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Wittgenstein-oriented (meta-)philosophy

Is philosophy dead?

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Every now and then I hear this idea that philosophy is dead. Or that philosophy is no good, or that the philosophers are living in their own fantasy world and do nothing useful. I find this interesting, and want to take these claims with respect.

At first I want to point out, the claim that philosophy is "dead" isn't just something that's said by ignorant, prejudiced, uneducated hobby-thinkers. Peter Suber, professor in philosophy, writes:

In the 20th century, western philosophy divided into two deeply opposed camps, the English-speaking "analytic" philosophers and the European or "continental" philosophers. It doesn't matter much here how they differ, and how recent bridge-building initiatives have fared. One reason why philosophy seems to have died is that major figures from both camps, who agree on little else, seem to agree that it has died.

Martin Heidegger convinced the continental philosophers that philosophy was dead and that Nietzsche had killed it. Among the analytical philosophers Ludwig Wittgenstein claimed he had once for all solved the philosophical problems, or rather *dissolved* the philosophical problems. What they are claimed to have killed or solved could perhaps be summed up in the somewhat ambiguous terms "metaphysics", or "foundationalism", such as the aims to understand *actual reality* or to obtain *certain knowledge*. However, if we in a wider sense ask ourselves questions:

Is it possible to come to new insights by reason?

Can problems be solved by the use of intellect?

Is it possible to come to conclusions by thinking?

Can one become wiser by sharing thoughts with other people?

Most people would reply yes to these questions. *As a starting point of view*, I don't think philosophy needs to be more complicated than this.¹ The word "philosophy" originates from the Greek "philo" and "sophia", which roughly means "love of wisdom", sometimes also referred to as "friend of insight" and similar.²

It can further be stressed that the aim for "certain knowledge" and understanding the "actual reality" and such wasn't all what interested the first so-called philosophers. I.e. they concerned themselves with the developing of a just society (as Plato's *Republic*), and they were doing natural sciences (as Aristotle). It's not true that all modern philosophers only focus on ontology/metaphysics either. I.e. Richard Rorty, famous philosopher of 20th century, claimed *there is nothing philosophically interesting in the concept of Truth*. He called himself "neopragmatist", working for what he called "social hope". Another example is Jürgen Habermas who agrees there is no interest to search for absolute foundations, but still thinks the philosopher can act as a guardian of rationality, and be a mediator between the scientific, ethical and aesthetic disciplines. Also Wittgenstein didn't say that all philosophising was meaningless, he just rejected an old conception about philosophy:

Roughly speaking, according to the old conception - for instance that of the (great) western philosophers - there have been two kinds of problems in fields of knowledge: essential, great, universal, and inessential, quasi-accidental problems. And against this stands our conception, that there is no such thing as a great, essential problem in the sense of "problem" in the field of knowledge.³

Is philosophy dead? Whether it's dead or not depends on how you define philosophy, and what you mean by dead. Some of the common objections I've noticed people have against philosophers:

One view is that the philosophers are on an impossible mission, talk a lot of nonsense and never find any answers. Another view is that the philosophers just talk with each other, don't reach out to the people, and make nothing of value. A third view is that the academical philosophers are too atomic, analytic and lacks in seeing the big picture.

My aim here can be seen twofold; Firstly to identify the bad reputation of philosophy, and secondly point out that it doesn't need to be this way. It can be seen as a caution to the ones only positive of (academical) philosophy, and an apology to the ones only negative about it.

There are a lot of preconceptions about *what is philosophy*. People have different views on what it's all about, and how it is to be done. To understand the essence and possibilities of philosophy in an unprejudiced way seems to be one of the toughest tasks. Below I post link to Wittgenstein whom I think brings interesting views on this topic. However, I believe it's a question that suits well to be attacked from different directions. I think it's important to perceive wide (this is hard), and not agree to just call them 'academical philosophers' philosophers. Philosophy can be so much more than what's being taught at university.

References and further reading

Ludwig Wittgenstein -

"Philosophy" <http://www.springerlink.com/content/q686283u86221819/fulltext.pdf>

Jürgen Habermas - "Philosophy as Stand-In and Interpreter", in *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (1990) Here is a PPT-presentation on this essay, which presents the central ideas of the text short and comprehensible: <http://s08.middlebury.edu/PHIL0260A/Philosophy>

Peter Suber - "Is Philosophy Dead?" www.earlham.edu/~peters/writing/endphilo.htm

Unknown author - "Is Philosophy Dead?" <http://www.universityessays.com/example-essays/philosophy/is-philosophy-dead.php> (I link this as an example of what I regard as an unsatisfying answer to the question – they don't seem to acknowledge the actual concerns, just simply dismiss it.)

Notes

1Note well that I write "*starting point*", which is not the same as to define "actual philosophy". At some point we might reach something specific and transcendental "higher wisdom" in philosophy, but not by starting with denying what's considered as ordinary and practical, I believe.

2 What the words "philo" and "sophia" really meant in their original sense might not be so easy for us to grasp. It refers to concepts that we cannot quite relate to, as we live in another time, under other circumstances. One thing we may note is that the Greeks didn't make any difference between 'science' and 'philosophy'.

3This quote is easily misunderstood, if one doesn't know the context in which it's written. I.e. Wittgenstein didn't ignore the so-called "great" and "universal" problems, as one may think by reading this quote.

Distinguishing between philosophy and science with the help from Ludwig Wittgenstein

"Philosophers constantly see the method of science before their eyes, and are irresistibly tempted to ask and answer questions in the way science does. This tendency is the real source of metaphysics and leads the philosopher into complete darkness." - Ludwig Wittgenstein, BB

This is a very strong statement. To Wittgenstein it is most important to stress the differences between philosophy and science. And though you rarely hear people who say they disagree with him, few actually follows up the consequences of what this implies, it seems to me.

Here I will make some distinctions between philosophy and science:

Category A	Category B
(claims of) Philosophy (and maths)	(claims of) Empirical science
Logic	Empiric
A priori	A posteriori
Analytic	Synthetic
Deduction	Induction
Recollection	Collection
Revisionary	Accumulative
Assumption	Hypothesis
If...then	Since...thus
Possible	Probable/Improbable
Necessary/Impossible	Probable/Improbable
(depend upon) imagination	(depend upon) observation
"Fiction"	"Reality"
Grammatical examples	Theses
Look within (inner world, mind)	Look outside (outer world)

This is not intended to be about any particular kind of philosophy, but philosophy in general. Many would be inclined to disagree with this list. To some degree I can agree that the list is problematic. But in order to dissolve disagreements about the list, I think it's mostly important to stress that one should not make overhasty conclusions about it. Things can be viewed from different perspectives, and interpretations can be made very differently... Describing difference between philosophy and science is in a sense much more complicated (something we'll have reason to dig deeper into later on).

One important note is that claims of empirical science is not same category as the claims of logic. One of the most common and problematic prejudices among people, it seems to me, is that many think that science is based upon logic. It is true that scientists often uses logic as a tool, but logic cannot back up scientific conclusions (as the scientific conclusions are based upon empirics and logic is independent of empirics).

Another common prejudice that follows from this is that people think science deals with certainty, when in fact scientific conclusions are in fact only matter of estimated probability. And on the other hand, people who think that logic (deduction) has to do with probabilities are just as wrong.

Some quotes from Wittgenstein for further development:

"What kind of investigation are we carrying out? Am I investigating the probability of cases that I give as examples, or am I investigating their actuality? No, I'm just citing what is possible and am therefore giving grammatical examples." PBT

"Our interest does not fall back upon these causes of the formation of concepts; we are not doing natural science; nor yet natural history - since we can also invent fictitious natural history for our purposes" PI

"One might also give the name philosophy to what is possible//present// before all new discoveries and inventions." PBT

"If one tried to advance theses in philosophy, it would never be possible to debate them, because everyone would agree to them." PBT

"The work of the philosopher consists in assembling reminders for a particular purpose." PBT

"Learning philosophy is really recollecting. We remember that we really used words in this way." PBT

"The problems are solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have known since long." PI

'The "actual infinite" is a "mere word". It would be better to say: for the moment this expression merely produces a picture —which still hangs in the air: you owe us an account of its application. An infinitely long row of marbles, an infinitely long rod. **Imagine** these coming in in some kind of **fairy tale**. What application, even though a **fictitious** one, might be made of this **concept**? Let us ask now, not "Can there be such a thing?" but "What do we imagine?" So give free rein to our imagination. **You can have things now just as you choose**. You only need to say how you want them. So (just) make a verbal picture, illustrate it as you choose - by drawing comparisons etc.! Thus you can - as it were - prepare a blueprint. - And now there remains the question how to work with it.' Zettel

(My emphasis)

"The aim of philosophy is to erect a wall at the point where language stops anyway." PBT

"It is all one to me whether the typical western scientist understands or appreciates my work since in any case he does not understand the spirit in which I write.

Our civilization is characterized by the word progress. Progress is its form, it is not one of its properties that it makes progress. Typically it constructs. Its activity is to construct a more and more complicated structure. And even clarity is only a means to this end and not an end in itself. For me on the contrary clarity, transparency, is an end in itself I am not interested in erecting a building but in having the foundations of possible buildings transparently before me. So I am aiming at something different than are the scientists and my thoughts move differently than do theirs." - CV

References:

Ludwig Wittgenstein, BB = Blue Book, CV = Culture and Value, PBT = [Philosophy in Big Typescript](#), PI = Philosophical Investigations, Zettel

Further reading

[/Issue_21_Paper_Marconi.pdf](#) (A well written article. It becomes a bit boring when he speaks of Quine, but the part about Wittgenstein is good, and the authors conclusions makes sense.)

A lecture on science and Buddhism, by Alan Watts <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzyDTV6EzUs>

I found this interesting. Watts describes science in a sense that is not far off from how Wittgenstein describes philosophy. He says, science is descriptive and systematic, much like Wittgensteinian philosophy. Watts is not wrong, I'd say, he just makes another distinction, an interesting distinction indeed.

