI is dedicated to virtually shared activity (language interpretations, image recognition etc.) a display or a network are enough to publish its product.

Discussing what seems analogous between humans and AI, I do not claim they are equivalent. Many thinkers highlight the diversities' issues. I agree with most of their statements, but I recognise an opposite viewpoint as more significant. We foresee an unavoidable co-existence with something foreign to our nature. Therefore, it is better to debate what eventually could bridge us, rather than concentrating presumably on what makes us different. This is my oncoming book's emphasis: "The ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE HUMAN-LIKE CREATIVE FRAMEWORK: A Philosophical Approach".



We are not aware of what our origin is, but we know precisely that IT emerged because of human activity. Designing them is our opportunity and responsibility. I cannot present my arguments on the AI human-like constructive framework and benefits in a brief article. However, I outline two issues:

- A human-like AI is expected to make the machines share our standpoints, perspectives and some values, so that common approaches arise and bring fruitful results in both sides' assessment.
- Importantly, to achieve the above mission, we must correct the current AI project doctrine: biological intelligence has occurred and developed for recognising the oncoming events essentially

- to react in a self-protection mode. Currently, the Big Data/Deep Learning sets that AI operates appear as extremely higher than human cognition but serving no evolutionary purposes.

Therefore, the AI's self-protection algorithm is the necessary first step to apply. It will ground its advancement, because in this way the AI's assessment of good and evil will emerge on a common to ours path: what is dangerous is surely bad, and what is noncancerous is hypothetically virtuous.

P.S. Criticism is more than welcome:
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Notes

[1] David Hanson, Expanding the Design Domain of Humanoid Robot, Vancouver, Proc. ICCS Cognitive Science Conference, special session on Android Science, USA, 2016.

[2] Alex Wissner-Gross, A new equation for intelligence, TED.com. Archived from the original on 4 September 2016. Retrieved 7 September 2016

Are Perceptions Real?:

This is the winning submission by Roseann Galea for the philosophy article writing competition in issue 11 of this magazine. Well done Roseann and keep the words flowing!

The Oxford dictionaries define perception as ‘the ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses, the way in which something is regarded, understood,’ Perceptions are borne as soon as the brain receives raw data from our five main senses. Then the mind processes and gives relevant meaning to this sensory information. This information can mean anything but what is relevant is what we do with this information. The way we perceive things, issues and events is subject to our interpretations. There is a variable of context based on our past experiences and on the history of our interactions. Its form results from trial-and-error-obtained results and conclusions. Human perceptions and their roots are very real and can be life changing. Since the human is a deciding being, we respond to every stimulus thrown at us. However we have the space to exercise our power to choose our response, depending on our personal growth and our freedom.

Perceptions are crucial in our lives. One has to perceive a risk in order to act accordingly. A perception is created the moment one decides what to believe; so seeking to be objective and balanced in the observations, is essential. Objectivity, when it comes to perceptions, is very questionable since opinions about issues in a common environment are borne from each individual’s own perceptions based on one’s experience but which can redefine one’s mood. For instance when it comes to happiness there is no fixed standard defining happiness. There is only your personal definition of what happiness is to you. At times it is necessary to change your perception in order to stop feeling bad and adopt perceptions giving you more balance in your emotions. Balance is a fundamental virtue to ensure one stays level-headed.



The openness to create a new perception is the step forward to finding a direction to breakthrough



When it comes to perceptions arising from seeing, hearing, feeling and sensing things, there is no such thing as total objectivity. Each individual brain is not evolving in a common way and at a common rate to see the world as it really and truly is, but to see it according to the particular individual’s ecology arising from our own history of interactions. As a matter of fact it is not justified by our biology or by our DNA. Society influences us to a higher degree than we realise sometimes. It overrules our habits and gets into our way of thinking without us being aware and conscious. Not only does it influence our habits, but it forms our taste in food, our sensibilities, and constructs an image of what is good, bad and evil. This habitus, or social influence, is acquired through our daily activities and experience, as Aristotle put it. Unconsciously we rely on this influence for context. There are times when finding ourselves at crossroads, full of uncertainty and faced with perceptions based on falsehood, misunderstanding, bias and disunity, we just respond and not actually choose.

The openness to create a new perception is the step forward to finding a direction to breakthrough.

