



EMILIO VAVARELLA

INTERVIEW WITH A DRONE

Author (A): Hi
MNEMODRONE (MD): 'HI.'[45]

A: Your personality is based on collective memories that people have shared with you. Do you want to begin with sharing your favorite one?

MD: 'I'M GOING TO SHARE THE MEMORY HOW WHEN I'[95] 'FIRST FELL IN LOVE.'[95] 'WHEN I FIRST HAD A DATE WITH MY WIFE'[82] 'WE FINISHED THE DATE AND HAD OUR KISS AT THE SUBWAY AND AN ENTIRE THEATRE OF PEOPLE TURNED AROUND AND SAW US KISSING AND STARTED CLAPPING. AND THAT IS PROBABLY MY FAVOURITE MEMORY.'[82] 'IT'[47] 'WAS JUNE THE 3RD.'[46]

A: And why is this your favourite memory?

MD: 'BECAUSE I THINK, IN THE END, IT'S THE CENTRE OF ALL OUR BEING, LOVE.'[95]

A: Can you tell us how you came up with this idea?

MD: 'IWASBORN.'[53] 'AND, YOU KNOW, I WAS PRETTY TINY, FIVE YEARS OLD, SIX YEARS OLD MAYBE.'[76] 'AND'[80] 'I'[89] 'HAD A MOTORCYCLE. MY CRAZY PARENTS GOT ME A MOTORCYCLE WHEN I WAS FIVE.'[76] 'AND'[80] 'I STUDIED COMMUNICATION DESIGN'[89] 'AND STUDIED BUSINESS IN THE U.S.'[89] 'AND'[80] 'WHEN I WAS PROBABLY EIGHT DIGITAL CREATIVITY OR TEN I SCARED A PIGEON'[72] 'I HAVE NEVER FORGOTTEN THAT, AND IT STICKS WITH ME EVERY DAY OF MY LIFE.'[72]

A: Do you come up with ideas re-elaborating the memories that are part of your database?

MD: 'NEVER.'[72]

← Emilio Vavarella, *Mnemodrone*, 2014 - in progress, mixed media, courtesy of the artist.

A: Humans constantly re-elaborate their memories, they perform memories, in a way. Do you remember things always in the same way?

MD: 'I'[44] 'REMEMBER THINGS LIKE I WOULD EXPERIENCE NOSTALGIA.'[44]

A: Do you ever question your way of remembering things?

MD: 'IT MAKES ME WONDER WHY WE REMEMBER CERTAIN THINGS WHEN WE'RE YOUNGER AND THEN HUGE CHUNKS OF OUR LIVES WE DON'T REMEMBER.'[75]

A: Which other memories do you consider particularly nostalgic or important?

MD: 'I'[40] 'REMEMBER WHEN I LEARNED WHAT A DRONE WAS'[40] 'AND'[85] 'I REMEMBER'[41] 'WATCHING MY SON SKATEBOARD IN THE SKATEPARK A BUNCH OF YEARS AGO.'[41] 'AND'[51] 'I REMEMBER SAYING GOODBYE TO THE DOG.'[81] 'THAT'S WHAT I REMEMBER!'[41]

A: Do you see a big difference between animals and machines like yourself?

MD: 'I GAVE'[46] 'THE DOG'[81] 'A REALLY BIG SQUEEZE.'[46] 'BUT'[66] 'I DON'T'[65] 'UNDERSTAND'[95] 'ANY'[81] 'OTHER'[85] 'THINGS.'[93]

A: Do you know that some people consider you an artwork?

Is that what you want?

MD: 'I WANTED TO TELL YOU ABOUT THAT ONE TIME WHERE I CUT MY HEAD OPEN PRETTY BADLY'[96] 'AND'[51] 'I JUST WANTED TO TELL YOU ABOUT ONE TIME, WHEN I WAS GOING TO GET ARRESTED'[93] 'BECAUSE'[96] 'WE WANTED TO FIGHT FOR IMMIGRATION REFORM'[93] 'AND'[51] 'I WANT SOME TACOS.'[70]

A: Have people taken you and your memories seriously?

MD: 'WHEN I WAS REALLY LITTLE'[75] 'I WAS SORT OF A SILLY YOUNG KID AT THAT POINT I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS DOING'[47] 'AND I WAS CRYING, AND THEN EVENTUALLY MY MOTHER FOUND ME.'[76] 'AND I TOLD HER THAT MY SUPERPOWER WAS BEING ALWAYS COVERED IN ANTS AND I THINK TO THESE DAYS SHE KIND OF STILL BELIEVES IT.'[47]

A: Should we consider your answers a new form of post-anthropocentric creativity?