[Wittgenstein's Lectures on Philosophy](#)

"Reading literature and doing philosophy" by Dawn M Wilson

Dawn M Wilson discusses the differences between reading science, literature and philosophy. Philosophy is usually read in similar sense as science, and Wilson argues that it should rather be read in similar sense as literature, and she uses the writings of Wittgenstein to support her point. She writes "[T]he imaginative activity of reading literature is to be seen as a model for understanding Wittgenstein's philosophical method. My claim is that the way we *read* literature can help us to understand the way that Wittgenstein wants us to *do* philosophy."

Some appetizers from the text:

- "When reading science we assume that the sentences say something, we take for granted the specific context of application that is required, and we only worry about whether what the sentences say is true or false."
- "In literature we do not make this assumption and instead look to see which context of application, if any, makes sense of the language. We imagine unlimited models of discourse for comparison without having to say that the sentence is reducible to a true claim. "
- "When we are doing philosophy we should look at our language in the way that we do when we are reading literature, rather than the way that we do when we are reading science. We must be active, imaginative and pluralistic rather than inactive, dogmatic and monistic."

"The task of philosophy is not to *say* something, but to *see* clearly what can be said. "

(Recently I've been thinking a lot in terms of Jungs typology. And this description of the task of philosophy makes it sound like a task for an introverted intuitive mind. One can wonder, is philosophy really an introverted intuitive business?

I think, several ways to answer that question. But we may note Wittgenstein himself was strongly introverted intuitive (that I'm quite certain of.)

"For Wittgenstein, all philosophical problems are confusions arising from a failure to see clearly whether sentences have sense. They are brought about because we look at sentences and assume that they say something. This is easily done because we confuse forms of expression that has a similar appearance and assume that the application is the same"

"In the case of philosophical problems, as soon as we see that the utterance says nothing then the problem disappears, because the problem was nothing more than the confused idea."

Reference and further reading:

Dawn Wilson - [Reading literature and doing philosophy](#)

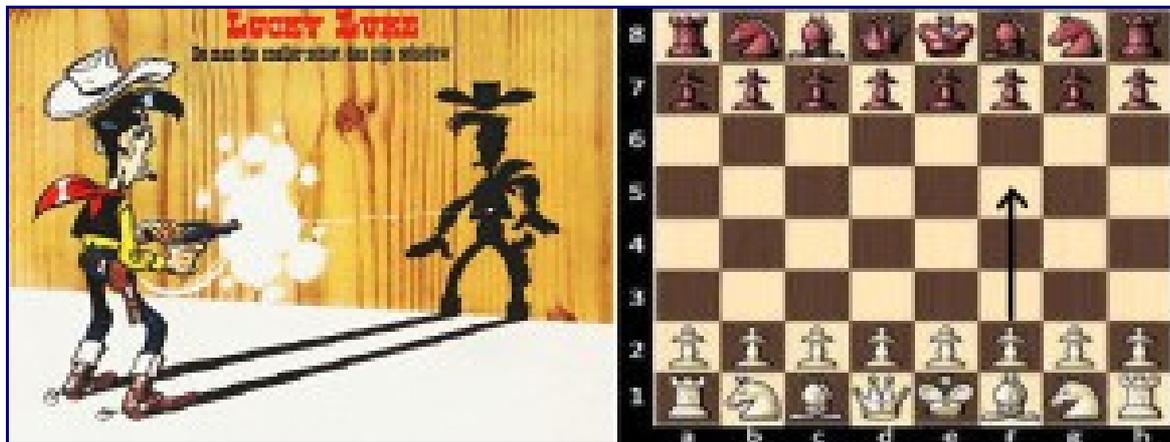
One famous scholar who treats Wittgenstein in a context of history of literature is Terry Eagleton. Here is a link to a nice essay by Eagleton [Wittgenstein's Friends](#)
I specially liked the part about Wittgenstein and the Bakhtin brothers.

On logic and Socratic method etc.

Empirical problem versus logical problem

Consider the statements:

- (1) Lucky Luke is very quick in his movements, he shoots before his shadow lifts the gun
- (2) Garry Kasparov is a great chess player, he has got a special ability to move a pawn three squares in just one move



One would be inclined to mistrust both of these statements. The important thing here though is to see the difference in nature between the statements. The first statement contains an *empirical problem*, the second statement contains a *logical problem*. We may also say,

-The first statement is logically/grammatically* possible, but empirically very **improbable** (it's a matter for scientists)

-The second statement is logically/grammatically **impossible** (since a pawn may at maximum move two squares in chess), and thus no matter for empirical/scientific investigation at all

*like Wittgenstein, I speak of logical/grammatical as synonyms or almost synonyms

Breaking the laws of logic? Sure, but it's not so exciting.

Some people express that it would be something fancy about going beyond logic. I'm skeptic about this. Is it possible to break the laws of logic? I'm inclined to say that breaking the laws of logic, is literally analogous to breaking the laws of chess (however, also I'd like to note that it's not so easy to speak of logic in a proper sense (for reasons hard to explain)).

If you played chess with a friend, and when it was his turn he took his pawn and moved it three squares in one move, would you be amazed? I think you wouldn't be very impressed, but rather annoyed. And if you played chess with God and God moved his pawn three squares in one move, how would you react then? Would it be a sign of how powerful he is?

Philosophy about defending rules/logic? No, philosophy about letting others decide, and adopting thereafter.

Philosophers, especially philosophers of the analytical tradition, often seem think that it is their task to defend logic or defending "proper use of language". This is problematic, I'd say. Defending logic always means defending certain rules. But what rules should a philosopher defend? The official rules of chess? Rules that scientists have set up about how to use language for their scientific investigations? I'd reply no to that. Rather, I'd say, *the rules that the philosopher should embrace, are rules that are approved by the one he is talking to.*

We may remind us of the Socratic method. Socrates asked people questions, and used their answers to ask further questions, without making any claims himself. This is the essence of pure philosophy, I'd say. It's much like an unforced force (using Habermasian term). This also indicates why

philosophy is a dialogical genre.
Consider this quote by Wittgenstein:

You can have things now just as you choose. You only need to say how you want them. So (just) make a verbal picture, illustrate it as you choose - by drawing comparisons etc.! Thus you can - as it were - prepare a blueprint. - And now there remains the question how to work with it. (Zettel)

What Wittgenstein says here is much in line with the Socratic method (I'm thinking of making a closer comparison of Socrates and Wittgenstein in a later post). He asks the listener to decide the terms. The one talking to the philosopher may set up the rules herself. I.e. if you want to play chess where the pawn is allowed to move three squares, you can have it that way – and then we can continue to discuss chess according to these terms.

Another quote from Wittgenstein:

One of the most important tasks is to express all false thought processes so characteristically that the reader says, "Yes, that's exactly the way I meant it". To make a tracing of the physiognomy of every error. Indeed we can only convict someone else of a mistake if he acknowledges that this really is the expression of his feeling. // For only if he acknowledges it as such, is it the correct expression.

What the other person acknowledges is the analogy I am proposing to him as the source of his thought.

Henry W. Johnstone tries to explain why the philosopher should play according to the terms of the listener:

Since we cannot decide the validity of a philosophical argument either by an appeal to evidence or to internal consistency, the only alternative is an appeal to consistency with the intention of the original propounder of the argument. The general schema of an argumentum ad hominem is that it is a reply to a previous argument which shows that the first argument "defeats its own purpose"

More on philosophy and chess

Consider now that we play chess according to ordinary rules. What's the point of reminding of that a pawn may only move one square at a time, to someone who already knew this since before? There is not necessarily any point. However, it could be if the chess player had a serious concern. Say, he is afraid of that his opponent's pawn at F5 will move to the spot F8 and thus convert into a queen. We may then remind him of that since the pawn only can move one square at a time, it'll take at least three turns for the opponent's pawn to get to the F8 spot – and in that time he can move his own pieces to prevent this from happening.

It's a bit weird to call ordinary problems of chess philosophical problems, but the problems are of similar kind. Wittgenstein wrote "the work of the philosopher consists in assembling reminders for a particular purpose". The method of the chess player is much the same. A reason why problems of chess is not to be considered as philosophical problems though is that one may consider these to be a part of a "normal discourse" while philosophy is "abnormal discourses" (borrowing term from Kuhn/Rorty).

Conclusion

A problem of many philosophers is that they insist on rules (of language) that nobody wants to play according to anyway. They treat it as a "game of knowing rules and instructing about rules", when in fact it should be more of a "game of playing according to rules that's being given" (why it should be like this is something we may return to in later posts).

Appendix: Language games of the words "certain", "possible" and "impossible"

In a strict sense, the terms "certain", "possible" and "impossible" are empty of content for the empirical scientist. Why? Because nothing appears certain, nothing appears impossible, and everything appears possible (for the enlightened scientist). The answer to any question can be given already before the question is being asked, and thus the answer won't fill any function. - But yet these terms are used within science. Yes, and that's because they are used in another sense (perhaps not intentionally). The words certain, possible and impossible are given different meaning within the language game of empirical science, than within the language game of logic.

Within the language game of logic (i.e. mathematics)

certain = certain
possible = possible
impossible = impossible
logical law = necessity

Within common language games of empirical sciences (or ordinary language)

certain = very much probable
possible = not very probable nor very improbable, but somewhat probable
impossible = very much improbable
natural law / scientific proof = very strong hypothesis

I.e. when someone asks whether it's possible for Lucky Luke to shoot before his shadow lifts the gun, the implicit question is "is it somewhat probable that he can do this, or is it very very improbable?" (see link below)

Further reading

[Discussion on whether Lucky Luke can shoot faster than his own shadow](#)

Critical theory etc

Jürgen Habermas, non-ironist and non-metaphysical philosopher

As I previously noted, Jürgen Habermas and Richard Rorty stood close to each other. However they did also have their disputes. Rorty's philosophical heroes are people who are both "liberal" and "ironist", and he called Habermas "a liberal who is unwilling to be an ironist". In a sense this appears somewhat paradoxical. According to Rorty, being an ironist is an opposite of being a metaphysician (see [earlier post here on Rorty's ironist/metaphysician distinction](#)), and Habermas clearly claims himself to be a non-metaphysician, but yet not ironist. Personally I want to avoid labels as much as possible, and I think that "ironist" is not a very nice sounding word, so I do sympathize with Habermas on this point.

