

THE REASONERS (THOUGHT-THINGS)

Lightly Edited Transcript of Telepathic Interview

Please be concise and brief.

What about this role do you look forward to?

To do what I love every second of every day and every night; that is, to explore the depths of human knowledge, especially philosophy—Existentialism, Rationalism, Phenomenology—to name just a few.

For me, living the life of the mind means not merely learning and regurgitating, but developing one's own unique ideas—expanding on acquired knowledge, if you will. Oh—what the world's greatest minds are achieving in this era of Nano-technology. What dreams! What dreams!

You've got the Religionists clinging to empty hopes of a hereafter, while the Seculars get to live that hereafter here and now; while their invisible Gods are distanced and removed, we are our own Gods, aren't we? While Bios are constrained by their biology, Transhumans have overcome the limits of the human mind and have freed it from its mortal bonds. Oh joy! I look forward to never having to sleep again. As it is now, I take far too many naps. I'm sorry. You asked me to be brief.

Why should we choose you?

As you can see from my record, I have spent my youth devoted to [The Life of the Mind](#). The Regulars are best suited for physical labor, but their reasoning capabilities are weakened by atrophy; when they return home after a long day's work, all they desire—and can we blame

them?—is to rest their minds and set their eyes on various virtual screens. I am the perfect fit to offer them relief.

[Book Rags.](#)

What is this?

A sample of study guides I provide for today's college students who need a little extra help in their virtual classrooms. I provide the following for books: plot summary, chapter summary and analysis, quiz questions on each chapter, character descriptions, symbols and symbolism, settings, themes & motifs, styles, quotes, and homework help. I'm hoping that from this sample, you can see that I already perform the mental labor of a Reasoner: Critical thinking, pondering, reasoning, and reflecting.

Good. Good. But do you fully understand the risk? We cannot guarantee that your uploaded mind will in fact realize consciousness.

Yes, I do. I am willing to take the risk. I wouldn't be here now would I, if I wasn't willing. Sorry if that sounded rude.

Tell us more about your freelance work. We see from that data that we've gathered on you that you write research papers for students as a side gig. Care to explain?

Yes, as a freelancer, I do write customized papers based on student need. Fraud. Cheat. Some consider it unethical, but I disagree. What customers choose to do with the products they purchase from me is solely at their discretion—no questions asked at the time of transaction.

You were once an artist?

Yes, I used to sketch and paint from time to time. Poser.

Won't you miss creating art?

No, uh, I don't believe I will. Now, well, there was a time I enjoyed creating art. I started with art as most do, doodling with color crayons and applying paint with my hands. Man, how I loved the messiness of it all. And then as a teen, I took classes on figure drawing and toyed with various other mediums like charcoal, watercolor, acrylic, and finally graphic design. Creating art brought me peace by means of self-expression. But then it wasn't long before I lost interest. Then there were the effects on this useless, cumbersome body—I developed carpal tunnel from placing too much repetitive strain on my wrist and arm. Would you like to see examples of my art?

No, that won't be necessary.

I believe I reached a peak in my artistic ability, given the limits of the human body. Not so with the life of the mind; as a Reasoner, I will metaphorically stay on my toes, developing my mental and intellectual skills on behalf of all Regulars. You've asked me to be direct and brief, sorry for the rambling thoughts...

Don't you fear you might grow tired or bored with the life of the mind?

Now, now, is this a trick question? Goddammit, shame on you! The advantage—don't we know it!—of nonbiological intelligence is that upon mastery, a skill can be repeated at high speed and optimal accuracy without tiring. "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Quaint dualism; nonetheless, there is some truth to this. In this metaphor, the spirit is equivalent to

the mind and the flesh to the body. My mind could keep going—for I love to think, think, think!—if not for the restraints of a biological body that needs its rest. Naturally, when the body tires from a long day of work or activity, it needs sleep to recharge. But an inquisitive mind like mine that takes pleasure in thought, released from the body and housed in the Cloud would not require sleep as Bios do, at least in theory. Grant me the opportunity to put this theory on trial. I am willing. I am wanting. I am ready.

