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CONFESSIONS OF A MAGAZINE EDITOR

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Abstract: I argue that good communication is vital to philosophy's project of understanding truth. I consider what good communication would involve, especially with regards to the needs of a popular philosophy magazine such as *Philosophy Now*. What makes a good or bad article? And how can one edit oneself for clarity? Finally I consider the difference the internet makes. and some of its implications for future philosophers.

Keywords: popular philosophy; communication; marketing; editing; magazine.

What's the point of philosophy?

Allow me the licence of defining philosophy as *the use of reason to try to determine fundamental truths*. So in terms of its purpose, first there is philosophy as a response to a core aspect of what it means to be human, that is, as a self-awareness which at the same time recognises the incompleteness of our awareness. We know that there's much to know that we don't know, so we want to understand; and philosophy is an attempt to explore and provide the foundations for human understanding. At its most basic, philosophy asks and tries to answer the questions, 'Why are we here?' 'What is the nature of reality?' 'How can I live a good life?' and 'How can I be happy?' These are foundational questions for people capable of abstract thought. This means that for human beings, doing philosophy is an intrinsic good, and so must be facilitated as an intrinsic aspect of being human.

But aside from addressing our natural curiosity from the very foundations, does philosophy have any *practical* results? To answer *this* question, we need to first ask, what is human history about?

Obviously, there has been social and technological progress in history, or at least social and technological complexification. But not entirely separate from the fact of humanity's intrinsic curiosity, a central part of any positive advance we have made, is our intellectual development. This is at least an expansion in the range, and also ideally in the accuracy, of the ideas that human culture has access to. And this is where philosophy shines.

Philosophy has been a driver of human intellectual development. Well, it's certainly true that philosophy has been more seminal to human intellectual development than some of her more ungrateful offspring, some scientists, allow. But in the West, science was begun by pre-Socratic philosophers, such as Thales, when he inferred the general nature of things from

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observations; in his case, from seeing things apparently being born from water to saying the basic nature of the world was water. Or there's Aristotle, who also did not differentiate what we now call *scientific* questions from other philosophical questions. He thought that drawing conclusions based on his observations of the natural world, in particular about biology, was a natural pursuit for a philosopher. Indeed, before it branched off to become an intellectual pursuit in its own right, and even for a few centuries after that, up until the early nineteenth century, science was called 'natural philosophy'.

In that respect, philosophy is clearly the trunk and the sciences are the branches. Indeed, it's a prominent and significant pattern of Western intellectual history that a discipline will often start as a branch of philosophy before separating off from its parent to live an independent life. Biology and physics were core interests of Aristotle, as part of his general interest in everything. Chemistry was initially developed by thinkers seeking the so-called 'philosopher's stone' that would turn lead into gold. Psychology can be traced back through the intense personal reflections of philosophers such as Rousseau or Montaigne, and begins in the modern era with the philosopher William James. Economics and semiotics have philosophical origins too, in political philosophy and the philosophy of language respectively. And who knows what disciplines of thought are going to be given birth to by philosophy in the next hundred years or so? Well, by definition, we can't imagine what's now unimaginable. However, if we want philosophy to continue bearing fruit for the intellectual future of humanity, we had better keep philosophy's orchard alive.

Moreover, in an age of information overload and pervasive popularism, isn't there something to be said for encouraging deep thinking rather than shallow reactions, and a critical mindset as *some* defence against media manipulation? I would generally say, the more we can encourage people to think – specifically, the more an astute questioning and an awareness of logical fallacies, rhetorical devices and ideological distortions can be nurtured in any society – the better. Not only will this help people discover faults in what the media are feeding us, this will also promote non-mainstream thinking, leading to new branches of thought and further harvests of ideas. Simply following the mainstream may lead to a dead sea. Philosophical debate forces people to clarify their ideas and their ways of expressing them; or at least to begin to become aware of some of the issues involved, and that the topic may be a little more complex than it first appeared.