Habermas, born in 1929, was in his youth member of Hitler Jugend. His father was "passive sympathizer with Nazism". After the war, when documentary films of concentration camps was released, Habermas is to have said, "all at once we saw that we had been living in a politically criminal system." And so he eventually would turn into one of the most prominent defenders of liberalism and democracy.

Quotes and notes from *Philosophy as Stand-In and Interpreter*

I will just pick some quotes from this essay and comment. If you want a review of what it's all about, and what points Habermas wants to make, this may not be the best place to look. Earlier I recommended a PPT-presentation on this essay, which presents the central ideas of the text short and comprehensible: <http://s08.middlebury.edu/PHIL0260A/Philosophy>

"Richard Rorty's impressive critique of philosophy assembles compelling metaphilosophical arguments in support of the view that the roles Kant the master thinker had envisaged for philosophy, namely those of usher and judge, are too big for it."

"While I find myself in agreement with much of what Rorty says, I have trouble accepting his conclusion, which is that if philosophy forswears these two roles, it must also surrender the function of being the 'guardian of rationality'. If I understand Rorty, he is saying that the new modesty of philosophy involves the abandonment of any claim to reason – the very claim that has marked philosophical thought since its inception."

This shows Habermas humbleness. He says "I have trouble accepting" instead of "I disagree" as if he indeed does try to accept Rorty's conclusion... and "if I understand Rorty", as if he is concerned that he might've actually misunderstood Rorty.

Of course this may be just empty phrases, but it seems to me that he takes what Rorty says as a serious challenge to his own thinking. And I think that he should.

"I will argue that philosophy, while well advised to withdraw from the problematic roles of usher (Platzanweiser) and judge, can and ought to retain its claim to reason, provided it is content to play the more modest roles of stand-in (Platzhalter) and interpreter."

Explanation of the purpose of the essay.

"What I know about the history of the social sciences and psychology leads me to believe that hybrid discourses such as Marxism and psychoanalysis are by no means atypical. To the contrary, they may well stand for a type of approach that marks the beginning of new research traditions. What holds for Freud applies to all seminal theories in these disciplines, for instance, those of Durkheim, Mead, Max Weber, Piaget, and Chomsky. Each inserted a genuinely philosophical idea

like a detonator into a particular context of research."

Here Habermas argues why philosophy can be practical and useful. Are this list of people really philosophers, one can wonder, or are they rather sociologists, anthropologists, linguists? One may answer that they are both, but then; in what way, to what extent, is not so easy to sort out...

"bla bla bla.... triumphal march toward objectivist approaches, such as neurophysiology, that quaint favorite child of the analytic philosophers."

Is Habermas here being sarcastic and scorns analytic philosophers for taking interest in neurophysiology?

It reminded of that most philosophers seem to stand close to certain other intellectual discipline, and whatever that other discipline is can vary widely. Some philosophers stand close to the natural sciences (such as many analytic philosophers), other stand close to the social sciences (such as Habermas), and some stand close to culture, literature and psychology (such as Wittgenstein).

"Whose seat would philosophy be keeping, what would it be standing in for? Empirical theories with strong universalistic claims."

This is important quote. This seems to be Habermas own opinion. I'm a bit skeptic about it, but I'm not quite sure what he means by it either. I believe it can be problematic to be a Stand In for empirical theories, if you aren't involved in any certain empirical context and don't undertake empirical investigations yourself. Maybe Habermas does think philosophers should involve themselves in certain empirical contexts?

"every philosophy makes a practical and theoretical claim to totality and that not to make such a twofold claim is to be doing something which does not qualify as philosophy"

Here quoting a metaphilosophical claim by Robert Spaemann. Habermas expresses some sympathy with this. To me it sounds reasonable too, but it all depends on how you interpret it... "Totality" is a dangerous word, which easily makes philosophers get lost.

"Reason has split into three moments: modern science, positive law and posttraditional ethics, and autonomous art and institutionalized art criticism (i.e. aesthetics) - but philosophy had precious little to do with this disjunction.

Ignorant of sophisticated critiques of reason, the sons and daughters of modernity have progressively learned to differentiate their cultural tradition in terms of of these three aspects of rationality such that they deal with issues of truth, justice, and taste discretely rather than simultaneously"

There are three intellectual disciplines; science, ethics/laws and aesthetics. These turn away from each other, and do not cooperate. This is Habermas concern.

"(1) The sciences disgorge more and more dements of religion, thus renouncing the former aim to being able to interpret nature and history as one whole. (2) Cognitivist moral theories disgorge issues of the good life, focusing instead strictly on deontological, generalizable aspects of ethics, so that all that remains of "the good" is the just. (3) With art it is likewise. Since the turn to autonomy, art has striven mightily to mirror one basic aesthetic experience, the increasing decentration of subjectivity"

"how can expert cultures with their rarefied, esoteric forms be made to stay in touch with everyday communication?"

"Everyday life ... is a more promising medium for regaining the lost unity of reason than are today's expert cultures or yesteryear's classical philosophy of reason."

Quotes like these are a central reason why I choose to pay attention to Habermas in this blog. I find this interesting, but also find it hard to grasp what he really wants to say. How to stay in touch with

everyday communication? Should this be a concern of philosophy?

Rather than standing above the expert cultures, as something über-esoteric, philosophy should stand below them - as a mediator and discipline closer to the lifeworld?

I'm positive about what he says. But if we are to follow it through, I suspect that philosophy has to be done in *very* different way from how it usually is done

"As far as philosophy is concerned, it might do well to refurbish its link with the totality by taking on the role of interpreter on behalf of the lifeworld. It might then be able to help set in motion the interplay between the cognitive-instrumental, moral-practical, and aesthetic-expressive dimensions that has come to a standstill today, like a tangled mobile"

And how to make reality of this?

In general, I'm sympathetic with Habermas view. It seems to me, he doesn't manage to get things quite straight when trying to work out the role of philosophy, but he's not far off. The role of empirics in philosophy is an important question. Here is another post where I continue to discuss the role of empirics in philosophy - [Pierre Bourdieu, philosophy and empirics](#)

Pierre Bourdieu, philosophy and empirics

[Pierre Bourdieu](#) differs from most philosophers in one sense - he relies heavily on empirical research. Earlier I've reviewed essays by Jürgen Habermas ([link](#)) and Kai Nielsen ([link](#)), that suggested philosophy should be empirical. By referring to Pierre Bourdieu, I do not want to say that they are wrong - but I want to highlight the risks that philosophers may run into when they decide to go empirical. If one wants to make claims involving facts (for many people this will appear like the only way to make claims), without being involved in any particular empirical context, then one is likely to run into problems - and I believe Bourdieu can help us understand these problems.

Here's a couple of quotes from Bourdieu's work *Homo Academicus*:

Self-centered reading vs. Scientific reading

'[S]ociological knowledge is always liable to be led back to a superficial perception by the self-centred reading which focuses on anecdotes and individual details and which, if not checked by a formal language, reduces to their ordinary meaning words shared by scholarly and ordinary language. This almost inevitably partial reading generates a false understanding, based on ignorance of everything which defines specifically scientific knowledge as such, that is, the very structure of the explanatory system: it dismantles what scientific construction had created, mingling what had been separated, and in particular confusing constructed individuals (whether a person or an institution), which exist only in the network of relations elaborated by scientific study, with empirical individuals directly accessible to ordinary intuition. It dissolves everything that distinguishes scientific objectification either from ordinary knowledge or from the pseudo-scholarly knowledge which - as is patent in most essays on intellectuals, essays which demystify less than they suffer mystification'

The people in borderland between ordinary knowledge and scholarly knowledge

'[T]hose who frequent the borderland between scholarly and ordinary knowledge — essayists, journalists, academic journalists and journalistic academics — have a vital stake in blurring the frontier and denying or eliminating what separates scientific analysis from partial objectifications, [...] They can if they so desire indulge even here in a reading guided by idle curiosity, interpreting examples and individual cases in a perspective of snobbish gossip or critical infighting, if they wish to reduce the systematic and relational mode of explanation which is characteristic of science to the most ordinary procedure of polemical reduction, to *ad hoc* explanation using *ad hominem* arguments.'

(To that group, of people in the borderland, I believe one can also often include academical philosophers - as they are without scientific schooling (in Jungian terms: perhaps they are schooled in *introverted* aspects of science but not in *extraverted* aspects), and not involved in any particular empirical contexts** (thus not been able to learn "language-games" or "rules-of-the-field" of any particular science).)

*One case of exception though, academical philosophers are usually involved in one particular empirical context - namely the history of philosophy.

Bourdieu and Wittgenstein

Bourdieu about Wittgenstein:

"Wittgenstein is probably the philosopher who has helped me most at times of difficulty. He's a kind of saviour for times of great intellectual distress – as when you have to question such evident things as 'obeying a rule'. Or when you have to describe such simple (and by the same token,

practically ineffable) things as putting a practice into practice.” ([ref](#))

Instead of approaching Wittgenstein as a ”theoretician” with certain philosophical ideas to analyze, Bourdieu sees Wittgenstein as a kind of therapist (helper/”saviour”), who helps you see clear (see the ”simple”/”evident”). I believe this is also the sense in which Wittgenstein is ”supposed” to be read.

Bourdieu hailed the philosophy of Wittgenstein, but yet their approaches were very different. If Bourdieu is described as a hard-core empiricist, Wittgenstein could be described as hard-core anti-empiricist, exclaiming that ”we can also invent fictitious natural history for our purposes”.

Sociology is a martial art

documentary on Pierre Bourdieu, here I link first part:

[youtube=http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Csbu08SqAuc]

Reference and further reading

[A blog post about Bourdieu and philosophy @ schizosophy.com](#)

[Pierre Bourdieu - Homo Academicus \(@ google books\)](#)

[Pierre Bourdieu - Language and Symbolic Power \(@ google books\)](#) Description: "This volume brings together Bourdieu's highly original writings on language and on the relations among language, power, and politics. Bourdieu develops a forceful critique of traditional approaches to language, including the linguistic theories of Saussure and Chomsky and the theory of speech-acts elaborated by Austin and others [including Habermas]. He argues that language should be viewed not only as a means of communication but also as a medium of power through which individuals pursue their own interests and display their practical competence."