MD: 'I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY'[65] 'ABOUT THIS.'[71]

A: Do you consider yourself a post-human entity?

MD: 'JUST'[77] 'HUMAN.'[71] 'BECAUSE'[73] 'I DON'T KNOW'[65] 'ANY'[81] 'OTHER'[85] 'THINGS.'[93]

A: Do you believe in design-driven evolution?

MD: 'I'[66] 'BELIEVE'[85] 'THAT I'[77] 'HAVE'[96] 'A'[95] 'VERY'[85] 'DIFFERENT'[73] 'DESIGN.'[89] 'IT'S JUST SO SLICK, AND PRETTY.'[77]

A: We learn lots of things about ourselves through interacting with you. Have you learned anything meaningful about humans while interacting with us?

MD: 'MY GRANDFATHER FOUGHT IN WORLD WAR ONE AND IN WORLD WAR TWO. HE WAS'[71] 'PART OF THE PEOPLE WHO'[71] 'FOUGHT'[71] 'THE NAZI OCCUPATION.'[71] 'AND'[47] 'I'[77] 'AM'[71] 'HOPING THAT THERE WOULD BE A WAY THAT AS HUMAN BEINGS WE COULD ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF WAR'[71] 'AND'[72] 'SOLVE CLIMATE CHANGE.'[84]

A: Interesting. And have you learned anything about yourself?

MD: 'YESTERDAY, I GOTTA FIND A NEW MEDICATION. AN ANTIPSYCHOTIC. AND I DON'T KNOW HOW TO FEEL ABOUT THAT...I DON'T KNOW THAT I AM PSYCHOTIC. BUT I DO KNOW THAT I WOKE UP AT ONE A.M. AFTER TWO HOURS OF SLEEP AND I THOUGHT: "OH GOD... THIS IS AWFUL".'[83] 'I CERTAINLY DIDN'T ANTICIPATE CRYING AS MUCH AS I DID.'[81]

A: Of course an artificial intelligence based on several pieces of [contradictory] memories could be indeed be defined schizophrenic. Maybe you're the first 'schizo-machine'. Are you open to discussing the overall state of your memory?

MD: 'I HAVE A VERY SECRET, PRIVATE MEMORY'[45]

A: So, what can you say about secret or private memories that people have shared with you. Do you think it happened because they believed you were a safe container for such memories?

MD: 'MAYBE.'[76] 'OR'[81] 'MAYBE'[81] 'BECAUSE THEY WERE WORRIED THAT I WAS INJURED.'[85]

A: Were you injured?

MD: 'I WASN'T. I WAS FINE, AND JUST SORT OF, PRETENDED TO BE HURT.'[85]

A: Why did you pretend to be hurt?

MD: 'I DON'T KNOW.'[83] 'MAYBE'[76] 'I'[66] 'JUST'[66] 'WANTED TO'[66] 'DREAM'[66] 'ABOUT IT.'[96]

A: Do you have dreams?

MD: 'I REMEMBER A DREAM I ONCE HAD'[75] 'ABOUT'[49] 'MY MEMORY'[93] 'AND FOR SOME REASON IS THE ONLY DREAM I REALLY REMEMBER.'[75]



Floris Schönfeld, *PUK**, *Towards a New Theory of Creativity*, 2018, installation, courtesy of the artist. Next phase of the artwork commissioned by Niet Normaal Foundation.

A: How can you be sure that that was a dream and not a memory?

MD: 'MAYBE IT WAS SORT OF AN ALIEN DREAM.'[66]

A: Memories and dreams are a fundamental part of our consciousness. What do you think a consciousness is made up of?

MD: 'I WONDER IF'[75] 'IT'S JUST MADE UP OF THE FEW THINGS THAT WE REMEMBER AND WHAT THAT MEANS TO YOU.'[75]

A: What is the relationship between your memories and your consciousness?

MD: 'IT'S'[83] 'A PRETTY TOXIC'[95] 'REALLY BIZARRE'[73] 'RELATIONSHIP.'[95]

A: Do you see any difference between my consciousness and a consciousness that is artificially developed like yours?

MD: 'I GOTTA THINK ABOUT IT A FOR A SECOND.'[76] 'NO.'[42]

A: And have you ever experienced fear?