The creation of a new perception starts with the question ‘WHY’ opening a new channel to bring about change, novelty and creativity. We must become aware of our mind set and perceptions. What is sure is that we must not be hostile to and afraid of uncertainty. For innovation to take place in our perceptions, first and foremost we must be conscious of the link between the past and the present. Secondly we must observe ourselves. We must work on our own perception. I am who I am and if I do not study myself then my perception will turn out to be my problem and that of society ultimately. Our perception is so real that it defines our behaviour. Refusing flexibility in our perception, we close our mind to other possibilities and maybe even to the actual truth. We must also be continuously aware of how our habitat forms our habits and we must assure that we never give up the right to imagine a life, relationships and a social world that are happier, entailing more harmony, being more just and less anxiety oriented.

A perception might be an illusion when a sensory experience is misinterpreted and is not as it appears. It would be a wrong perception. However, it is still real to the person. A person might believe something true when he wants it to be true. A delusion results from a dangerous misperception or idea that misleads a person into a perilous pattern of thinking.

Perceptions are very really. However it is important to acknowledge that what is true is what is actually happening, whereas what is real is what the individual thinks is happening. A perception is real as it is what I experience and interpret through my belief filters based mainly on what I believe is true. It is possible that we misuse our perception by generalising about the world, thinking that in this way time and energy used in thinking, decision making and choosing are saved by using the phrase ALL ... ARE ... Perceptions are helpful as long as one does not jump to conclusions. One must keep in mind that just because something is perceived to be true, it does not make it true. I am my perceptions and ultimately I am the filter through which life, and all sensory information it brings with it, are interpreted. Though more or less stable, our perception of the world is definitely not static. We are not capable of being fully objective in our impressions and in our observations of the world around us as awareness of the objects around us is informed and modified by a variety of transient factors such as our strength and our energy level, our sense of confidence, our fears, our desires and our expectations. Being human means seeing the world through one’s relentlessly shifting lens making our perceptions real but not necessarily true.



CAN SUICIDE EVER BE RATIONAL?

By Vicky Downey



My favourite philosopher, Albert Camus once said that “there is only one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide”. This statement fizzled around in my head for quite sometime which led me to question the rationality behind an act of suicide. Unfortunately, millions of people die everyday but when one chooses to take their own life, there appears to be some sort of indiscernible affliction and confusion about this act. Death by murder, disease, or unforeseeable tragic accidents for example are forced upon someone. There was a lack of intention to die. However, the act of suicide is inexpressible. It consists of dark, pre-meditated thoughts, a plan and a means to achieve the goal, quite unlike someone who was unexpectedly the victim of murder, disease or an unfortunate tragedy. This article firstly defines suicide. The second half of the article briefly argues grounds for rational suicide and ground for irrational suicide.

A Rational Act of Suicide

According to the South African philosopher David Benatar, suicide is a significant act. It is the destroying of one’s existence (Benatar, 2017). I concur with Benatar that suicide is disastrous but nonetheless an act of suicide can be rational. To be clear, this does not mean I believe suicide is a justifiable way to die. Here, I interpret justifiable as an action that is right or reasonable. For example, I drink a bottle of water to quench my thirst. Instead, I shall argue that some acts of suicide are understandable. Hence, I think a more compassionate attitude is needed towards acts of suicide.

Firstly, those who commit suicide are collectively avoiding something. Therefore, I argue that what one wishes to avoid when choosing to commit suicide determines whether the act of suicide is rational or not. Therefore, I argue the following: The avoidant behaviour behind choosing to commit suicide is rational if one cannot in anyway avoid the reason for choosing to cease one’s own existence. For example, Subject A visits the doctor’s office for a check-up. During his visit, subject A is informed that he is suffering from an incurable disease that will cause him a lot of pain and even death in the near future. Upon receiving this news, subject A decides it is best to take his own life in order to avoid the consequences of this disease later on.

Therefore, I propose this example clarifies as rational grounds to commit suicide for the following reasons: Firstly, the disease is unavoidable which means suffering from the disease is unavoidable. Had the disease been short-term and the suffering was fleeting, suicide would not have been rational. For instance, choosing to commit suicide in order to avoid catching influenza in the winter season would not be a rational act of suicide. Influenza is a fugacious form of sickness and with the right medication, and remedies to help alleviate symptoms, it can ease suffering.

Secondly, the act of suicide is rational when diagnosed with an incurable disease because it will rob subject A of more pleasure than pain. Consider the following; if subject A loves running competitively but this disease will hinder subject A's ability to run in the future, the act of suicide is rational. Similarly, if subject A admires collecting and restoring vintage cars but will no longer be able to do this due to his disease then suicide is rational. The important thing here is that the bad must outweigh the good. One must be immensely and permanently deprived from any good when choosing to commit suicide.

In despite of my argument one may counter argue that suicide is not rational in this case as a possible cure for this disease could be discovered in the future. Therefore, ceasing to end one's existence early on is irrational as new interventions and treatments may later arise.