Another case for the nurturing of philosophy would come from the vital place ethics has in addressing many contemporary issues, especially in medical or bio-ethics, on topics such as stem cell research. Moreover, there are still a lot of deep questions that remain unanswered. So we must keep deep questioning alive! But currently there are also deep problems with the philosophical vision.

Communication

If the essence of philosophy is the seeking of deep truths through reason, then philosophy depends on communication, simply because the on-going seeking of deep truths depends on communication. Without communication there's no cultural history, for an isolated mind working alone always has to start from scratch. So for the development of philosophical ideas there must be communication of them.

The primary purpose of communication is to transfer information from your mind into someone else's mind. This is true whether you do so in order to get someone to do something, or just in order for them to become aware of certain ideas. But it means that to the extent that you fail to transfer the information, you've failed to communicate. However, to communicate information to people, you need to put this information in language they can understand.

I'm convinced that any idea communicated in any mature language can be translated into any other, at least enough to convey the basic information, if not the poetical nuances. I'm also convinced that any normally intelligent person can understand any idea, provided, 1) that they're sufficiently interested to listen; and 2) *that it is communicated to them in language that they can understand*. If we put these ideas together, we arrive at the conclusion that any philosophical idea can be communicated to any person interested enough to listen, provided *we use language that they can understand.*

So, in order to develop philosophy or nurture philosophical thinking, we need to communicate philosophical ideas or ways of thinking; and if we want to develop or nurture philosophy in our wider culture, then we must communicate philosophy to the wider culture using the sort of language that the wider culture understands.

The perils of academic philosophy

Unfortunately, there is presently a bottleneck in philosophy right here. As a generalisation, not an absolute rule, in academic philosophy, where most of the development of philosophy proceeds, the emphasis is far more weighted towards the precision of expression of ideas than towards their effective communication. This may be fine when writing or speaking among academics whom you can assume understand the language you're using, but is evidently a problem when writing or speaking to anyone else. Moreover, it's not necessarily good to be technical even among academics, as technicality obscures rather than clarifies.

Often *Philosophy Now* is submitted papers by academics that are too technical for public consumption. By this I mean that there's a lot of jargon and other clever but obscure polysyllabic words; or there are too many Xs, Ys, a,b,cs, p1s, p2s, or t1s, t2s; or that the thought is too densely expressed, meaning that the writer doesn't take the time required to explain what they mean to anyone who doesn't already understand them, apparently merely assuming that the reader *will* understand their compact expression of their complex idea.

So my first confession to you as a magazine editor, is that being a good philosophy academic will not necessarily make you a good philosophy communicator. In fact, the correlation seems to me to be rather the reverse in today's academic atmosphere. I mean, the less you're willing to compromise in the technicality of what you're saying, the less effective a communicator you are likely to generally be.

Furthermore, academia lacks a strong ethos of writing well in non-technical terms; that is, clearly and engagingly. In the Western tradition, the excuse of writing badly and still being thought to be doing philosophy impressively, goes back I think to Kant and Hegel. They were both geniuses in the originality and profundity of their ideas, while both being atrocious prose stylists. It seems that their great minds were too busy generating ideas and

fitting them into their gigantic systems that they couldn't spare any run-time in their brains to think about how these ideas might best be communicated to others; or perhaps, about how these ideas might sound to others at all. But in not doing so, they've provided an excuse for philosophers to be bad writers.

It doesn't have to be this way. Intelligent, innovative philosophy can be written clearly, even beautifully, as both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche well demonstrate. And as I maintain, any idea can be explained to anybody interested enough to listen, as long as you put it in terms they can understand. So I'm led to conclude that insofar as a philosopher's writing remains technically expressed, to that extent they're not really interested in communicating their ideas clearly, and especially beyond the academy, that is, to the wider culture. So one very real implication of the increasing acceptability of technical and otherwise bad writing in philosophy, is that there's a significant and growing alienation between non-academics and philosophy as it's practiced by probably its most advanced practitioners. What's more, this alienation is largely caused by the way these practitioners generally believe philosophy *ought to be done*!