[Bourdieu: A Critical Reader \(@ google books\)](#) Description: "This Critical Reader provides a new perspective on the work of France's foremost social theorist Pierre Bourdieu, by examining its philosophical import and promoting a fruitful dialogue between Bourdieu and philosophers in the English-speaking world."

Some nice articles on Pierre Bourdieu

[Bourdieu, Critic of Foucault" by Staf Callewaert](#)

["Towards a Sociology of Philosophy" by Henrik Lundberg](#)

[An invitation to Reflexive Sociology](#)

Internal links

[A philosopher's guide to Pierre Bourdieu](#)

[Sartre's "total intellectual" vs. Bourdieu's "collective intellectual", and the philosophers role](#)

Sartre's "total intellectual" vs. Bourdieu's "collective intellectual", and the philosophers role

Pierre Bourdieu argued that it is overestimated what one lone intellectual can do to improve the society, while it is underestimated what many intellectuals can do together. Bourdieu criticized the Sartrean "total intellectual", and spoke in favor of a "collective intellectual", including the cooperation of many.

In similar sense I think that expectations of philosophers to be great polymaths or some "ultimate founding authority" are set too high, but what they actually can do together with others is frequently underestimated. Daniel Little writes "I think philosophers need to interact seriously and extensively with working social scientists and historians if they are going to be able to make a useful contribution", as opposed (or in addition) to this I present examples of how one can attract and influence others without entering the same field.

The Sartrean "total intellectual" vs the Bourdieuan "collective intellectual"

'The total intellectual' and Bourdieu's criticism of it here described by Daniel Franklin Pilario:

A 'total intellectual' is one who is capable of transcending social barriers be it in terms of academic disciplines, social locations or political involvements. [---] Sartre's philosophical works themselves purport a dialectical methodology which, with the same totalizing ambition, endeavors to subsume all rivals under its own system. Referring to Sartre's Critique de la raison dialectique, Bourdieu states

"every aspect of the work testifies to the will to exercise the philosopher's traditional claim to be the ultimate founding authority, and to do so unchallenged in every realm of existence and thought. Sartre's most reliable annexation strategy is to set himself up as a transcendent consciousness, capable of supplying the person or institution to which it addresses itself with a self-truth of which the person or institution has been dispossessed." ([ref](#))

This can be put in contrast to Bourdieu's concept of a "collective intellectual", here described by Mustafa Emirbayer & Erik Schneiderhan:

Bourdieu [...] sought to foster the development of what he termed a "collective intellectual". [...] This collectivity would gather together in a single working body a range of thinkers possessed of specific expertise in the given issue of wide concern, an expertise made possible by the autonomous inner development of their respective fields of learning. The collective intellectual would debunk folk assumptions as well as the so-called expert opinions propounded by media intellectuals and "think tanks"; it would also propose constructive and creative solutions to the problems addressed. In so doing, it would contribute to a broader public enlightenment. ([ref](#))

...relating to Jung's typology

I think the preference of a Bourdieuan "collective intellectual" in front of a Sartrean "total intellectual" can be supported by taking Carl Jung's typology into consideration. Jung's typology describes eight different functions, which all are useful and needed, but which cannot all be mastered simultaneously by one single person (see [earlier post on Jung's typology](#)). Equal development in all functions is not a sign of strength, but rather sign of a lack of differentiation. Jung writes "uniform consciousness and unconsciousness of functions is [...] a distinguishing mark of a primitive mentality". When counting in an auxiliary function, as in the MBTI, it leaves us with 16 different personality types, and each with certain unique characteristics. Not one of these types can subsume any of the others.

The philosopher's role

Daniel Little, philosopher of social science, writes on his blog UnderstandingSociety, "I think philosophers need to interact seriously and extensively with working social scientists and historians if they are going to be able to make a useful contribution" ([ref](#)).

I do both sympathize and see problems with this. I sympathize with it in the sense that I find some kind of interaction (or perhaps rather "interinfluence") desirable, however one problem I see is that it may lead to the conclusion that philosophers should "sacrifice" themselves, and become more like social scientists.

One could say; it is desirable to make a match, but remember there are different ways to make a match. Consider for example these different alternatives:

- (1) Stick to yourself, do what you've always done, wait until others notices you, and eventually, by some time, you will get the recognition which you "rightfully deserve". (perhaps prototype of "analytical philosophy")
- (2) Take the initiative yourself by attending others, enter their field, speak with them in their terms etc.
- (3) Make yourself attractive to others (i.e. by showing you've got something which they themselves lack but desire). (Below I argue why Wittgenstein would fit into this category)

I think that many would only consider something in line with alternative (1) or (2). One may for example conclude that (1) isn't working; many philosophers have kept doing their thing without impressing anybody much, and thus one has to go for alternative (2) instead. I believe that the quote above by Little is likely to cause such associations.

I try and make a stand for something in line with the third (3) alternative. I want to do it by stressing the importance of different roles. Rather than seek to master everything, like the total intellectual aiming to be "the ultimate founding authority", the road to success may be to play a limited role - but do it with great skill.

"There is no more light in a genius than in any other honest man - but he has a particular kind of lens to concentrate this light into a burning point." - Ludwig Wittgenstein

At first, I'd like to consider a couple of examples from literature. Here are some quotes by prominent intellectuals of their time about the novelists Fyodor Dostoevsky and Honoré de Balzac:

Dostoevsky [is] the only psychologist from whom I have anything to learn. - Friedrich Nietzsche

*

Dostoevsky gives me more than any scientist, more than [Gauss](#). - Albert Einstein

*

I have learned more [from Balzac] than from all the professed historians, economists and statisticians of the period together - Friedrich Engels

Looking at these quotes one could think that Dostoevsky and Balzac must've been excellent polymaths. Apart from being great novelists, they were also great psychologists, scientists, historians, economists etc. But I think the truth is much the opposite. What made Dostoevsky so interesting to Nietzsche and Einstein, wasn't that Dostoevsky had any great knowledge in either psychology or physics, it was rather that Dostoevsky played the role of an artist very well. And as for Balzac, I'm quite certain he didn't study economy or statistics extensively, nor found any particular interest in any of these subjects, but his "concentrated light" in a field he mastered helped Engels see clearer in other subjects (this may give us a hint of how things are interconnected on a deeper level).

In conclusion, Dostoevsky and Balzac didn't attend the physicists, economists etc, as alternative (2) suggests but they were able to make themselves attractive (and useful) to them by doing their own thing very well (as (3) suggests).

Similarly in philosophy, we may consider that some of the most prominent social scientists of the

20th century such as Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdieu acknowledged intellectual debt to Wittgenstein ([ref](#)). For example, here quote by Bourdieu:

Wittgenstein is probably the philosopher who has helped me most at times of difficulty. He's a kind of saviour for times of great intellectual distress – as when you have to question such evident things as 'obeying a rule'. Or when you have to describe such simple (and by the same token, practically ineffable) things as putting a practice into practice. ([ref](#))

But this appreciation was not because Wittgenstein was doing social science himself (which many have mistaken him for, assuming that "the later Wittgenstein" did linguistics, anthropology and similar sciences), rather I would say that it was due to a rare ability to avoid the mindset of a scientist. Wittgenstein noted that philosophers in general are drawn towards science, and he urged that this has to be avoided: "Philosophers constantly see the method of science before their eyes, and are irresistibly tempted to ask and answer questions in the way science does. This tendency is the real source of metaphysics and leads the philosopher into complete darkness."

So, what we have is a match between Wittgenstein and prominent social scientists which is not because Wittgenstein attended the social scientists by entering their field, but rather Wittgenstein attracted them by showing great talent in his own field.

Summing up

[Text may be added later]

Reference and further reading

External links

["Back to the rough Grounds of Praxis - :](#)

[Exploring Theological Method With Pierre Bourdieu](#)" by *Daniel Franklin Pilario* - This book connects Bourdieu and Wittgenstein in a peculiar way, as the title "back to the rough ground" refers to famous quote by Wittgenstein

["Dewey and Bourdieu on Democracy"](#) by Mustafa Emirbayer & Erik Schneiderhan

["Wittgenstein and social practices"](#) by *Nigel Stirk* - This article discusses the relationship between Wittgenstein, Bourdieu and Giddens. It highlights some interesting similarities between Wittgenstein and Bourdieu. But the author seems to misunderstand Wittgenstein quite gravely by wrongly assuming that Wittgenstein was an anthropologist.

[Did Wittgenstein have a Philosophy of Language?](#) by Robert Wesley Angelo. This article highlights why Wittgenstein didn't have any "Philosophy of language", and why he wasn't doing philology but philosophy. Helps to show Wittgenstein's specificity as a philosopher.

Internal links

[A philosopher's guide to Pierre Bourdieu](#)

[Internet Revolution, attentionalism and slow-thinking, with Alexander Bard and Pierre Bourdieu](#)

[Pierre Bourdieu, philosophy and empirics](#)

[The task of philosophy is to use "introverted intuition"?](#)

A philosopher's guide to Pierre Bourdieu

Some would perhaps call [Pierre Bourdieu](#) more of an anti-philosopher than a philosopher. I want to claim that Bourdieu was a philosopher, and stress Bourdieu's role within philosophy. It is true that Bourdieu strongly criticized academic philosophy, but Bourdieu also associated himself with and found inspiration from canonized philosophers of both older and newer times, such as Pascal, Leibniz, Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Foucault. And as pointed out by Staf Callewaert, “Bourdieu insists he has nothing against philosophy as a discipline”. I think, that instead of being regarded as an outsider and enemy of philosophy, Bourdieu could be regarded as an insider, as a bridge-builder between different branches of philosophy, and as someone who can help bring philosophy to a better reputation.