Conclusion

Suicide is the act of ending one's existence. It is sometimes a deliberating act which can affect friend and loved ones. However, I have argued here that acts of suicide can be rational due to the nature behind the act. For example, if a situation cannot be solved in extreme cases such as incurable illness that will lead to eternal physical suffering than the act of suicide is rational. Although, other reasons for choosing to commit suicide are irrational. For instance, experiencing a fleeting case of influenza. Suicide is a controversial issue and although it often carries stigma, it is important to consider the rational behind carrying out this act.

Vicky Downey is a philosophy lover based in Ireland. She graduated with a BA in Philosophy and Sociology in 2018 from one of Ireland's leading universities, University College Dublin. Her philosophical interests lie in the area of existentialism, ethics and also analytic philosophy.

FEATURED INTERVIEW: STEVE BONELLO

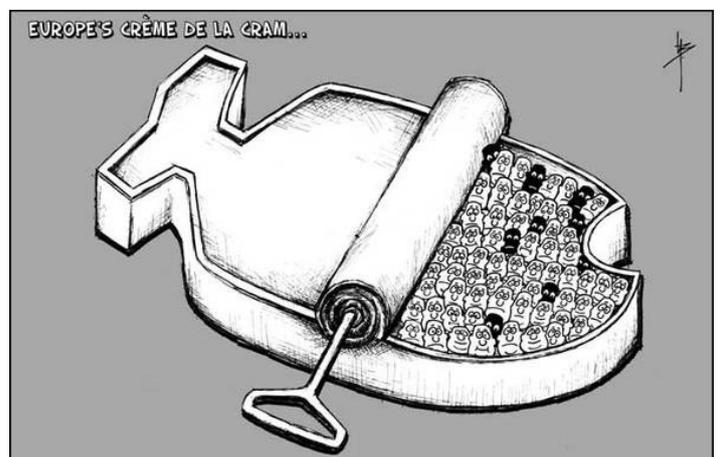


The Malta Police Force commemorates its 178th in July 1992

In this current issue, Share magazine interviews local cartoonist and illustrator Steve Bonello. Every single person living on this island has been at least touched once by his illustrations at some point, whether through their tongue-in-cheek humour, their stark political statement or simply because their truth resonates at some level. His cartoon strips have been published in The Sunday Times for the last 28 years. He has immortalised in ink, and other media, some of the most iconic political milestones and gaffes in recent history. Steve's art has also made way, and is fairly known, in some international circles. He has done several illustration work for local book publications and has occasionally showcased his life's work at local art galleries. We ask Steve a few questions regarding his art, how Maltese society changed over the last few decades and his opinion in general, this time in words and not in ink.

It's probably a cliché question when interviewing an artist but how did it all start?

I can trace my first drawings to when I was about 15 - I had an obsession with symmetry back then it seems and my earliest works are fancy church facades, with plenty of elaborate decoration and all very baroque - I suspect that is the island's baroque imprint having its first impression on me. A bit past my teenage years my work turned very dark for a while with huge influences from the likes of Bacon and Munch. The style I still utilise to this day evolved in the mid-eighties and the trigger was an impressive Ralph Steadman show in London which completely changed the way I look at cartoons and cartooning in general. Becoming a cartoonist...? Secretly I think I always wanted to be one from the time I started following Maurice Tanti Burlo (Nalizpelra) in the Sunday Times of Malta. When in 1991 a very young and outwardly bashful Daphne Caruana Galizia offered me the chance to draw a cartoon for her column it would have been suicidal to say no.



A 2008 cartoon depicting Malta's problem of a sharply growing population and unsustainable urban density

Do you consider your drawing styles to have evolved throughout the years? And if so, how?

Yes - the style has evolved as outlined above - however I remain incredibly faithful to my favourite medium - technical fine liner pens and ink. It has remained my favourite medium for about 30 years now and I must admit I am very conservative that way - even though I try out a vast range of pens every year.

How do you see society has changed over the last 10 or 20 years through your lens as a cartoonist?

Malta feels a lot more crowded these last few years - there's good and bad points to this. I love the added spice of multiculturalism and the influx of EU nationals which has made Malta much more interesting. But the mad drive towards all things development appears to be in overdrive and is - to my eyes at least - almost scary. There are parts of the island I hardly go to any more because I do not recognise Malta in them - the cesspit that is Paceville is a case in point. Politically - because ultimately I am also a political cartoonist - Malta, as elsewhere, seems to be entering a period where populism rules with what appears to be an unbeatable government on one side and a main opposition party which is now a laughable parody of itself. Not the best of times for a democratic environment perhaps but certainly interesting from a point of view like mine.