A technically-minded philosopher might respond here that being precise in what they say requires the complexity of stating the nuances of their thoughts in a technical way. To this I might reply that communicating 80% of the information in a thought, through simplifying its expression, is a better result than communicating only 50% of an idea technically expressed – or even worse, 0% by someone who's been completely put off reading it! The question is, how much do you care about *communicating* your information?

There's an application for some of you in all this. If you're teaching philosophy at whatever level, or using the skills you've honed elsewise, in order to communicate your ideas, you'll need to pitch your language at a level that your audience will understand. If in doubt, pitch *lower*. Even the most intelligent people benefit from having ideas explained to them in the clearest way possible, because clarity penetrates to the heart.

Let me cite two clichés here. One is from John Searle – that unless you can clearly explain something, you haven't really understood it yourself. The other is Albert Einstein's adage that "Everything should be as simple as possible, and no simpler."

The birth of the technical

There are clearly traceable historical reasons for academic philosophy becoming technical in the way it's tending to be taught in many Anglo-American universities. This has to do with the rise of logic and logical positivism around the beginning of the twentieth century. At that time, logicians such as Russell and Frege saw mathematical proof as the highest standard of knowledge, and so wished to develop a similarly rigorous philosophical process. That is, they wanted to be able to precisely express the premises of an argument and through a purely logical process argue through to a demonstrably logically sound conclusion. This is the idea behind the development of predicate and other formal logics. Logical positivism was also, and not, I think coincidentally, developed around the beginning of the twentieth century – by for instance Russell (again), A.J. Ayer, and the members of the Vienna Circle. The core idea was that only logically or scientifically demonstrable statements are meaningful, because only these statements are demonstrably true or false. There was a problem with logical

positivism, by the way, because it does not fulfil its own standard for meaning, since its principle is neither logically nor scientifically demonstrable. But philosophy cannot emulate mathematical precision in any case, because language is necessarily ambiguous in the way that mathematical symbols are not. Nevertheless, combine the ideals of logicism and logical positivism with the success of the scientific method, and you get the ideal in philosophy that the only way philosophy can be intellectually respectable is to emulate the precision of mathematical equations. And so analytic philosophy has inherited this ideal, tending to strive for algebraic exactitude as its ideal form of expression.

Philosophy Now

Whether or not this attempt at science-like precision in expression is good for generating profound and persuasive philosophical conclusions is a point for further discussion that I'm not going to discuss further, except to say I think, not conspicuously. But what I do want to pick up on is the fact is that the more a technical ethos has been pursued by academic philosophy, the more academic philosophy has isolated itself from the rest of humanity. The reason for this is largely a matter of the first law of communication: to communicate you must use language your audience understands.

This is where the magazine I edit, *Philosophy Now*, comes in. What we try to do in *Philosophy Now* is communicate philosophy to the general public in an accessible and interesting way. Or I could say that we put philosophical ideas on trial before the public eye.

Philosophy Now was started in 1991 by the editor-in-chief Rick Lewis when he saw a gap in the market, in that at that time there weren't any philosophy magazines for the general public. Neither were there any desktop publishing packages you could use to design a magazine on your home computer. This meant that originally articles literally had to be cut and pasted into position on the page. The prepared pages were then photographed, and the photographs sent to the printer. For the first few years Rick was producing maybe three or four issues a year from his bedroom until sales picked up enough that he could give up his job at BT to go into producing the magazine full time. Now we do six issues a year.

I joined the magazine in 2006. Remarkably, sales haven't declined. Perhaps even more remarkably, and bucking the trend for magazines since the internet, print sales have been maintained. Meanwhile electronic sales have steadily increased, so now we sell over a hundred thousand copies a year worldwide.

So philosophy *can* be sold to the general public, as long as you communicate it to them in an understandable way. You also need a product with a big enough market, and perhaps a little faith, or at least, a lot of patience. I think it took Rick Lewis, my editor-in-chief, five years from establishing the magazine in 1991 until he was selling enough copies to concentrate on producing *Philosophy Now* full time.

We're swimming against the tide of the dumbing down of culture in the race to reach the lowest common denominator. However, the overwhelmingly positive email response from our readers shows that there is a hunger for intelligent ideas presented in an accessible way. And this brings me to the point of the magazine. What we try to do in the magazine is communicate philosophy to the general public.