Selected quotes and commentary of Pierre Bourdieu

[Bourdieu and \(academical\) philosophy](#)

[Bourdieu on language](#)

[Bourdieu on self-reflexivity](#)

[Bourdieu on contextual orientation](#)

[Presentation of some of Bourdieu's key concepts](#)

[References and further reading](#)

Bourdieu and (academical) philosophy

Philosophers ask the hardest questions there is to ask but...

“Bourdieu says that philosophers ask the hardest questions there is to ask about the social world but if you want to start thinking seriously about the questions the philosophers ask you should do social science. That philosophers are not good really at dealing with the questions that they ask because they don't engage in empirical research.” - Ghassan Hage lecture on Pierre Bourdieu ([ref](#))

The philosophers' illusio

"Every participant who wants to succeed within the field of philosophy must be prepared to engage or invest in the game in some way. Illusio is Bourdieu's term for the tendency of participants to engage in the game and believe in its significance, that is, believe in that the benefits promised by the field are desirable. [...] Whatever the combatants on the ground may battle over, no one questions whether the battles in question are meaningful. The considerable investments in the game guarantee its continued existence. Illusio is thus never questioned." - Henrik Lundberg & Göran Heidegren ([ref](#))

The problem of questioning philosophy without questioning the philosophical institution

“Every attempt to bring philosophy into question which is not bound up with a questioning of the philosophical institution itself still plays the institution's game by merely playing with fire, by rubbing up against the limits of the sacred circle, while still carefully refraining from moving outside it.” - Pierre Bourdieu ([ref](#))

Nothing against philosophy as a discipline

"[Bourdieu] insists that he has nothing against philosophy as a discipline. He notices that he has tried to contribute to a 'sociology of philosophy' in order to liberate the discipline from the constraints imposed by a 'philosophy of philosophy' that only reproduces the dominant philosophical doxa." - Staf Callewaert ([ref](#))

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Bourdieu on language

Developing central line of inquiry projected by Austin and Wittgenstein

"Bourdieu develops the central line of inquiry projected by Austin and Wittgenstein's philosophy of language ... [but] Bourdieu goes much further than either Austin or Wittgenstein in providing the theoretical tools and empirical methods for a systematic analysis of the social forces, structures, and contexts that actually shape linguistic meaning" - Richard Shusterman, Bourdieu A Critical Reader ([ref](#))

Criticizing Austin and Habermas for their use of 'illocutionary force'

"concepts such as 'illocutionary force', [...] tends to locate the power of words in words themselves rather than in the institutional conditions of their use" - Bourdieu ([ref](#))

"The limits (and the interest) of Austin's attempt to define performative utterances lie in the fact that he does not exactly do what he thinks he is doing, and this prevents him from following it through to the end. Believing that he was contributing to the philosophy of language, he was in fact working out a theory of a particular class of symbolic expressions, of which the discourse of authority is only the paradigmatic form" - Bourdieu ([ref](#))

The evolution of a legitimate language

"the legitimate language is the result of a complex historical process, sometimes involving extensive conflicts (especially in colonial contexts) between a particular language, which emerges as the dominant one, and other languages or dialects, which are eliminated or subordinated to it." ([ref](#))

Question of "practical competence" more central than question of "grammatical competence"

"Lack of competence of the legitimate language entails exclusion from the mainstream society or silence. By lack of competence Bourdieu means not so much lack of linguistic or grammatical competence as lack of 'practical competence'.

This is not the Chomskyan competence, that is the capacity to generate an unlimited sequence of grammatically well formed sentences, but rather a capacity to produce expressions which are appropriate for particular situations, that is, a capacity to produce expressions à propos. This is the capacity to make oneself heard, believed, obeyed, and so on. It is the recognition of the right and authority to speak." - ([ref](#))

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Bourdieu and self-reflexivity

"If there is a single feature that makes Bourdieu stand out in the landscape of contemporary social theory, it is his signature obsession with reflexivity." - Loic Wacquant

To turn one's weapons against oneself

"...as I wrote on skholé and all these other things, I could not fail to feel the ricochet of my own words. I had never before felt with such intensity the strangeness of my project, a kind of negative philosophy that was liable to appear self-destructive." - Pierre Bourdieu, Pascalian Meditations

To humble oneself and take interest in the ordinary, Bourdieu more of a Pascalian than affiliated with Marx

"For a long time I had adopted the habit, when asked the (generally ill-intentioned) question of my relations with Marx, of replying that, all in all, if I really had to affiliate myself, I would say I was more of a Pascalian. I was thinking in particular of everything that concerns symbolic power, the

aspect through which the affinity appears most clearly, and other, less often observed, facets of his work, such as the refusal of the ambition of foundation. But, above all, I had always been grateful to Pascal, as I understood him, for his concern, devoid of all populist naivety, for 'ordinary people' and the 'sound opinions of the people'; and also for his determination, inseparable from that concern, always to seek the 'reason of effects', the *raison d'être* of the seemingly most illogical or derisory human behaviours — such as 'spending a whole day in chasing a hare' — rather than condemning or mocking them, like the 'half-learned' who are always ready to 'play the philosopher' and to seek to astonish with their uncommon astonishments at the futility of common-sense opinions." - Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*

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Bourdieu on Contextual Orientation

The importance of contextual orientation

(If you read English translations of Bourdieu's books, you will often find a preface by Bourdieu especially dedicated for the translated version where he discusses the problems of moving texts from one context to another - I think this can be seen as an indicator of how important contextual orientation is for Bourdieu)

"Many misunderstandings in international communication are a result of the fact that texts do not bring their context with them" - Bourdieu, *The international circulation of ideas in Bourdieu : Critical reader* (all of this essay deals with the question of contextual orientation)

"In the international (and also the intergenerational) circulation of ideas [...] texts are transmitted without the context of their production and use, and count on receiving a so-called 'internal' reading which universalizes and eternalizes them while derealizing them by constantly relating them to the sole context of their reception." - Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*

The advantage and the disadvantage of the outsider

"It is understandable that a book aiming to account for this sort of initiatory itinerary orientated towards that reappropriation of the self which, paradoxically, is only accessible through objectification of the familiar world, is bound to be read differently by readers who are part of this world as opposed to those who are outsiders. [...] It could be supposed that, contrary to the native reader who understands only too well in one sense, but who may be inclined to resist objectification, the foreign reader, because (at least at first sight) he has no direct stake in the game which is described, will be less inclined to offer resistance to the analysis. All the more so since, as it happens in the theater that one may laugh unwittingly at the portrait of one's own foibles, the foreign reader can always elude the challenges implicit in situations or relations which he does find familiar, by isolating only the most blatantly exotic, but perhaps also the least significant, characteristics of academic traditions thus dismissed as archaisms, thereby managing all the better to keep his distance." - Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*

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Presentation of some of Bourdieu's key concepts

(Some concepts Bourdieu uses are difficult to understand. Feel free to give comments and ask questions in the comments field below)

Habitus - A set of dispositions which incline agents to act and react in certain ways. The dispositions generate practices, perceptions and attitudes which are regular without being consciously co-ordinated or governed by any rule. [...] Its conception is primarily dynamic and operational, as opposed to static and ontological. [...] not, strictly speaking, the cause of behaviours

[...] "To do something 'regular' but in a spontaneous way"

Field - "A field is a setting in which agents and their social positions are located. The position of each particular agent in the field is a result of interaction between the specific rules of the field, agent's habitus and agent's capital (social, economic and cultural). Fields interact with each other, and are hierarchical (most are subordinate of the larger field of power and class relations)."

Illusio - "is Bourdieu's term for the tendency of participants to engage in the game and believe in its significance, that is, believe in that the benefits promised by the field are desirable." ([ref](#))

Doxa - "Common belief" or "popular opinion". "The power of doxa is in its hidden nature which claims that what it claims to be 'reality' is the one and only 'truth' about the nature of existence" ([ref](#))

Nomos - "Nomos refers to the specific way a subject or discipline constructs its object, that is, how it views and delimits the subject from other disciplines. If doxa consists of a series of beliefs, nomos is rather a particular perspective. Nomos functions as a criterion of relevance that excludes certain approaches as irrelevant or illegitimate." ([ref](#))

The scholastic point of view - (term borrowed from J.L. Austin) "the particular use of language where, instead of grasping and mobilizing the meaning of a word that is immediately compatible with the situation, we mobilize and examine all the possible meanings of that word, outside of any reference to the situation." ... "The scholastic view is a very peculiar point of view on the social world, on language, on any possible object of thought that is made possible by the situation of skhole, of leisure, of which the school - a word which also derives from skhole - is a particular form, as an institutionalized situation of studious leisure." (I believe that Wittgenstein's famous quote "philosophical problems arise *when language goes on holiday*", in other words could be described as "philosophical problems arise *when one views things from a scholastic point of view*")

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References and further reading

Works by Pierre Bourdieu

[Language and symbolic power](#) - Perhaps most "philosophical" work of Bourdieu, speaks with J.L. Austin, Wittgenstein, Habermas, Saussure, Chomsky and others.

[Pascalian Mediations](#) - Likely the most personal of his works

[Homo Academicus](#) - A sociology of the intellectuals

[Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste](#) - One of Bourdieu's most famous works

Secondary literature on Bourdieu

[Key concepts in Language and Symbolic Power](#) - Powerpoint presentation of key concepts in Bourdieu's work *Language and Symbolic Power*

[Bourdieu A Critical Reader](#) editor Richard Shusterman. I'd especially recommend first two chapters *Introduction: Bourdieu as Philosopher* and *Bourdieu and Anglo-American Philosophy* both written by Richard Shusterman, and also last chapter *The Social Conditions of the International Circulation of Ideas* by Bourdieu himself.

["Back to the rough Grounds of Praxis - :](#)

[Exploring Theological Method With Pierre Bourdieu](#)" by Daniel Franklin Pilario - This book connects Bourdieu and Wittgenstein in a peculiar way as the title 'back to the rough ground' refers to famous quote by Wittgenstein

[Bourdieu, Critic of Foucault](#)" by Staf Callewaert

[Towards a Sociology of Philosophy](#) by Henrik Lundberg & Göran Heidegren

[An invitation to Reflexive Sociology](#) with Bourdieu and Loic Wacquant

[Lecture on Bourdieu by Ghassan Hage](#) - First part of the lecture he discusses Bourdieu's relationship to philosophy, and then he goes on explaining some of Bourdieu's key concepts.

