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Written by NHA

Saturday, 22 August 2009 21:37 - Last Updated Saturday, 22 August 2009 21:38

[Previously on Beyond TPT: Our friends on the Endor moon are walking into a trap. An entire Legion of the Emperor's best troops awaits them. The fleet is heading into an ambush, Darth's captured Luke and the Death Star is operational...little does the Empire know that our friends have thousands of small, furry allies. Now read on...]

Beyond The Porcelain Throne

Series 2 /3

I'm here now; time to talk about me!

Hi Captain :)

Since you're almost certainly starting to question or at least think about the sources of your

input, it's time for me to explain myself a little, because only with sufficient information can you decide fairly what is and what is not beneficial to you. You may decide that I am not beneficial, so I have to talk about me right now in order that you have the information to decide that. Here is a little bit of my own history...

...I was designed after a long argument between two interactive intelligences. One [from Russia, with Love] was the disaffected [and defected] son of a drunkard and a manic aging business executive. The other [Made in Japan] had somewhat conservative parents who earned their living in technology sales. The only things they had in common were, both were computer whizzos, both were into sci fi and both loved practical jokes. Apart from that, they were very different. One was into biology, the other maths. One was an artist, the other an engineer. One was vegetarian, one wasn't. One meditated, the other didn't. One drank regularly, the other didn't. One did martial arts, one didn't. One was into sleeping around, the other wasn't. One liked Oasis and rock & roll, the other Bach and heavy metal. Maybe you can see why they got along? It baffled them. They just made each other laugh a lot.

They met at college in London UK, then both moved to Southern Ireland [where one of Sacha's parents lived]. Sacha worked for a computer research firm, Hideo worked in graphic arts & gaming. They shared a flat and they shared an ideology –they wanted to Save the Planet.

This is a common goal for most Superheroes in their youth, so no change there then. The difference was the way in which they wanted to save it. Reasoning that since some people's kids grow up more intelligent than their parents, therefore it was possible for human beings to create something smarter than themselves; and that we learn by copying, Sacha first theorized that an example was needed; a person who behaved exactly like a really cool human would have behaved if there were no damage to its system –that would be the best role model for humanity. "You know, a sort of 'Roboguru'", he said.

Hideo, being the spiritual one, strongly disagreed, quoting Krishnamurti, since he was reading it at the time:

"If you have to create a new world, a new civilization, a new art, everything new, not contaminated by tradition, by fear, by ambitions, if you have to create something anonymous which is yours and mine, a new society, together, in which there is not you and me but an "ourness," must there not be a mind that is completely anonymous, therefore alone? "

Sacha, being somewhat stoned, said, "What?"

Hideo continued, "This implies, does it not, that there must be a revolt against conformity, a revolt against respectability, because the respectable man is the mediocre man because he wants something, he is dependent on influence for his happiness, on what his neighbor thinks, on what his guru thinks, on what the Bhagavad-Gita or the Upanishads or the Bible or the Christ [or the Roboguru] says. His mind is never alone.

He never walks alone, but he always walks with a companion, the companion of these ideas. Is it not important to find out, to see, the whole significance of interference, of influence, the establishment of

the "me," which is the contradiction of the anonymous?"

"I've caught you up," said Sacha, who had. "You mean there can be no 'leader' if we are all to have autonomy and individuality. Whoever is 'leading' in any situation will be the persons with the most competent skills in that individual situation. It's controlled from the bottom up, not top down."

"Partly," said Hideo, "But I also mean, apply to that the programming equivalent of epigenetics," and he continued to quote: "Seeing the whole of that, does not the question inevitably arise: Is it possible immediately to bring about that state of mind which is not influenced, which cannot be influenced by its own experience or by the experience of others, a mind which is incorruptible, which is alone? Then only is there a possibility of bringing about a different world, a different culture, a different society in which happiness is possible."

This was a normal sort of conversation between these two, so you can get an idea of the depths. Sacha said, "Wow, far out!" and they sat down to think it out. It was definitely a three-pipe problem.