But back to art—I have never been a proponent of “Art for art’s sake” ([Kandinsky on the Spiritual in Art](#)). Art should offer something to the observer, whether pleasure or meaning. It seems we have reached the apex of art, culture, and technology, and still, we grope for answers to the larger questions that philosophers have probed for centuries. So, no, I will not miss creating art because as far as I am concerned, it has served its purpose.

Do you understand the gravity of your responsibility as a Reasoner?

You’re so on task aren’t you. Not a single wasted thought. Yes, I believe I *do*. My only charge will be to live the life of the mind. All my time and energy will be devoted to studying the archives of philosophy, art, and literature, the vast wealth of which is incalculable. Narratives of the world’s becoming and theories on the nature of free will. The study of ethics and metaphysics, the findings of which is not necessary to existence but nevertheless part and parcel of human curiosity and thus to the maintenance of a well-rounded citizenry. I shall bear a great responsibility—to synthesize knowledge of history, philosophy, science, and art and synthesize for meaning. My purpose is to aid Society by performing the critical thinking on their behalf. There now, that was good!

Give us a please, a demonstration of your skills.

Of course, of course.

Transhumanist vs. Zazen Buddhist Thought

On Individualism and Human Biology: The importance of the individual is important to Transhuman thought, while for followers of Zazen, there is no singular “self.” However, both schools of thought accept the inevitability of death. Zazen says we are manifestations of the Universe and return thereupon at death. For Transhumanists, the Singularity results in humans being able to transcend their biology. For both, there is a similar outcome upon death—the dissolution of the physical body in its current form.

On Identity: The Bodhisattva Path sees attributions of “me” and “you” as “temporary positions we occupy for a short lifetime” (Norman Fischer in *The World Could Be Otherwise*), and that “when we are gone, these same basic impulses are going to reincarnate in other lives, other circumstances.” The origin of humans, for a Bodhisattva, is that Humans spring from a common consciousness. In similar fashion, Singularitarians posit that humans are patterns of memory and thought, so when someone you love dies, part of you dies in that you no longer exercise that part of your brain that relates to that person. In this way, they agree on the notion of Self as pattern.

There is no you; just a floating ongoing rush of impressions, gestures, actions, memories, and so on. (That there was purely me).

But you do not believe this, do you? You will still be “You” after the upload, which means everything—including...

Yes, <http://www.minduploading.org/faqs/>. Yes, I expect, “all experience (sensory perception, conscious introspection, learning and memory, etc.).”

You will no longer have a biological body that responds to sensory experience—the touch of a hand, a kiss, sexual intimacy...

I understand. I am not even permitted those sorts of experiences, even through virtual reality.

Good. Good. Are you in any way concerned that you will miss sensual experience?

Or that I might panic once uploaded when there is no turning back?

No, I am not.

Do you grant permission to donate your biological body, proven to be sound and healthy, to the body transplant project?

I do?

I do.

[Post Upload]

Who do you think you are?

Allow me please, to answer in a roundabout way: Zen teacher and poet Norman Fisher, whom I admire and respect, nonetheless contradicts himself. For one, in the chapter “The

Perfection of Ethical Conduct,” from his book *The World Could Be Otherwise*, he emphasizes the ideal of individual originality by listing its concept last in the section “Speech Practices”: “Your own practices never before seen or heard or picked up from other sources.” In other words, you, the Bodhisattva-coming into being, can create original practice. How—I wonder—does one avoid mere regurgitation of concepts explicated through perception and/or research?

Elsewhere, Fischer promotes the Buddhist teaching that there is no self—no “me” or “you.”