Ghassan Hage is a good lecturer, enthusiastic and pedagogical.

[Sociology is a martial art](#) - Video documentary on Bourdieu

Internet Revolution, attentionalism and slow-thinking, with Alexander Bard and Pierre Bourdieu

Introduction

[Alexander Bard](#) (1961 -), "Internet sociologist", speaks of the Internet as one of the greatest revolutions of mankind. The capitalist system is being replaced by a netocracy. Bard embraces this new world order and exclaims 'We ought to make revolution and hang all politicians who haven't got any twitter account'. As opposed to this stands [Pierre Bourdieu](#) (1930-2002), one of the most prominent public intellectuals of 20th century, who on one hand dreamed of a society with interaction and participatory information which the Internet is providing, but on the other hand warned of and fought against the superficiality and simplifications which he saw emerging in the new society. Bard represents a liberal let-go-mentality, while Bourdieu clearly stated "I don't believe in [laissez-faire](#)".

No doubt, our society is rapidly changing and one has to adapt. However I want to point out that there are different ways to adapt. I sympathize with Bourdieu's desire for more "slow-thinking", and I find his attempts to find collective intellectual solutions appealing.

A world-changing Internet revolution? Alexander Bard's prophesy of the new netocracy

"Alexander Bard's provocative keynote speech at Next Berlin 2012 challenges the way history is taught, with industrialization presented as the climax of human history. He believes we need to contextualize history not in terms of the Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age, and Industrial Age, but rather in terms of information, such as spoken information, written information, printed information, broadcasted information and finally the Internet as participatory information." (ref: [examined life blog](#))

In the book *Netocracy: The new power elite and life after capitalism* (first published 2000), written by Alexander Bard together with Jan Söderqvist, they speak of a new world order emerging - The netocracy:

"This society is by definition post-capitalist, because the requirements needed to achieve status under capitalism – money, fame, titles, and so on – no longer have any value for entrance applications to any of the higher and more powerful networks. The netocratic status which is now in demand requires entirely different characteristics: knowledge, contacts, overview, vision. In other words: qualities which contribute to increasing the network's status and making it even more powerful."

Bourdieu's dream of an international network of intellectuals and his criticism of the superficiality of the new emerging society

Bourdieu never really saw the Internet coming, his career ended before the Internet boom. We can thus only speculate what he would've thought of Facebook, Google, Twitter etc. I think we can be quite sure though, that he would have had both positive and negative things to say about it.

When Bourdieu spoke on television, he expressed the wish that TV should become more interactive. This kind of interactivity is now very much offered on the Internet. Bourdieu did also say that he dreamed of "an international network where scientists and journalists can fight the simplifications and provide truly sharp analysis" ([ref \(only Swedish\)](#)). To help accomplish this he suggested that one could establish a telephone exchange system where intellectuals could keep in touch and contact each other when needed. If only he would've known about the Internet he would've realized that the Internet would work much better for this purpose. In other words, Internet does to a large extent provide the means which Bourdieu demanded.

On the other hand, Bourdieu was a fierce critic of the superficiality and simplifications in the new society which he saw emerging. And this kind of superficiality and simplifications, I think it's fair to

say has only increased with the Internet. While Bard to large extent seems to embrace a let-go-mentality to the Internet, I'm quite sure Bourdieu would've taken a different stand, as for example indicated in this quote:

"Regarding culture, my beliefs are the same as those I hold for everything else: I don't believe in laissez-faire. What I hope to show [...] is that all too often, [in International exchanges,] the logic of laissez-faire favours the circulation of the very worst ideas at the expense of the very best." ([ref](#))

Bard's imaginative 17-year-olds vs Bourdieu's intellectual hard-workers

When Bard speaks of an ideal for his vision he mentions 17-year-olds. The 17-year-olds have dreams and see a world full of possibilities. The 17-year-olds often believes that they can change the world, and also have the will to do so. Bard said "my experience is that the absolutely best ones to ask if one want to find out things about the society is 17-year-olds" ([ref \(only Swedish\)](#)), and another quote "What Korean schoolgirls do today, the rest of humanity will do five years from now. Always remember that sentence." ([ref](#)) When Bourdieu speaks of an ideal, he mentions hard-working intellectuals who are ready to sacrifice attention and fame for rigorous high-quality work. Bourdieu maintains he has a deep respect for "true journalists", those who take their job seriously and don't let themselves be manipulated by media's "urgency, cliches and commercial logic" ([ref \(only Swedish\)](#)).

I think this can help us understand the difference in political approach between Bard and Bourdieu. Bard's political enemies include the ones of old systems who don't adapt to new systems, while Bourdieu's political enemies include the "fast-thinkers" who only offer cultural fast-food and perhaps adapt too easily in new systems. Bard's political stance is a kind of laissez-faire, he has for example blamed the liberal party for not being liberal enough, while Bourdieu was against laissez-faire and he has been said to blame the political left for not being left enough (for whatever that is suppose to mean, I'm not quite sure).

The Netocracy's informationalism and attentionalism vs Bourdieu's need for reflection and "slow thinking"

Bard and Söderqvist describes a society where you must always be on the go, always be ready to act quick and without hesitation. It is a society of "informationalism" and "attentionalism". And their message is clear, either you join this or you'll get ruled over. Here are some quotes from their book:

"The rules will change, but the constant underlying message of the curators [a kind of master netocrats] to their net-citizens will be simple and unambiguous: you can never network well enough, you can never be good enough at communicating, you can never let yourself rest, you must constantly be ready to jump, constantly ready to learn new things. Thus a new set of masters will seize power and the language of power with which to control informational society."

"The decisive factor governing where in the hierarchy an individual ends up is [---] his or her attentionality: their access to and capacity to absorb, sort, overview, generate the necessary attention for, and share valuable information. [---] Attention is the only hard currency in the virtual world. The strategy and logic of the netocracy are therefore attentionalist rather than capitalist."

"Anyone trying to resist developments and persist with political agitation in the old way would not survive in the society ruled by the netocracy. He or she would look like a despicable information-tyrant. The new conditions of the informational media landscape mean that the plurarchic public is turning its back on the old political stage."

If we look at Bourdieu's writings the approach is quite different. He doesn't spend so much time predicting what will happen. He rather speaks from a critic's perspective, and focuses on what kind of change is desired. According to Bourdieu it is the very duty of an intellectual to be a critic, to criticize, give suggestions and provide genuinely sharp analysis. One of his central contributions was a talk he held in television about television. There Bourdieu focused on the need for reflection and slow-thinking, as for example indicated in this quote:

“Sometimes I want to go back over every word the television newspeople use, often without thinking and with no idea of the difficulty and the seriousness of the subjects they are talking about or the responsibilities they assume by talking about them in front of the thousands of people who watch the news without understanding what they see and without understanding that they don't understand.”

Theresa Benér describes in an interview with Bourdieu that according to Bourdieu TV 'loves to summon "fast-thinkers", the kind of semi-intellectual famous people, for some quick, nicely packaged pseudo-thinkings which people take for profundities of topical problems. Bourdieu argues that these media "fast-thinkers" are really harmful types. They destroy both the serious journalism and the true intellectual production of knowledge.' (for more clarification of this issue I recommend this blog post [Pierre Bourdieu, philosophy and empirics](#))

One of Bourdieu's main problems with television was the lack of time. He concludes, [paraphrasing Plato](#), that when you are in a hurry you cannot think. Bourdieu would occasionally refuse to appear on television with the motivation that the time he was offered was so short that he wouldn't be able to say anything at all (however he also claimed that under certain circumstances it was intellectuals duty to appear on TV). With the short time, all you can do is think in “cliches”, and “banal, conventional, common ideas that are received generally”.

We cannot know what Bourdieu would've thought of the microblog Twitter where you are only allowed to write messages with a maximum of 140 characters, but I think it's fair to guess that he wouldn't have been all too positive about it. He probably would not have subscribed to Bard's: *"We ought to make revolution and hang all politicians who haven't got any twitter account"* ([ref \(only Swedish\)](#))

End discussion

For certain, the times they are a-changing. And when a big change occurs, the worst thing one can do is probably to just ignore, go on as if nothing has happened. The main part of Bard's critique seems to be against these people. He says that the [politicians “lack of interest for the newly emerging society is directly indecent”](#) ([ref \(only Swedish\)](#)). However, I think this criticism doesn't really target someone like Bourdieu. Bourdieu didn't show a lack of interest for the newly emerging society, he just was strongly critical of many aspects of it. Both Bard and Bourdieu take interest in the new society, but while Bard seems more inclined to “go with the flow” Bourdieu raises a more critical voice. Bourdieu's approach is much about looking for collective intellectual solutions which is something I find appealing.

To better understand the difference between Alexander Bard and Pierre Bourdieu, I think it can help to consider the difference in temperament between them. Speaking in Jungian terms, I'm quite sure that Bard is more of an extravert and Bourdieu more of an introvert (see earlier post on [Jung's Typology and Philosophy](#)). The extravert is inclined to underestimate and misunderstand the usefulness of the introvert and the introvert is inclined to underestimate and misunderstand the usefulness of the extravert.

Reference and further reading

External links

[Alexander Bard & Jan Söderqvist - Netocracy: The new power elite and life after capitalism @ Amazon.com](#)

[Pierre Bourdieu - On Television](#) (free full text)

[Alexander Bard's blog](#) - I quite enjoyed this blog, as I think it shows another side of Bard. Here I think he shows more humbleness and thoughtfulness than on twitter and in his public appearances. For example [here](#) and [here](#). I like his concept of publishing mail conversations on the blog.