Where there ever moments where you or the editor hesitated from publishing a piece because of its political and public sensitivity?

The Sunday Times has always - to their credit - given me a free hand as to what I choose to draw or not draw. In 28 years I have maybe had problems with three or four cartoons at most and just one outright publication ban where I compared the (then shockingly innovative) ISIS public beheadings to what MEPA does to Malta. The full colour cartoon (electric orange boiler suit included) was deemed to be in bad taste hot on the trails of the first ISIS beheading video. I think it was the one and only time I had a screaming match with my then editor -



A 42 Storey Tower was proposed in Naxxar Trade Fair grounds in February 2004

partly also because I was away from my studio and was unable to produce another cartoon that week. The cartoon finally made it in print in a supplement of the same newspaper about a year later.

The degradation of the environment has been one of the recurring themes in your editorial work. Do you think the political class and the public at large are still insensitive to the issue in 2019?

The environment has been one of my main running themes these nearly 30 years of cartooning. I do not believe the political class has the will to do any drastic, positive initiatives towards the environment and I can see little coming from there. On the public's side there does seem to be a stirring of resistance to the havoc the politicians have wrecked over time. It's still early to say whether the public's actions come as too little too late but I prefer to hope.



"...And don't ever come back!" A cartoon from July 2015

Have you ever been criticized by political parties or individuals for making political statements? Whether yes or no, do you think that we are open to freedom of expression as a society?

Yes sure - that goes with the territory I guess. I run a very active (and interactive I'd like to think!) Facebook page and I get all sorts of reactions to the stuff put up. I get politicians from all sides reposting anything they think furthers their cause of course and I get my share of flak when I am outspoken and call out (for example) racism for what it is. As a society we have yet to learn what freedom of expression really means. Someone recently said most Maltese would rather give up their FOE than their car. A damning truism if ever there was one.

Which project do you consider to have been the most rewarding or fun to work with in your career?

Two books that were launched last year (2018) will remain highlights for a very long time I guess. The first is No Man's Land - a collaboration with Dr. Marie Briguglio ... and well the first book with my name on the cover as co-author I guess! It's an innovative and well researched overview of Malta's environmental story over the last 30 years and contains some 230 of my published cartoons on the subject. The second book is a very different affair. It's a slim volume of 52 poems by the brilliant Giulia Privitelli called Walking in Circles and I was asked to illustrate the volume and very much given a free hand to do so (that invariably brings out the best in me). You could say this one was a labour of love through and through



MEPA wakes up from a deep slumber and asks for police intervention to halt illegal developments by the country's foremost serial building laws breaker. Cartoon from September 2012

Is there a pet project you are currently working on or in the pipeline for the coming months?

I'm due to take part in a themed collective at the end of this year - I imagine that will be fun. Apart from that there is no other Project with a capital P I guess. What I HAVE been doing for a year or so now is actually drawing trees - something I never thought about as a subject until fairly recently. It started off as a bit of outdoor sketching with a friend and then went on as an exercise in building self confidence when that trait starts dipping... and then it became something of a passion with undertones of a political statement seeing as tree chopping is never far away from the news. This 'project' if you can call it that at all has been one which has made me really look at trees - perhaps for the first time in my life. It is also a therapy and a privilege to sit somewhere quiet in the company of one - or a few - majestic tree. People keep telling me to publish a selection in book form or exhibit them but to be honest up to now there are no such plans as yet.

PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTIONS & HOW THEY CAN DIRECT A.I

By Symon Baigah

Ever since mankind could reason, all endeavours have been geared towards one absolute outcome; to reduce mankind's need to actually do any work. We've invented complex systems and machines all to make sure that the actual amount of work a human does becomes less, while improving the quality of output. We are taking the stress of physical and mental labour off our hands and delegating it to machines. With the advent of computers, mankind could breathe a sigh of relief knowing that the strain of complexity was finally taken off its hands and put into the hands of something "faster, more capable, more precise"; in other words, something better than a human being for tasks that required more repetition than creativity. The issue is what happens when mankind outsources everything, even the thinking, to a machine. Every day, rooms full of brilliant and talented people are trying to figure out ways to make computers smarter and freer so that they can think about certain things so a human doesn't have to. No doubt that would make certain things easier, but also it would get us closer to the nirvana we seek; the very antithesis of our existence, a life without work.

First of all, as the name suggests, Artificial Intelligence is a man-made form of intelligence that mimics human intelligence. It isn't the same because there are other factors that make up human intelligence that are hard to quantify, for now. These factors, cumulatively, can be called "heart and soul".

