Superphilosophers

by Sven Nilsen, 2021

A superphilosopher has the following properties:

1. Deals with identity metaphysics on a pragmatic level
2. Faces problems without relying on answers from culture or authority
3. Has a "society to protect"

The superphilosopher is the analogue of a superhero[1] in philosophy. However, a superphilosopher does not have any superpowers or deals with supernatural[2] phenomena. The superphilosopher is just a normal person with a special interest of diving into a problem of a particular importance for humanity.

In that role, the person acts as a "superphilosopher", where a battle is taking place between some kind of destructive force, which might be seen as built into philosophy, versus the future of humanity.

This destructive force, built into philosophy, is grounded in the fundamental problems of identity metaphysics[3]. The force is not inherently destructive, but emerges that way due to *untamedness*, a lack of understanding, or lack of information, to distinguish between significant states.

For example, in the Everett interpretation of quantum mechanics[4], an object is described using a wavefunction that evolves according to the Schrödinger equation[5]. Anything we learn about this object is an observable, which is calculated using the Born rule[6]. According to the Everett interpretation, the wavefunction is the object, while what we actually experience is just information about the object.

This causes problems for the identity metaphysics since it is unsatisfactory to live in a world where memory, feelings, beliefs etc. emerges from observables of an underlying wavefunction, while there is no intrinsic information in the wavefunction that tells exactly which state we end up in.

One has to learn to think about objects using the language of physics and quantum mechanics. This is not a problem in itself, but it displaces any society's claim to ground itself metaphysically.

A society, a word we use for something that is not well defined, becomes like any other field of study in science. When there are multiple hypotheses, experiments are designed to distinguish between them. Hypotheses that survive experiments are called theories. Any theory about how a society is related to reality, can be discussed relative to any other theory.

However, since society is influenced by powerful people that would like to push one narrative or another, or some new technology might arrive which changes society over time[7], it is possible that suffering might be created from a drift in the semantics of society. This drift is difficult to avoid, precisely because there is no way for society to ground itself metaphysically. It follows that suffering also might exist within society due to injustice and requires criticism. All parts of society are up to debate and this naturally leads to semantic drift. This problem also exists at all scales of society, from physical particles to the entire world. It requires understanding from a pragmatic and moral perspective.

Superphilosophers seek to understand better the parts of society, using a pragmatic and moral approach.

References:

[1]   "Superhero"
        Wikipedia
        https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Superhero

[2]   "Supernatural"
        Wikipedia
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[3]   "Ship of Theseus"
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        https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ship_of_Theseus

[4]   "Many-worlds interpretation"
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        https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Many-worlds_interpretation

[5]   "Schrödinger equation"
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        https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schr%C3%B6dinger_equation

[6]   "Born rule"
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        https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Born_rule

[7]   "Artificial general intelligence"
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