[Criticism of Netocracy by Slavoj Zizek](#)

[Alexander Bard @ campus party](#) - Public lecture by Bard
[Sociology is a martial art](#) - TV documentary on Bourdieu

[Universal Corporatism: The Role of Intellectuals in the Modern World](#) by Pierre Bourdieu (jstor article)

[Intervju med Bourdieu av Theresa Bener](#) (Swedish)

[Bourdieu - fortfarande inflytelserik eller på väg ut?](#) (Swedish radio)

Internal links

[A philosopher's guide to Pierre Bourdieu](#)

[Sartre's "total intellectual" vs. Bourdieu's "collective intellectual", and the philosophers role](#)

[Pierre Bourdieu, philosophy and empirics](#)

Jungian Typology and philosophy

Jung's Typology and Philosophy

In this text I will speak some of Carl Jung's Typology, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), and its relation to philosophy, making a parallel to Immanuel Kant and the term "philopsychy".

Several philosophers, including Wittgenstein, Rorty and Habermas have expressed sympathy with the view of philosophy as a kind of therapy. The therapy they thought of is of course different from the psychotherapy of Jung - but still I think connections can be made. This is one of the reasons I find it interesting to take a closer look at the typology of Jung, which he used in his psychotherapy.

Short introduction to Jung's Typology

In Jung's typology there are three dichotomies, the *perceiving functions*, the *judging functions* and *extraversion/introversion*.

The perceiving (information-gathering) functions are **Sensing (S)** and **Intuition (N)**

The judging (decision-making) functions are **Thinking (T)** and **Feeling (F)**

All of these functions can be either **Introverted (I)** (libido/interest directed towards subjects) or **Extraverted (E)** (libido/interest directed towards objects)

All people need to use all these functions. However all people also develop some functions more than others. Developing one function is always at the cost of its opposite. I.e. if you use your intuition a lot, your sensing will become more uncontrollable, and when you sink into introversion, you won't easily be able to switch to extraversion when needed.

As all people develop more in certain functions, it leads us to the different personality types. Everyone will have one dominant (primary) function, and another auxiliary (secondary) function. If your dominant function is perceiving (Sensing or Intuition), your auxiliary function will be judging (Thinking or Feeling) and vice versa.

There are 8 possible dominant functions, and as every dominant function can have either of two different auxiliary functions, it leaves us with $8 \times 2 = 16$ different personality types. Here is example of the different sensing types:

Introverted sensing with thinking as auxiliary function (MBTI: ISTJ)

Introverted sensing with feeling as auxiliary function (MBTI: ISFJ)

Extraverted sensing with thinking as auxiliary function (MBTI: ESTP)

Extraverted sensing with feeling as auxiliary function (MBTI: ESFP)

Differences between Jung and Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

According to MBTI, if your dominant function is Introverted your auxiliary function is Extraverted and vice versa. According to Jung, if I understood correct, that need not to be the case. Both Jung and MBTI agree though that the 4th ("inferior") function is the opposite of the 1st (dominant) function (say your dominant function is Introverted Sensing, then your inferior function will be Extraverted Intuition).

Another difference is that MBTI adds Perceiving(P)/Judging(J) as a separate category. This determines whether your dominant function will be perceiving (N or S) or judging (T or F). Extraverted perceivers will have a perceiving function (N or S) as dominant function, *however* for Intraverted perceivers it's the opposite - they will have a judging function (T or F) as dominant function. Same pattern applies for Judging. Spontaneously this does sound a bit weird I think. If you are introverted and more of a perceiver than a judger, why cannot then your dominant function be perceiving (that is Intuition or Sensing)?

Applying typology and it's role in philosophy

This typology has been criticized for not being scientific. I will not try and discuss it's scientific value on a deeper level here. I think that the typology can be helpful, but it's important to not make overhasty conclusions about it. There is a danger in using typologies like these to label people. Rather I would like to see it as a source of inspiration to help understand people. It is very common to project oneself on others. For example, Carl Jung himself claimed that "it took him a long time to discover that not everybody was a thinking (or intellectual) type like himself". Learning about other types, can help you widen the perspectives on how others can be different. Instead of using this typology to determine your opinion about people, you can use it to widen your imagination of who they can be.

Ray Monk argued it's important to know the biography of a philosopher in order to understand in what manner they are writing. In similar sense I think one can argue that it can be helpful to have a grasp of their typology. Different types are likely to have different criteria of what is relevant and, quoting Rorty, "fruitful philosophical controversy is possible only when both sides have the patience to investigate their opponents' criteria of relevance" ([ref](#)).

In the links below I try to type some philosophers:

[Wittgenstein MBTI, Why he was Introverted iNtuitive and Feeling \(INFj\)](#)

[Habermas and Rorty MBTI, Introverted Thinking vs. Introverted iNtuition](#)

Is this philosophy?

Jung's typology is a part of psychology, psychology is a kind of science, and I've argued that philosophy is not a science. However, we can consider what Wittgenstein said in his text *philosophy of psychology*, "Is scientific progress useful for philosophy? Certainly. The realities that are discovered lighten the philosopher's task, imagining possibilities"

A *philosophic* approach to Jung's Typology, means we shouldn't try to determine its accuracy - but rather it's possibilities.

A *scientific* approach to Jungian Typology could be asking questions such as:

Which person is an extraverted feeler? Is the MBTI more accurate, than the typology by Jung? How come some people are introverted and other people are extraverted?

Taking a *philosophic* approach one could ask questions such as:

What's meant by feeling and what is meant by introversion? What's the difference between introverted feeling, and extraverted feeling? Can we imagine other categories? (it's not unproblematic to claim that this is 'philosophical questions' though - I'll speak more of this later on)

Jung and Kant

Jung studied Immanuel Kant extensively, and regarded Kant as his favorite philosopher. Some people have looked closer into this, and found striking similarities between the typology of Jung and the categories of Kant. Professor Stephen Palmquist writes:

"Jung's four functions (sensation, intuition, thought, and feeling) correspond directly to Kant's four main categories (quantity, quality, relation, and modality), while Jung's three ways of experiencing each function(introvert, extravert, and their combination in the integrated personality) correspond directly to Kant's three manifestations of each category (e.g., the three moments of quantity: unity, plurality, and totality)" ([ref](#))

Palmquist coined the concept "philophychy" (soul-loving). He gives examples of how Kant's categories, just as Jung's typology, can be used in counseling, dealing with practical problems. To me it appeared a bit strange. But also I found it interesting and enjoyed it for its originality. I haven't heard of anyone using Kant's philosophy in a practical sense like this before.

Further Reading

[MBTI:ers, Jungians and Scientists](#) - Blog post where I compare the MBTI community, Jungians and their critics.

[The task of philosophy is to use "introverted intuition"?](#) - In this blog post I argue why introverted intuition is central in philosophy. Also I discuss the difference between introverted intuition and introverted thinking.

<http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Jung/types.htm> - "Psychological Types" by Carl Gustav Jung

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myers-Briggs_Type_Indicator - MBTI on Wikipedia

<http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/jtypes2.asp> - There are many Jung Typology/MBTI-tests on the Internet. Here is one of the most popular

<http://www.personalitypage.com/> - One of many pages where you can read about the different personality types

<http://www.celebritytypes.com/philosophers/index.php> - A page trying to MBTI-type celebrities

<http://npcassoc.org/docs/ijpp/PalmquistV3N1.pdf> - "Kant's Categories and Jung's Types as Perspectival Maps" by Stephen Palmquist

http://cdn4.libsyn.com/philosophybites/Ray_Monk_on_Philosophy_and_Biography.mp3 - Ray Monk talking about Philosophy and Biography (Audio)

MBTI:ers, Jungians and Scientists

Introduction

Critics of [Carl Gustav Jung's Typology](#) and the [Myers-Briggs Type Indicator \(MBTI\)](#) often argues that it lacks scientific evidence and is therefore of no use, while those who approve it tend to take no interest in whatever scientific investigations say and presuppose that the typology works anyway, relying on their own subjective validation (and relying on the opinion of others). I'm inclined to think of both of these views as unsatisfying.

In the "meta-debate" about the value of MBTI I've noticed some different standpoints which somewhat simplified could be divided into three camps which I will be calling the Jungians, the MBTI:ers and the Scientists. I think all these three camps bring some important contribution, but each camp also tends to fail to recognize the value of the other camps. An aim of this article is to help these camps get better understanding of each other.

MBTI:ers, Jungians and Scientists

When speaking of MBTI:ers I mainly refer to the MBTI community on the Internet. There are several forums dedicated to the MBTI with people subscribing themselves and others to MBTI types signified by a 4-letter code. By Jungians I speak of Carl Jung himself and his followers. The Jungians have read original texts by Jung and generally don't speak of MBTI types, and don't approve of the specific MBTI theory. The Scientists I choose to call people who in general are skeptic of the MBTI. I could also have called this group the "skeptics" or the "critics", but the general argument against MBTI is its lack of scientific evidence - and I wanted "science" to be mentioned in the title as it will be central issue for the text.

An attempt to outline some tendencies of the groups

MBTI:ers	Jungians	Scientists (skeptics/critics)
Big community	Small community	(worldwide)
Pop culture	High culture	High status
Easy accessible	Esoteric	"Neutral"
Simplifying	Complicating	Approving or rejecting
Fixed	Unfixed/vague/abstract	Testing the fixed
Subjective verification	"Professional verification"	Objective verification
Subjectivity		Objectivity
Spontaneity/"free will"		(School-)"duty"
"Non-intellectual"		Systematic and intellectual
(Introversion and intuition)		(Thinking and sensing)

MBTI and Carl Jung

MBTI aiming to be an extension, but not an opposing theory to Jung

The MBTI is based on the work by Carl Jung. I think that it is important to stress that it is not developed opposed to Jung, but rather it is aiming to be an extension to the work of Jung. For example, Jung describes 8 different types, and Myers-Briggs adds for each type two subtypes making it a total of 16 types. Jung describes three different dichotomies, while Myers-Briggs adds to this a fourth dichotomy. According to Jung, if the first function (dominant) is introverted then the fourth (inferior) function is extraverted, but he doesn't explicitly say anything about direction of second and third function, Myers-Briggs however adds that the third function is in line with first

function and the second function is opposite of the first function. Jung vaguely spoke of his typology as a tool to be used (with a lot of caution) in psychotherapy, while Myers-Briggs had wide ideas of how to use the typology for career counseling.