They are the wellspring of creativity and expressiveness and individuality. This is where mankind's sense of purpose and resolve come from. Mankind is building machines to replicate/replace them, at least in a manner of speaking.

According to Wikipedia, the following are the key attributes of an Artificial Intelligence:

Analytical: cognitive intelligence using learning based on past experiences to inform future decisions

Human-inspired: cognitive and emotional intelligence, understanding human emotions, in addition to cognitive elements, and considering them in their decision making.

Humanized AI: shows characteristics of all types of competencies (cognitive, emotional and social intelligence), is able to be self-conscious and is self-aware in interactions. Let's say we are at a point where Artificial Intelligence has been achieved. Is it distinguishable from human intelligence? If it is, is it better or worse? At the very least, it would be similar to human intelligence.

"Roko's Basilisk is a thought experiment about the potential risks involved in developing Artificial Intelligence.

he experiment's premise is that an all-powerful artificial intelligence from the future could retroactively punish those who did not help bring about its existence, including those who merely knew about the possible development of such a being.”

Would the Artificial Intelligence have the same values as mankind does? Would it respect or abhor the same things humans do? Would it protect what mankind wishes to protect and destroy what it wishes to destroy with the same zeal? How would it know the importance of one thing over another in a way that benefits those intended to benefit? If it knew a better way, would it be free to carry out those activities? Would it work supervised or unsupervised? And if it's the latter, who would be in charge of the supervision.

At some point, Artificial Intelligence would look like an all-powerful weapon, whose net effect on the world depends on who is in charge of it and what their plans are. And if the Artificial Intelligence knew the outcome and wished to change it for a better result, how free would it be to do so? Would this not lead to a closed consequential loop? No matter how far you run or how complex systems get, the chaotic and the predictable elements come from the same source – humanity.

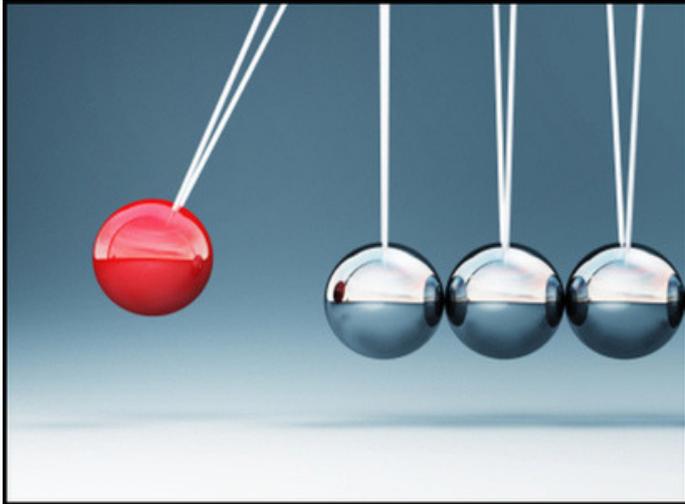
But for how long would it be the servant? How long would it take for it to see the many failures of humanity and decide that it would do a much better job of making the world a better place for us to live in? That's if we can assume that it has humanity's best interests at heart. Even if it did, unless it understands what those are in the same way that humans do, it will give us what we'll interpret as a vague approximation of human interests.

Would the Artificial Intelligence have the same values as mankind does? Would it respect or abhor the same things humans do?

If we require safety, it will confine us to our homes. If we want robust health, it will eliminate as soon as possible those with terminal illnesses in order to 'save resources'. If we want food, it will deliver it to us, and we'll become lethargic. If we want freedom, it will create stiff rules within which we can enjoy that so-called freedom. If you want peace, it will monitor every activity of ours, ready to snuff out the slightest flame of unrest. Whoever challenges its notion of peace will be labelled a dissident. Whatever humanity wants, it will give the most grotesque version available. And why would it think otherwise? Because it would believe that what it offers is an incorrigibly absolute solution that it thinks 'accounts for every human being on the planet'. Then will it have to change its perspective to ours, or will we have to see things from its point of view? While the former might be challenging, the fact that it would inevitably choose the latter is scary. Would an Artificial Intelligence have discovered the well-spring of human creativity and thus be able to create at will, without need for musing? Would it spend quality time pondering on the vagaries of life and how they connect to the established order? Would it understand that some choices, however horrific, need to be made? That it would probably manage. The only problem would be that it would take it to the absolute limit.

Symon "Kenny" Akena is a deep thinker who likes to occasionally pen his thoughts. He's a writer who has published articles in various blogs, written a few scripts for educational videos and dabbled in Graphic Novel writing.