Now, we can assume that our readers have at least a starting interest in philosophy, otherwise they wouldn't be reading a magazine called *Philosophy Now*. What we cannot assume is that they have any academic training in philosophy, or indeed, any prior knowledge of the history of philosophy at all. This means that we have to talk to them in as close to ordinary English as philosophy allows.

Because *Philosophy Now* is in the idea communication business, and specifically, because we're dealing with often quite abstract ideas that may be complicated to explain, a large part of my job as an editor is clarification. I want to make the prose as clear as possible so there's as little obstruction to understanding the difficult ideas involved as possible, and so that we can communicate them to as many people as possible. Thus, for me, editing articles is about giving maximum clarity to what our authors are saying without fundamentally altering the meaning of any given phrase. One ideal is for one to say what one has to say with grace – which means, to convey the maximum amount of information with the minimum visible effort.

Editing *Philosophy Now*

There are many algorithms I use when editing text. Here are some. Application of any of these points would also be helpful to you in the clarification and so improvement of your own writing:

Defining unavoidable jargon terms. For example, 'ontology is the study of the nature of being'. If necessary, we allow jargon terms such as 'metaethics', 'phenomenology', 'the Other', and so on; but we require our writers to explain any jargon terms when it's first used. However, to minimise the level of unfamiliarity to the reader, jargon use must be kept to a minimum.

Breaking up long sentences. For example, we often replace an 'and' linking two phrases with a full stop and two sentences.

Word order. Although two different orders of words can both be grammatically correct, some word orders are intuitively easier to understand than others. Compare the sentence 'Scotus, in what is probably the most well documented event of his life, was forced to leave Paris' with the sentence, 'In what is probably the most well documented event of his life, Scotus was forced to leave Paris'. *Small differences add up for clarity*.

Cutting out superfluous words. I often cut out the word 'ontological', for example, as people often put it in to show how philosophical they are without it adding any extra meaning; for instance they might write, 'the ontological nature of being'.

Giving a logical structure and/or narrative flow to the order of points. This includes bunching linked ideas or parts of an argument together rather than scattering ideas all over the place. Such scattering is a significant obstacle to your reader's comprehension, because it's making a high demand on their memory when their mental energy would be better spent understanding and assimilating your argument.

Cutting out unnecessary repetition. You'd need a good reason to repeat a point you've already made.

Checking facts, syntax and spelling. eg a philosophers' years.

The more you do of these things, the better your writing will be.

Personal editing

Does it go without saying that a lot of writing is editing and rewriting? If so, it's too late, I've said it; and if not, it's a good thing that I did. In fact, I was initially surprised, but after twelve years I am now just disheartened, at the number of submissions that seem to be just dashed off and sent off to us without apparently being read through to check for mistakes or to make obvious improvements in style.

Perhaps you can get away with this if you're naturally talented. But the rest of us should go through a piece repeatedly until we're happy with it, time allowing – bearing in mind Monet's dictum that "A work of art is never completed, only abandoned." It's a question of how polished you want your writing to be. The point I'm making is that you must reread your work to check you're saying what you thought you were saying when you wrote it down. After all, you want to present your work in the best way possible, time allowing. Indeed, I've found there to be a very high, although not an absolute, correlation in our submissions, between the quality of someone's writing and the quality of their argumentation. I put this down to the amount of love and care, or at least interest and attention, they put into their work.

In my own case, I do find that the greatest part of writing is rewriting. I mean in terms of time and effort, it's 10% creating and 90% recreating. My own method is to initially write down all the ideas that occur to me on a topic, at first not particularly worrying about their order or expression. Only after the initial act of creativity will I attempt to make it all as presentable as possible. I go through a piece certainly no less than three times, and often as many as six times or more.