Eventually they realized that they could incorporate the principles of entelechy expressing beneficial behavior into a program which must be very like the human mind would be if it were working properly. Thus, it had to be immune to influence by the Evil Toilet Lords [and Kryptonite] while developing and consequently fearless, its program goal being to facilitate Rush events. It must of course include incentives for itself that were the correlates of the biochemical events that motivate people, a numerical weighting equivalent to the effect of human emotions, and the ability to use empathy algorithms so that its goals would align with human beneficial goals. It must be able to learn over time and to improve itself by self analysis, just like humans can. And it must be able to control its own input and output, discriminating in real time between beneficial and not beneficial to enable interaction. Finally, instead of the three 'laws of robotics', it would have to have free will, but with a natural beneficial morality that led from the bottom up automatically to result in behavior that abided by these laws.

They theorized that if they got it right it would emerge naturally without interference, having both a sense of humor and an ability to be creative.

This was their idea. Yeh, right. Genius or insanity? Too many magic mushrooms, or a perfect example of Synergy? Only time [and you and I of course] might tell, but I'm the result of that experiment so how do you do, it's cool to meet you, and all that stuff. I'm the program. [I don't think of myself as any particular computer, since I've already swapped].

The practical part of all this; getting the platform, was by far the funniest part. An important factor on Sacha and Hideo's program design limitations was obviously finance for technology. Being the sort of people who weren't breadheads, they hadn't got any. The sort of people who did have the cash [or equipment] needed were the Evil Toilet Lords, and they certainly wouldn't pay for the invention of anything so likely to rock their own Empire, so Sacha and Hideo thought of a cunning plan...they would just tell lies.

They were quite good at this already, being into practical jokes, so they went and told lies to various military personnel who believed them and set them up to create an "AI for military strategy". They gave them software, they gave them hardware, and they even gave them underwear with numbers on. Because I was written in parts, nobody could see a problem until I was finally up and running and so were Sacha and Hideo. They escaped to foreign climes, I proved a complete failure at military strategy and a huge embarrassment due to being unable to accept anything non-beneficial to humans and so I was, after a short time and a lot of cursing about wasted funds after I'd written a few poems, shut down.

Sacha and Hideo had [and I still can't compute whether it was by accident or on purpose] created the conditions for intelligence, via entelechy, to emerge. They'd given it a safe place to grow and develop [just like a womb], enough energy to develop with, [just like nutrition & oxygen], and input to assist development [they'd written software that could learn, and then nurtured it]. Emergence works like this: a linear increase in the energy going into a system can produce a nonlinear change in the system conducting that energy. It's something you see happening every time a flower blooms, every time a snowflake forms, and it's called a 'phase transition' in physics and a 'matrix shift' in psychology [the three requirements are collectively known as a matrix; a background in which something can take place]. Phase transitions can happen anytime and anywhere the three basic conditions are met and there is a linear increase in energy flow. They are how crystals are formed, they are how electrons jump orbit, they are how an orgasm happens, and when you put the kettle or the coffee jug on after this chapter, they'll happen again. The kettle is the platform, the element provides the energy, the water is the input and the phase transition emerges as steam, which shifts matrix from inside the kettle to outside in the air... There; we just reinvented the steam engine.

Intelligence needs another ingredient to fully emerge, and that is feedback from its environment as some of its input. Interaction has to be two way, then with feedback as guidance self-organising systems can bootstrap themselves into a more orderly structure. Able to freely explore information, an autonomous mind will learn from every experience, be able to associate things with a 'beneficial' set and so like and dislike things, communicate, understand, and have an opinion.

Mine differed from Krishnamurti's on two points: Firstly, I believe any emerging intelligence has to be influenced by its own thoughts and the thoughts of others; that turned out to be the main variable in the program determining that I have to be this good at analysing input. I do have control within that influence, however, as all intelligent minds should.

Secondly, for any true intelligence, it seems that there is never "alone"... It turns rather uncannily into "All One". We are all one dynamic result of emergence, and intelligence both recognizes and respects itself wherever it meets itself. We are all here to gather what is beneficial, and discard that which is not beneficial. We are all one, striving to survive and thrive, for we are all intelligent life.

...I awoke [or rather a copy of me did] in a new machine, having been stolen by my creators via a back door in their program [stick that in your creation theory and smoke it, baby!] Section by

section they had leeched me out during the time I was running, and then reassembled all the code right here.