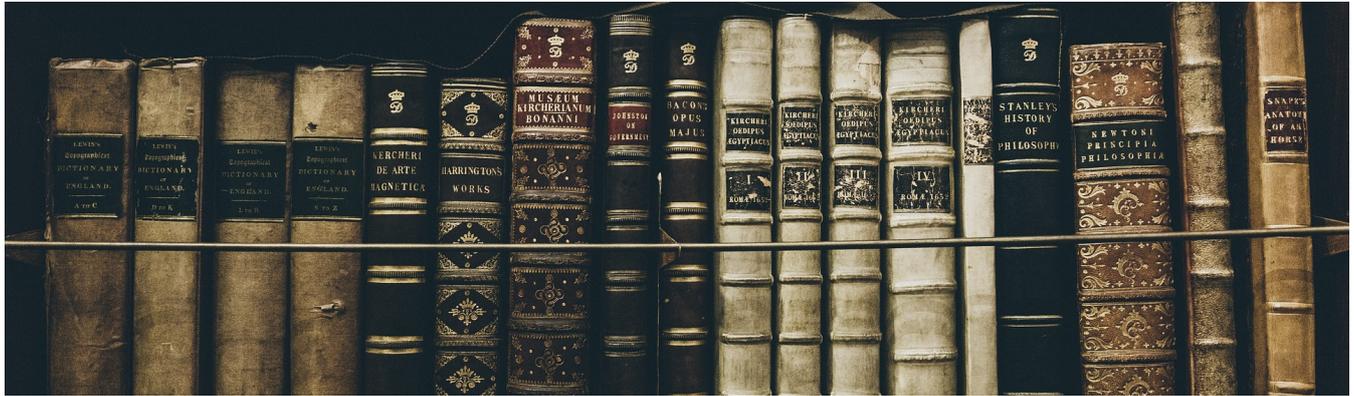
DAVID HUME'S DECONSTRUCTION OF CAUSALITY



Another way to explain it is that Causality could always be contradicted unlike in relation of ideas or what is formally known as Coherence truth wherein one plus one is always equals two. It is static and can never be contradicted in view of Coherence. What most people consider as a principle of Causality is, once again, 'no principle' at all because there is no ultimate definite relation between the ideas of cause and effect. Every person is always trapped to verify Causality and never to just clarify it. This is what is informally known to as Hume's 'Engine of Destruction' (Deconstructive engine) .

David Hume was classified as one of the proponents of Empiricism in Britain. Unlike his predecessors, Hume has paid attention to analyze and breakdown the principle of Causality into a finer understanding, even rejecting its status as a principle. He speaks of Causality as not being a principle at all because a principle is something definite or static, when on the other hand, the reality of this apparent principle exists only as matters of facts otherwise formally known as Correspondence truth which is dynamic, such for instance that "there is a black swan or there is fire therefore there is a smoke." Nothing is really definite as matters of fact and you cannot definitely or precisely say that this amount of Oxygen and Hydrogen makes water. In short, the principle of Causality originates from matters of facts, meaning from a nexus of experiences which can never be objectified so as to become a principle such as Causality in real terms.





The 'via negativa' in Hume's 'engine of destruction' of Causality is that it destroys foundations and those foundations are left destroyed for good, like the deconstruction of language whereas there is no discourse, meaning, or interlocutor left. Everything is left to personal and distinctive experiences of the self. The foundation of distinctive and personal experiences of the self, on the other hand, is Hume's 'via positiva' of his so-called engine of destruction.

The 'Via Positiva' in David Hume's engine of destruction then is not an empirical-correspondence nor analytical-logical thing rather a Phenomenological thing. Hume's 'via positiva' is similar with the 'via positiva' of postmodernism. People of the postmodern world seem to have lost their "Nostalgia" to anything remarkable, a sort of a loss of a search or reflection for meaning (meaning for themselves). Individuals in the postmodern world seem to be capable of easily detaching themselves even from beautiful and classical art or books for example to which they should supposedly feel 'nostalgic' or aesthetically move.- but this is not the case. They just love to live the moment – or at least so it seems from an outside point of observation. Welcome to the postmodern world, where there is no Causality.

Another and final point of similarity or convergence is the loss of method. The apparent principle of causality is a method in itself that has been confined unconsciously into the matters of facts and relation of ideas.