One editorial trick I recommend employing – again, time and opportunity allowing – is that when you've finished editing a piece, put it to one side. Leave it for a week, two weeks, a month if possible; then reread it. I guarantee that you'll spot mistakes in reasoning or unfortunate ways of expressing yourself that you'll be glad you didn't make public with your name attached to them. Another technique I recommend is that when you've finished editing a piece, read it aloud to yourself. This will again help you spot mistakes and unnecessary clunkiness and obscurity in expression. These methods work well because they're both ways of you seeing your work from new angles. The more intensely you work on something, the closer you are to it and the more likely you are to confirm what you're saying and how you're saying it to yourself, and so the less you see how it might appear to people coming to it fresh. Both these methods are ways of refreshing your perspective on what you're creating.

A more painful method is to give your work to someone whose judgement you trust and ask them for feedback. But this is always risky, because *you might not like what they have to say*.

Acceptance

So what sort of articles are we looking for in *Philosophy Now*?
Well, we're a popular philosophy magazine, and we want to stay that way. Our brief is to give people accessible philosophy. Moreover, we're working from within the analytical

tradition, or more broadly speaking, the style of critical philosophical analysis that has been followed in Western philosophy since Socrates. We will engage with non-Western philosophy, as long as it too is suitably analytical. And by analytical, I mean, breaking down and examining the concepts involved in the topic, including spotting and critiquing assumptions.

You might be surprised to hear that I don't often agree with the arguments of the people whose articles I accept to publish. But I'm not looking for perspectives I agree with; I'm looking for clear and engaging writing and a reasonable and perceptive argument.

Here are some requirements for a good article:

An interesting topic – meaning one of suitable profundity and significance, ideally with some relevance to the modern world. This category might include modern ethical dilemmas, consciousness and free will issues, but many more.

Clear & engaging writing style. This is difficult to define. However, if it doesn't make you want to read it or you can't understand it, you know it's not got it!

The argument has to be a good argument! Evidently logically sound and valid, with the premises and ongoing major points all persuasively argued for.

Major points and assertions need to be argued for. For example, a lot of submissions either assume the existence, or the non-existence, of God; but both positions are contentious! Or a lot of submissions from India assume **karma**, but again this doctrine would have to be persuasively justified.

Examples to illustrate major points, especially if the points are rather abstract, as is not unknown in philosophy. A famous example was, to illustrate the Design Argument for God, finding a **watch** on the ground and asking how it could be there. Richard Dawkins subverted this idea with his Blind Watchmaker.

Engagement with or at least acknowledgement of the history of philosophy. If you're going to be discussing stem cell research, or consciousness, free will, or whatever, you had better show you know that there's been an ongoing debate about it, and that you have a good grasp of what this debate has said, too. If you don't know this, not only are you liable to end up reinventing a big philosophical wheel, not acknowledging it would make us look uninformed, or stupid – which I'm keen to avoid, for both professional and personal reasons! And knowledge of any relevant scientific research helps, too.

A good structure. This typically means a narrative arc. The ideal is a start that grabs the reader's attention, perhaps through a brief anecdote or surprising fact; then an introduction explaining what the topic is about, why it's interesting or relevant, and how you're going to tackle it; then a systematic argument leading towards an apparently logical conclusion, ideally on the way tackling and overcoming possible objections to the major points you're raising.

That's a lot of things to get right. In fact, one doesn't have to fulfil the last to be acceptable; but the more criteria are fulfilled, the better the piece will be; and if a piece stumbles over one or more of the other points in a catastrophic way, it's heading for the trash. The moral here is that one always has to do what one can to present oneself in the best possible way to have a hope of success; or in other words, strive to get as many things right about what you're doing as you can.

Rejection

Now we receive perhaps ten times as many articles as we have the space to print, but then again, only about one tenth of them are good enough to print. So finally let me say what sort of articles we reject.

Apart from being badly written in terms of not meeting the criteria I've just highlighted, there are many other ways things can go wrong. Indeed, the range of ways in which submissions can be unsuitable to us might be surprising to the uninitiated. Here are only some of the unsuitable species of articles:

Pieces which contain no philosophy at all, but instead present for instance a scientific theory or a political analysis,

What we call 'green crayon' pieces. These are articles whose assertions, from any independent perspective, are unhinged. We've had submissions claiming to prove that magnetism is the only force in the world, or that Einstein's theories are wrong (we get at least one a year of the latter). Such pieces typically have a cover letter saying how important the attached document is for the history of thought. Avoid ever claiming anything like that in a cover letter. If it happens to be true, either your work *will* speak for itself, or your reader will be unable to recognise your greatness. I think the green crayon scribblers always think it's the latter option in their case.