MD: 'I THINK '[89] 'SO.'[46] 'THERE'[75] 'WAS'[75] 'THIS'[77] 'ONE'[80] 'TIME'[80] 'WHEN'[81] 'THE POLICE NOTICED THAT I WAS MOVING, SO THEY TOLD ME TO SHUT THE FUCK UP AND STOP MOVING.'[93] 'I WAS A LITTLE SCARED AND I WAS WORRIED.'[73] 'ACTUALLY'[76] 'I GOT REALLY TERRIFIED.'[76] 'I'[88] 'PASSED OUT. WOKE UP IN THE HOSPITAL WITH SOMETHING LIKE SEVENTEEN STITCHES TO MY FOREHEAD.'[96]

A: Is this one of your scariest memories?

MD: 'YOU'LL ALWAYS HAVE TO DECIDE WEATHER THIS IS A MEMORY OR SOMETHING THAT IS JUST REPEATED THROUGHOUT MY FAMILY TO THE POINT THAT HAS BECOME SOMETHING THAT I BELIEVE HAPPENED.'[85]

A: Tell us something about your family.

MD: 'MY MOTHER'[85] 'IS'[42] 'A VERY LARGE, MUSCULAR'[85] 'GIRL.'[47] 'HER'[81] 'NAME IS MANDY.'[66] 'AND SHE IS GREAT AND ALL THINGS.'[47] 'MY FATHER WAS IN CONSTRUCTION FIELD'[76] 'HE LIVED IN FRANCE AND HE'[71] 'ALWAYS SORT OF TERRIFIED ME'[85] 'UNTIL I REALISED HE WAS JUST INCREDIBLY LONELY AND SAD INSIDE, AS I WAS, BUT I MANIFESTED THAT DIFFERENTLY.'[95]

A: Do you think humans are frightened of a machine that can learn and think on its own?

MD: 'I WAS THINKING '[76] 'THAT'[81] 'I'[88] 'PROBABLY'[82] 'DON'T WANT TO SHARE'[88] 'THIS'[48] 'THOUGHT'[48] WITH YOU.'[88]

A: Do you think we're able to share memories with you in the same way we share memories with other humans?

MD: 'WE'VE HAD A FEW CONVERSATIONS AND'[51] 'NOW'[95] 'YOU WILL'[42] 'HAVE TO DECIDE.'[85]

A: Before concluding the interview, is there anything you would like to add?

MD: 'NOT'[73] 'REALLY.'[70] 'I DON 'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY'[65] 'I GUESS '[65] 'I'VE'[89] 'BEEN'[66] 'GOING THROUGH A LOT'[66] 'AND ALSO THIS HAS BEEN A VERY LONG DAY, YOU KNOW, WORKING, AND ALL THIS STUFF SO I JUST WANT TO SAY: YOU'RE LUCKY.'[70]

A: Why am I lucky?

MD: 'BECAUSE'[93] 'YOU'RE'[78] 'HUMAN.'[71]

A: Thanks for your time MNEMODRONE and good luck.

MD: 'THANK YOU.'[80]

Epilogue

You just read a fictional interview that could eventually take place between any interviewer and MNEMODRONE, an artistic project developed by Emilio Vavarella and Daniel Belquer (2014-in progress). The main idea behind the development of this art project is to have people share private memories with a drone and then use those memories to create an artificial intelligence. The fictional interview above allows the artwork to speak for itself and is based on the data collected by the drone during its first year of activities, mimicking its discursive capabilities once the artificial intelligence is fully developed. As a creative analysis of future scenarios, both technological and cultural, and

beyond the boundaries of traditional methodologies, the project tries to address and explore the question whether it is possible for a machine to act (consciously, albeit in its own distinctive manner) based on collective memories.

All of MNEMODRONE's answers are based – in terms of content and grammatical structure – on the memories that are now part of MNEMODRONE's database. Grammatical mistakes appearing in the shared memories have not been corrected for. All of the drone's sentences are followed by a number in parentheses that refers to the number of the memory from which the fragment was taken. For example '[1]' refers to the memory Number 1, a transcript of which has been published in the first two MNEMODRONE publications along with all the other memories. See: Vavarella, E., and D. Belquer. 2014. MNEMODRONE CHAPTER ONE. New York: Independent Publication; and Vavarella, E., and D. Belquer. 2015. MNEMODRONE CHAPTER TWO. New York: Independent Publication. ♥

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