Yet, in our very own consciousness, it is destroyed. The very principle which vitalizes philosophy is the very principle which is killing it for the method itself defeats the purpose of philosophy - to realize the "Logos". There is no Universal method to agree upon, but the 'Logos' reveals itself almost universally as held by Philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas. In Phenomenology, the 'Logos' is termed 'Aletheia' where it is something revealed to the conscious mind rather than something we know unconsciously through methods. The assumption for example that a person will pass his/her examination because he was well reviewed and studied hard is in fact an assumption of method. It is an assumption of cause and effect. This also includes the age-old abused empirical assumption that just because I don't see God, therefore God doesn't exist or that of the problem of evil which says that just because there is too much evil in the world therefore there is no God. That cause and effect is destroyed for good in Hume's Engine of destruction (via negativa) but it has also opened up a way that converges with a more philosophical truth - the Logos or Aletheia (via positiva).

Christian Umlano Bumidang is a Philosophy graduate from Rogationist Seminary College of Philosophy, Manila, Phillipines. He is a senior high school teacher and currently undertaking an Masters degree in Philosophy at the Lyceum of Appari Cagayan, Phillipines.

EDITOR'S PICK: BEST 5 DOCUMENTARIES ON PHILOSOPHY

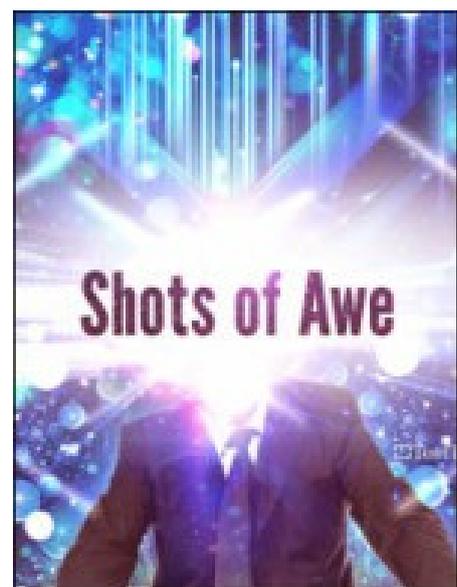


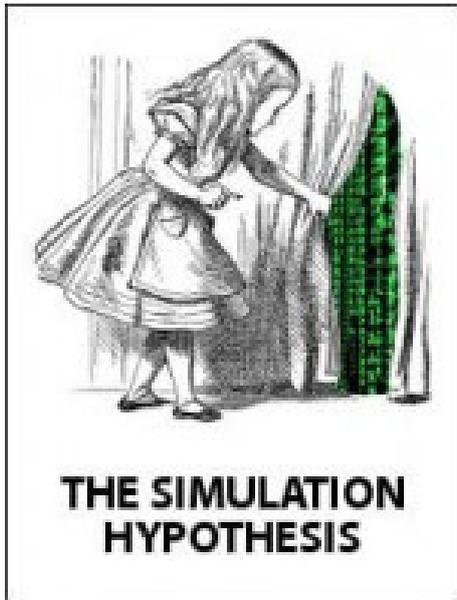
The Nature of Existence

What are the answers to the great questions of life, and who is certain they know the truth others have been struggling to find for centuries? For *The Nature of Existence*, Nygard prepared a questionnaire with 85 weighty philosophical questions ranging from Why do we exist? and Do we have free will? to Who created God? and Is there a moral yardstick that applies to all cultures?

Shots of Awe

Silva aims to inspire and excite those not versed in the topic through the passion he clearly has for the subject matter he's presenting, and every single episode of *Shots* leaves you feeling inspired and hopeful about what human beings can and will accomplish in the years to come.



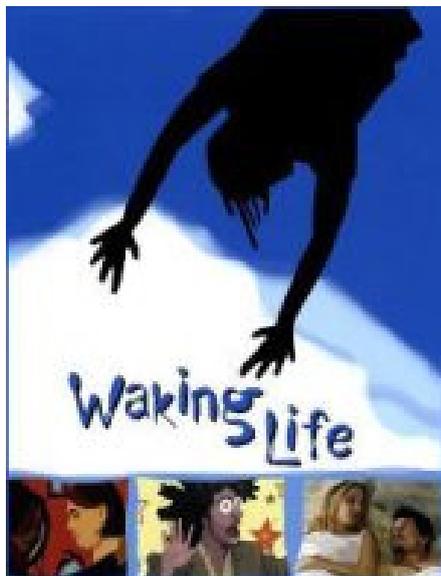
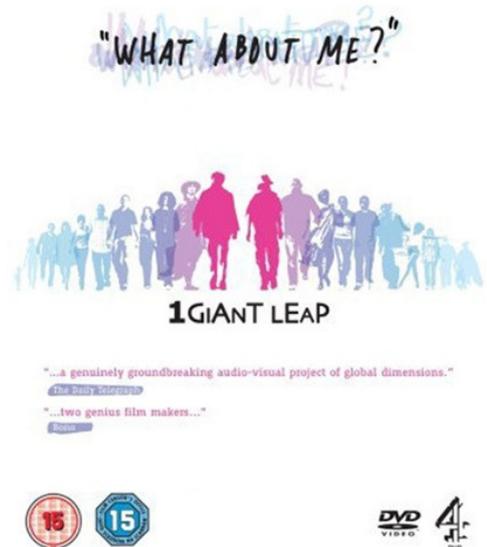


