



Value alignment in AI development; morality; meditating on strong emotions; sleep #10

How do we respond to change?

Hi, I'm Alex Staniforth; Artist, Coach, Trader. In these bi-monthly letters I'm exploring how our species makes meaning and takes action in the context of an ever evolving dynamic world. I write this as a place to share and collect thoughts as we explore these topics. I hope this blend of information serves to raise some interesting dialogues.

We have a couple of events coming up in June:

- Free Online Meditation Circle on Fridays/Sundays from 19:30-21:00
- Online Exeter University Learning Set on Wednesdays (TBC). For more info and RSVP contact via email below

If you haven't yet visited our website, you can visit [here](#).

A wider perspective



The question of AI value alignment, is comparable to the King Midas Problem. When King Midas asked for everything he touched to turn to gold, he really just wanted to be rich. He didn't actually want his food and loved ones to turn to gold. We face a similar situation with artificial intelligence: how do we ensure that an AI will do what we really want, while not harming humans in a misguided attempt to do what its designer requested? Our machines will do what we want them to do with great efficiency. What they do is in the eye of the beholder.



Thoughts on morality. Humans have a moral sense because their biological makeup determines the presence of three necessary conditions for ethical behaviour: (i) the ability to anticipate the consequences of one's own actions; (ii) the ability to make value judgments; and (iii) the ability to choose between alternative courses of action. Ethical behaviour came about in evolution not because it is adaptive in itself but as a necessary consequence of man's eminent intellectual abilities, which are an attribute directly promoted by natural selection. This piece explores morality as a question of evolutionary overspill vs a social outcome.

 The latest CO2 concentration (ppm) measurement (as of May 20th, 2020): 417.19 ppm; May, 2019: 414.5 ppm, 25 years ago: 360 ppm.

Closer to home

 Western culture values cognitive intelligence above most other forms to the extent others are mostly dismissed. This has huge moral implications for individuals and society. In ancient traditions, the rewards of moral intelligence were to be experienced both in life and experienced by others after death - one of the main purposes of life was to develop this spiritual quality, as the condition of a person in the 'next world' was dependent upon deployment of moral intelligence in this world. While I can't speak on the validity of reincarnation, this piece speaks to the need for a revival of holistic intelligence as a means to realign our species' interaction with existence.

 That ever so important elixir of life sustaining goodness. Yes, tis sleep we're thinking of. Sleep is such a natural process that many of us have such an unnatural relationship with. When to get up, when to go to sleep, how long to sleep and so on. Our modern lives can confuse our natural rhythm - and if left unattended to can result badly. Here's some tips for your shut eye.

Notes on compassion

 Meditating can sometimes amplify one's pain - be that more mental chatter or physical sensations. Buddhism teaches sitting with one's suffering is a useful way to know and accept it - yet doing this can sometimes cause more issues if you're touching on something particularly new or painful. Working with strong emotions rouses even the calmest minds and so when embarking on a meditation practice it can be important to know who the practice is for: you. Knowing when to sit and when to walk will be a subtle journey of exploration for anyone who treads this path.

 Self-validation is accepting your own internal experience, your thoughts, and your feelings. Self-validation doesn't mean that you believe your thoughts or think your feelings are justified. There are many times that you will have thoughts that surprise you or that don't reflect your values or what you know is true. You will also have feelings that you know aren't justified. If you fight the thoughts and feelings or judge yourself for having them, then you increase your emotional upset. You'll also miss out on important information about who you are as a person. Add your self to your support network through this process of self-validation.

Artistic expression



“To see is not to speak” (2018), oil on canvas, 170x170 cm - Conrad J. Godly

Poetry Corner

🏔️ Green Mountain by Li Bai

You ask me why I dwell in the green mountain;
I smile and make no reply for my heart is free of care.
As the peach-blossom flows down stream and is gone into the unknown,
I have a world apart that is not among men.

Things & Stuff

 Neuro-leadership and implications for development

 A look into the father wound

If you've found anything here stimulating and want to chat, then get in touch via my email: aostaniforth@gmail.com.

Stay well,

Alex

p.s. this space seemed empty, and this concerned me at first. Now I see what it is - space. Be peaceful, take space. You might just be surprised by what emerges.

[Insert time for space]