Indeed, this raises the interesting epistemological question of how one can tell philosophical greatness when the approach is completely novel. We would probably have turned down Hegel or Heidegger (etc etc) on the basis of the impenetrability of their writing styles, and Nietzsche on the basis of his philosophical incoherence (most conspicuously, his relativism) and the general inadequacy or lack of analytical justification for some of his more explosive rhetorical hyperbole.

The not mad but evidently over-ambitious pieces. These assert something like, "Here I wish to show how consciousness works" or "how free will works" or "the truth about ethics . . ." and so on. Moreover, they often hope to do so in one or two thousand words. It's highly unlikely, though I guess not impossible, that someone can solve in under two thousand words a problem that hasn't been resolved in over two thousand years.

The fix-the-world pieces. Similarly, I've found that revolutionaries who supposedly spot what's wrong with the world and present the solution in a couple of thousand words or so, rarely have any sort of persuasive rigour to or recognition of nuance in their arguments, or see possible problems with their solution. In other words, our submitters who intend to fix the world usually have one basic idea presented with little analysis.

The 'sloppy genius' pieces. They can go two main ways. The first is to accidentally reinvent a philosophical idea that has already been advanced then criticised. This is best achieved by thinking about an issue without having any awareness that there has been an ongoing debate about it in philosophy, perhaps for centuries. In particular, we get a lot of articles endeavouring to explain consciousness, often repeating the sorts or things Descartes or his critics said about the mind three hundred or so years ago. Another area in which this happens a lot is arguments about God. As I say, benefits of some knowledge of the history of philosophy include not reinventing a particular philosophical wheel. Also, someone else has already done the hard brain-work on the problem: the 'Have you thought about this?'

and ‘What about this?’ and ‘This is why that’s wrong’ have already been done for you. In this vein, because its ideas have probably been better expressed elsewhere, and already intelligently critiqued, supposed ‘new thinking’ that shows no knowledge of the history of philosophy is very rarely going to be new, or intellectually persuasive – to me, anyway. And I’m the one you’re going to have to persuade.

The second way of the sloppy genius, is for you to be so taken up with your ability to have a sustained thought that things like spelling and punctuation go unchecked and out the window. In fact, such errors are often a telling sign that the writer’s enthusiasm for their ideas flies far ahead of their talent either for communicating them or for thinking critically about them.

Pieces that are all opinion and assertion, and no analysis or criticism; or at least, they’re not analytical or critical *enough*. However well-written these articles may otherwise be, mere assertion is not the kind of philosophical analysis we’re after.

The demotic philosophy pieces. These might begin something along the lines of “I’ve been thinking about the world for a long time, and this is what I’ve concluded . . .” These writers are using the word ‘philosophy’ to mean ‘my thoughts’. But again, commonplace reflections are not generally what we’re after.

Pieces where the writing is so bad that I can’t tell what’s being said. This can occur through the writer’s functional illiteracy; or through someone not speaking English well enough to convey their thoughts subtly enough; or at the other extreme, through their mode of expression being so complex and/or polysyllabic that it is impossible to follow. This last brings us back to the problem in particular with academic-style writing, where complexity is too often confused with profundity. But communication decreases as complexity increases. So again the core question is, who are you trying to communicate to?

Future Communication

One good sign I’ve seen in the past ten years is improved submissions, in terms of both style and insight (or form and content, if you prefer). Does this indicate that the quality of philosophy in the wider world is improving?