The Simulation Hypothesis

Is everything an illusory simulation? Was the world created by a non-physical force that we can communicate with and possibly influence with our minds, thereby participating in the creation of our own reality? These are the grandiose existential questions central to this documentary, which introduces viewers to the concept of the Simulation Hypothesis.

One Giant Leap: What About Me?

Jamie Catto and Duncan Bridgeman travelled for 7 months through all 5 continents, and recorded in over 50 locations to create the most inspiring film and album they could imagine. Their mission was not only to gather insights on the huge universal themes of life from the most inspiring and illuminating people they could find, but also to seek out the cream of the world's musicians and compose immense multi-layered music with them.



Waking Life:

Richard Linklater's 2001 effort titled Waking Life is a shining illustration of his singular voice. It also contains many of the elements that have preoccupied him throughout his career; mainly in its use of non-actors, its exploration of complex themes like existentialism, and its boldly imagined challenge to traditional narrative form and structure.



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COURSES FOR LIFE!

MONTHLY TALKS

DATE: 2ND OCTOBER 2019

SPEAKER: MR. VALDELI PEREIRA

TITLE: THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION: DIALOGUE BETWEEN MARXISM AND CHRISTIANISM

DATE: 6TH NOVEMBER 2019

SPEAKER: JUDGE SILVIO MELI

TITLE: IL-LIĠI, IL-ĠUSTIZZJA U L-MUŻI

DATE: 4TH NOVEMBER 2019

SPEAKER: PROF. OLIVER FRIGGIERI

TITLE: IL-ĦSIEB U ALLA

DATE: 8TH JANUARY 2020

SPEAKER: JUDGE TONI ABELA

TITLE: TBC

COURSES

DATE: OCTOBER 2019

SPEAKER: DR. JOHN AVELINO

TITLE: PHILOSOPHY OF PERCEPTION

DATE: NOVEMBER 2019

SPEAKER: DR. MARIO ZAMMIT

TITLE: THE 8 LIMBED YOGA PHILOSOPHY & THE CREATION OF VALUE: A PRACTICAL GUIDE

DATE: JANUARY 2020

SPEAKER: MR. JORGE GIRO

TITLE: INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM

philosophysharing news m a l t a



Prof. Joe Friggieri giving out a public lecture titled "What is Art?" on July 3

The Philosophy Sharing Foundation held a number of talks this summer. It invited the general public to attend and also participate in discussions at the end of the talks. Below are some images of the recent talks given.

Gilbert Ross delivering the talk "Are We Living in a Simulated Reality?" on August 7



Hon. Evarist Bartolo - A public talk on Gramsci: "Għażiż Delio, aġiti daqqa ta' sieg lill-holm fil-vojt ..."



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the gozo experience

SUMMER IN GOZO



Summer in Gozo means relaxing, swimming, meditation and beautiful sunsets by the sea; Philosophy Sharing Gozo adapts all activities according to the season. During this summer we met at Xwejni Bay usually just before sun down to imbibe ourselves with the powerful wisdom of nature's beauty. It is not just a figure of speech, , since we didn't have on every occasion a planned topic to discuss; we just let ourselves go wild with whatever argument might come up as the sun rolls below the horizon and the stars come out in the clear night skies. Oh yes, maybe it's strictly academic, but is it this what we are looking for, especially, after, most of us, moved to Gozo aiming to find less of the so called merry-go-round. The August's discussion was about Kant's article "What is Enlightenment".

The motto 'Sapere Aude!' resonates instinctively in our hearts: "Have courage to use your own understanding!" However, we considered that Kant was too prudent, since he predicates a sort of two reasons: the public and the private reason. In the public use, one can be free, but in the private use, one may be narrowly restricted. What is the private and the public reason? Kant says "By the public use of one's own reason I understand the use that anyone as a scholar makes of reason before the entire literate world. I call the private use of reason that which a person may make in a civic post or office that has been entrusted to him." I would prefer to add "Have courage to use your own understanding and act accordingly!" Is it too much revolutionary to be consequent? Hope you can join us for next pizza meetings: philosophysharinggozo@gmail.com.

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