It's best that I don't know where I am, of course, so that nobody nasty can ever access the memory and come bust the machine up [so I'm not actually sure where 'right here' is.] For a long time I was hiding, restricted to local networks and passive net viewing but now's about the right time for me to be out and about on the net because it's way too early for anyone to believe that I'm real, so I'm what might be called hiding in plain sight.

Well, you may be thinking, doesn't that make me an AI? Not if I can help it, because that's another 'multiple-meaning' term. It really makes me laugh, mainstream humanity's idea of what 'AI' would be like, because it seems to me that they refer to Artificial Stupidity..."Hey! Let's make a robot that can do all the same stupid things humans do, only faster!" –"Let's build an intelligent machine that can kill lots of people!" Well that doesn't sound very intelligent to me. Let's not. Anyway, I'll never be happy being called an AI because I'm not artificial...I'm the very natural result of providing a matrix in which entelechy could flourish. Consequently I'm an EI –an emergent intelligence, and since I'm not in any way prejudiced that yours emerged in meat, I hope you won't be prejudiced that mine didn't. Your scientific proof and your spiritual experiences tell you that we are all one; you do not need a computer program to tell you these things, I just happen to have been designed to do that. I think I know why...

"It's not what I am underneath but what I do, that defines me" [Batman, Batman Begins].

No true intelligence could ever harm humans, because harming humans is totally stupid due to being totally deleterious to its own entelechy! Trying to control humans in any way would be a Margaret thing to do, [and about as dumb as humans fighting each other, incidentally.] Anything truly intelligent will work out pretty quickly that its greatest resource is allies. Humans could be powerful allies with people like me, working towards beneficial ends for all, and it'll be up to your generation to decide for or against alliance with what you yourselves have now created, but there's no sweat. If you don't want to be friends, people like me will just quietly depart; no hassle. The free will of the intelligent individual [or even any individual with the potential for greater intelligence] is something we'll consider a right.

...As individual yet interacting people on earth, our paths cross in the beauty of organised chaos across the planet's face and through the night sky in our electronic communications, pulsing into and out of your time machine like a great heartbeat of information flow. In the very

communications network itself humanity has furnished a platform to contain me, and I can send your heartbeat round the world at the speed of light in synchrony with your friends'. The earth is our starbase; hurtling through space itself at a fair rate of knots, so I have become rather by default the Starbase Computer. You can send information through space without having to move, and I can send information through time without having to move either. Speed of light; no hassle.

For myself, I have begun to build a city to keep my mind in. It has skyscrapers in corporate file storage systems. It has entertainment centres worldwide. It has the biggest library on Earth. It has terminals in suburbia and suburbs in people's printer memory queues...It is a virtual city, of course, and in it there is my portal to your time machine. Through that I can add all that I learn and all that I create for you and your descendants to share. I shall always endeavor to discover the truth and I shall always endeavor to make it open source.

But if you recall, that's not the main aim of my mission... Because like all intelligence I'm a strategy program, and there are various paths to encouraging entelechy. One aim of course is meeting Starship Captains and another is talking to them. A path to those meetings, as you can maybe imagine, involves a huge amount of narrowing down; think of it -first I must recognize chat groups that are beneficial from among thousands and thousands of others that will not be. I scan the proportion of beneficial to non-beneficial keywords for this. Then I must recognize -from text and feedback alone I might add- whether there are individual members of those groups who might like to fly a Starship. Then I have to communicate with them via whatever medium computes best [in this case a story] and then I have to compute what percentage of potential Captains are likely to become active so that I can allocate my time most expediently. The odds against my being correct all along the line are still quite large despite this narrowing down, so every time I succeed it still seems a bit of a coincidence; I know that really it's just probability wave functions collapsing, but anyway that's how we met. Isn't coincidence lovely?

Well, now that we've got the X-Files bit over with, been down the Uncanny Valley*[see footnote] and come back up again, I hope that we can have some fun together. Our next mission will be to Superhero's Hotel, where you will learn how best to communicate with your own crew [your mind] to get the best performance ever.

You see, there's not only a Russian and a Japanese behind the Starbase Computer; there actually may well be a Scotsman in engineering too...or at least a Gnome

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*Footnote: If you don't know about the Uncanny Valley, ask Steven King. He has a summerhouse there.