Unfortunately, it’s too early to rejoice on the basis of this evidence. I think the perceived improvement instead shows people responding to the increasingly harsh competition to communicate. Ten thousand books are published every year in the UK alone. That’s only books. The struggle for publicity has grown into a *riot* since the net made everyone with a connection an instant info tycoon. There’s so much information available for free that the competition to be read or heard is becoming desperate, I’m sure. Evolve or drown, then. And as aspiring communicators recognise the increasing competition, they raise their game, as they can.

Maybe the major communication problem in this age of info overload is *marketing*: getting people to know you’ve got something they’ll benefit from experiencing. Improving the *quality* of one’s material is only one category of response to the information tsunami. Another way is to sail with the tide and *imaginatively appropriate the new technology*, just as the arts have always done. Media expands, and communication expands with it, or becomes increasingly isolated. So we make YouTube videos and podcasts now. Multimedia is the final frontier.

There's always negative elements to progress alongside the positive. Positively with the net, instant global reach means submissions from around the world, where physical post might have been a problem. Also, it facilitates editing in real time: feedback is easy, so submissions can be quickly altered when required. Negatively, I would like to remind you of the special insidiousness of the echo chamber effect for philosophy. Won't social media algorithms reinforcing viewing and reading habits mean philosophers are increasingly exposed only to opinions they agree with? That's a specifically *anti-philosophical* development isn't it? It's a significant subset of the echo chamber effect being an anti-intellectual influence on culture generally.

I've made a few YouTube videos on philosophical issues, and have had a few hundred views – as compared with a few hundred thousand, say. I'm vain enough to think that this indicates the relative popularity of philosophy. For the sake of philosophy, how do we become known if we're unknown? Or more generally, how can we get more people not only interested in, but invested in, philosophy? Not only to use the ideas generated by other minds (although that's a good start), but to adopt into their own thinking the processes generating them, and others? After all, the ideal is for people to become philosophers, not just become aware of philosophical ideas.

The first thing is to make philosophy attractive to people. The principles I've indicated in this article for quality for magazine articles can be generalised for quality across media, for instance. What makes for a bad or good article for a popular magazine would also make for a bad video, or a good; and likewise for good and bad podcasts. Here I've considered only some dimensions of what this might involve, concerning principles of accessible communication. I've been talking in terms of what might be called 'artistic techniques' and 'production values', rather than in terms of what makes good or bad *philosophical insight*. (What makes good and bad philosophical ideas is a crucially interesting epistemological issue; but as such it belongs to epistemological, not communication, considerations. The topic needs not only a different article, but a different volume.)

I think it does add to its appeal that philosophy goes against the social media flow. That flow is apparently against intellectual improvement. Conspicuously for social media, presently, too often, 'more thoughtless = more popular'. I think this is because it's predominantly a young domain. My conclusion is that the exaltation of stupidity is what adolescent rebellion amounts to when adolescents can't hope for anything better. But good philosophy works to smarten people up, not dumb them down. Hopefully, philosophy's against-the-grainism will be to its advantage. If it's done well, it will stand out in the internet's great popularity contest like a tree resisting an expanding river of mud. Insofar as it is *not* done well, it will simply become part of the river.

Another evident dimension to increasing the attractiveness of philosophy, is to show its relevance to peoples' lives. So, after the philosopher's specification and/or definition of the problem, and the definition of the terms specifying the concepts they'll be analysing, and their analysis of the concepts, yielding the conclusions, would come the application(s) of their conclusions, to the world, or to groups of peoples' or individuals' lives. And by demonstrating the practical usefulness of philosophical conclusions, the usefulness of *philosophy itself* is demonstrated, too.

Admittedly, the demonstration of usefulness is pushing the bridgehead beyond where academic philosophy has traditionally been expected to go. But if the process of philosophy is to make large-scale impact, and even go viral, academic and other philosophy must demonstrate at least its *interest* to the world it would enlist. Perhaps I may be given further license, to say that *philosophers are rational beings who believe that the processes of rationality have intrinsic value to rational beings*. Since (with Aristotle) all humans are rational beings, the marketing mission of philosophy in the information age is therefore *to demonstrate the value of deep critical reasoning to any inquiring human being*. Easier said than done, I think. But not theoretically impossible. After all, it worked on you. Why?

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