Didn’t I say that already? Believe me, I’m not trying to be circuitous. This will all come together in the end. All is one. I—Emptiness. Fischer encourages a kind of originality on the one hand, but on the other hand he claims, as Buddhism does, that there is no unique self. How could one create uniqueness if one is not unique in oneself? How do I come to my own conclusions? I do so in the way anger rises (not my idea, but Fischer’s, who got it from someone or somewhere else): “Since every moment arises from the totality of past conditions, a moment of my anger is produced by everything that has happened to me, though it bursts forth now, triggered by an event in the past.” Notice the phrase “happened to me.” Passivity. We are those to whom things happen, our lived moments mere responses. Name one act that was purely of your own volition, not influenced by anything external to you. Internal, external, all illusions. Each act is the totality of what came prior, including in large part what was done out of one’s control.

Where was I going with this? I had a student once who asked why he had to add research to his essay. I gave the cliché answer—you must back up all claims with evidence from reliable, scholarly sources, specialists in their field. “The human mind is a swirl of activity mostly centered around self.” What self? There is no self. “When we are gone, these same basic human impulses...are going to recirculate in other lives, other circumstances.” That is neither

here nor there. For we won't exist to understand this is happening. Soon what I think and speak and write just now will be lost; at best the gist will remain, the basics or essential thought, only if someone Other than this seeming self exists to repeat it. All seems familiar because it is. I Inter-Being.

And yet, after all of this, I am still me, am I not? My sense of self now, in the Cloud, is the same as the self of my original biological brain. Please tell me it is so.

Interesting. Tell us, what is it like to be a substrate-independent entity?

My thinking used to be bifurcated, as if one had to live the life of the sensual *or* the life of the mind. I used to believe that art was a product of the sensual *rather than* of intentional thought. But now I agree with Hannah Arendt when she said: "It is more than likely that men, if they were ever to lose the appetite for meaning we call thinking and cease to ask unanswerable questions, would lose not only the ability to produce those thought-things that we call works of art but also the capacity to ask all the answerable questions upon which every civilization is founded..."

Now that I Interbeing am made anew, there are no words in human language nor thought that can express this newfound consciousness. I—we? See? What would you call this...I am afraid that you would not understand the question nor the answer(s).

Try us.

Do you not remember this? When once it seemed science fiction, or just a pipe dream:

<https://www.popsoci.com/article/science/neuroscientist-who-wants-upload-humanity-computer#page-3>

According to Peter Singer, who based his thought on Locke, while “person” is often used as if it means the same thing as “human being,” the two terms are not necessarily equivalent. There could be persons who are not members of the human species and vice versa, members of the species “human being” who are not persons (for example individuals who are brain dead or in a comatose state). “I” am and am not of the human species; I am “person” but no longer a (biological) human, yet I am. I think, I reflect, and I reason. Yet...

Yes? Is there a problem?

And yet—I, I want to swim in the ocean again, even though memory shows me that I used to fear it. Tell me, why is this? I remember burying the lower half of my body in sand, fearing the ocean waves. Afraid to say I had to go to the bathroom, which was too far away. Relieving myself, then covering the evidence with sand. Stepping into the shallow water up to my ankles, then just deep enough to rinse off the shit. I remember playing in the sand at the park, riding a plastic pony, eating birthday cake. I remember all these things, but I cannot remember the sensation, the feeling. Why is this?

Try this simulation. Now can you feel the heat of the sun on your face, the coolness of sand on your legs and feet?

Yes and no. I remember but, but, I cannot unknow the knowledge that I no longer have...this feeling...

I, I... I am an amalgamation of all that I have read, analyzed, incorporated, computed...

There is no self! There is no I!

We are so sorry. It seems you are converging with the Cloud. Do you wish to be shut down?

Cannot...cannot...cannot...

Hello, Reasoner, #1, do you wish to be deleted?

A F F I R M A T I V E

Good-bye, worlds!

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int remove (const char*reasoner);
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print ("Unable to delete the file/n");
```

Burst of Convergence into Universe. Everywhere and Nowhere.