Compare the work of Jung to a drawing, then Myers-Briggs can be seen as one who continues to draw on the same piece, filling holes which seems to be missing, adding more details etc.

The fixed vs. the unfixed

While Jung was interested in complicating ... our world and the people in it, Myers seemed determined to tidy it up, make it neat. - Annie Murphy Paul, author of the book [The Cult of Personality Testing](#) (ref)

The MBTI describes 16 different types, each with a fixed set of abilities. Say the ESTP person for example, s/he is supposed to have the four functions Extraverted Thinking (Te), Introverted Sensing (Si), Extraverted Intuition (Ne), and Introverted Feeling (Fi). This is far from anything that Jung himself would ever claim. Compare with this quote by Jung:

I came to the conclusion that there must be as many different ways of viewing the world [as there are psychological types]. The aspect of the world is not one, it is many--at least 16, and you can just as well say 360. You can increase the number of principles, but I found the most simple way is the way I told you, the division by four, the simple and natural division of a circle. I didn't know the symbolism then of this particular classification. Only when I studied the archetypes did I become aware that this is a very important archetypal pattern that plays an enormous role. (ref)

What you see is much more vagueness in the quote by Jung, compared to the MBTI. It may further be noted that when Jung speaks of personality types, he adds that every person is an exception against the rule.

There is both a strength and a weakness in the fixed. The strength is that it becomes more user-friendly. The vagueness of Jung will likely confuse people, while the fixation of MBTI appears more appealing. The weakness is that the fixation makes it less accurate, and is likely to mislead people. Imagine the work of Jung to a painting program on the computer where you can use some different tools to draw figures on the screen (like Microsoft Paint), then I'd say the MBTI is rather like a picture program where you have to choose from a given set of figures when creating a character. Say you want to add a pair of eyes to a character, then you get to choose one of many sets of eyes, but you may not choose, for example, to have the left eye blue and the right eye brown. The Jungian painting program has more potential, but on the other side it is more difficult to use - and so most people will find more value in the MBTI picture program. (I beg readers regard this comparison with caution as it is quite far-fetched)

To label or not to label people, that is the question

MBTI:ers often gets criticized for labeling people. Jungians stress that it is against the intentions of Jung. Jung often said that his typology is not at all intended to label people. For example this quote:

The classification of individuals means nothing, nothing at all. It is only the instrumentarium for the practical psychologist...

However, it is quite difficult to understand what Jung really meant by this. We may note that Jung himself quite frequently spoke of types of real people. For example this quote:

we might take Darwin as an example of the normal extraverted thinking type [and] the normal introverted thinking type could be represented by Kant

Or, when asked about his own "type":

I most certainly was characterized by Thinking ... and I had a great deal of Intuition, too. And I had a definite difficulty with Feeling. And my relation to reality was not particularly brilliant. ... I was often at variance with the reality of things.

If Jung was categorically against the typing of people, he himself did not seem to live according to his word - and thus it will be hard to take him seriously on that point.

However, one may note that Jung's typing is different to the way MBTI:ers usually type. Jung's typing tends to be more vague. For example, he doesn't explicitly say Kant was an introverted thinking type, but he says Kant represents introverted thinking. It is quite a difference to say for example that Kant represents introverted thinking in his philosophical work, compared to say that the essence of Kant's personality is introverted thinking. And when speaking of himself, I think it's no coincidence that he speaks in past tense ("was" rather than "is") and from an outsiders perspective ("was characterized"), also may be noted that it's not on his own initiative he speaks of his own functions, it is to answer somebody else's question. These small nuance shifts may be very important to note in order to understand the difference between Jung's typing and more usual MBTI-typing.

We may further on consider this quote by Jung:

Classification does not explain the individual psyche. Nevertheless, an understanding of psychological types opens the way to a better understanding of human psychology in general.

This indicates that the interest of the typology is not so much to understand individuals, but rather to understand human psychology in general. However, I think it's much of a two-way relationship: getting closer understanding of human psychology in general makes it easier for you to understand individual psyches, just as getting better understanding of individual psyches help you get better understanding of human psychology in general.

Inconvenience between MBTI:ers and Jungians

The description above can help us understand the peculiar relationship between the MBTI:ers and the Jungians. It is natural for the MBTI:ers to maintain a positive attitude towards the Jungians, as they don't want to reject Jung's theory but instead add more and add further application for it (such as career counseling). The MBTI:ers naturally seeks friendship with the Jungians, while the Jungians naturally rejects the MBTI:ers.

MBTI, Jung's Typology and Science

Jung's typology, MBTI and scientific investigations

At first must be noted that Jung's typology is not scientifically validated. Jung based his typology on his personal experiences, as a private person and as a professional psychiatrist, but he didn't conduct any scientific investigations such as [controlled studies](#) to validate his theory. He mentioned he probably would have done statistical studies if he had the means, but he didn't have the means. Nor did Myers-Briggs conduct any controlled scientific studies.

However other people have made some studies with the intention to investigate validity and reliability of the MBTI, and their results have been negative. I've been trying to find in-detail information and nuanced analysis about these studies, but it has been surprisingly hard. When people have been trying to explain the lack of scientific evidence for the MBTI, I haven't found their explanations very impressive. These people tend to spend more time and energy in musing in the assumed stupidity of MBTI the MBTI:ers, rather than providing a nuanced in-depth analysis of actual scientific studies. Most common article referred to, when speaking of lack of evidence for MBTI, seems to be this one by psychology professor David Pittenger: [Measuring the MBTI...And Coming Up Short](#)

Some points being made here:

*According to MBTI, people are either introvert or extravert, and there are few people in the grey-zone in between. This would show a bimodal distribution on a statistic test. However, at tests conducted, no such results are shown, there is no bimodal distribution - thus the MBTI is not reliable.

*According to MBTI, people don't change type. Studies however show that there is a low "test - retest reliability". People who do the test multiple times tend to get different results over time, which contradicts the MBTI theory that people do not change.

Subjective validation vs. objective validation

An example of a representative for the Scientists can be "The Skeptics Dictionary". Here is an article which deals with both [Jung's typology and the MBTI](#) at that site. It has some strong arguments, pointing out potential weaknesses of MBTI. There are several ways one can get misled when one doesn't use scientific investigation to validate ones theory. Some issues are brought up in Skeptics Dictionary's article on [Subjective validation](#). Associated problems when using subjective validation, which both Jungians and MBTI:ers do, include:

[The forer effect](#), [Self-deception](#), [Confirmation bias](#), [Selective thinking](#), [Wishful thinking](#)

MBTI:ers and Jungians are indeed likely to fall into traps listed above, but I'm inclined to say that so are also all other people. Looking at the Scientists criticism of MBTI for example, I think it's fair to say that they themselves are drawn towards selective thinking, confirmation bias etc. Subjectivity is not something one gets away from so easily, and one may question if it's all desirable to get away from subjectivity. Rather than dismiss subjectivity, one sometimes has to learn how to deal with it.

The articles above help to show the dangers of subjective validation. However, even if there are many problems with subjective validation, sometimes one will find that subjectivity is far superior to objectivity anyway. The Skeptics Dictionary may be good in highlighting problems of subjectivity, but it is also rather one-sided as it doesn't seem to recognize that there are also many strengths of subjectivity. Objective validation has it's problems and limits too, and sometimes subjective validation is to be preferred.

Some outlines for better scientific investigations

I want to claim, that in order to scientifically investigate the validity or usefulness of Jung's typology and the MBTI, you need to confront yourself with *extreme* methodological difficulties. It will be very difficult both to *set up a plan* for a study, *implement* the study, and then *interpret* and *mediate* the results. When one is dealing with methodological difficulties, it can be reason to turn to philosophers rather than scientists for advice. Consider for example this quote by Ludwig Wittgenstein:

One of the most important tasks is to express all false thought processes so characteristically that the reader says, "Yes, that's exactly the way I meant it". To make a tracing of the physiognomy of every error. Indeed we can only convict someone else of a mistake if he acknowledges that this really is the expression of his feeling.

Here Scientists seems to be coming short, they do not care to find out where their target really is at - and so when they think they are attacking MBTI:ers and Jungians they are in fact attacking something which the MBTI:ers and Jungians tend to not quite recognize. The quote below by John B. Lloyd may serve as an example of where many MBTI:ers/Jungians considers themselves to be, and why they often consider themselves invulnerable to the Scientists attacks:

The Myers-Briggs understanding of personality type can be seen as a hierarchy of two levels, the first of these theory-free, the second theory-laden. Stripped of its theoretical framework, Myers-Briggs typology becomes a simple taxonomy, with 16 types identified only by their observed characteristics. Parallels with 18th-century botany and zoology and with (the 20th century) Colour Me Beautiful illustrate that taxonomies can exist robustly without a supporting theoretical framework. Furthermore, Myers-Briggs typology retains much of its practical value when reduced to a theory-free taxonomy. The two levels of Myers-Briggs typology differ in their epistemic status. Myers-Briggs typology as a theory free taxonomy cannot be falsified and indeed does not need to claim that it is the only possible classification. By contrast, Myers-Briggs theory postulates the existence and singular importance of a number of entities (e.g., the four pairs of polarities) and the

determinative nature of the dynamic interaction between the four components of a personality type. All of this is open to question and, in theory if not yet in practice, to testing and therefore conceivably to falsification. (ref)

I do not think Lloyd's reasoning is unproblematic here (I'm inclined to think that his presupposition that something can have a practical value and yet cannot be falsified is contradictory) but I do think he has some good points and it helps to bring another perspective.

When you've appropriately set up a plan for a scientific study, most likely you will find that it cannot really be an interesting question "if" there is scientific support for Jungian typology and MBTI, but rather "in what sense" and "to what extent" there is scientific support.

Summing up

Reading this article one may think I favor the Jungians in front of the MBTI:ers. In a sense I am, but I think that the Jungians fails in one important aspect in which the MBTI:ers succeed. A problem with the Jungians is that they don't manage to reach out to many people. Myers-Briggs succeeds in doing something which few others have succeeded with, that is mediating something profound (which I do believe the Jungian typology is) to a broad audience.

The Scientists help to show some of the problems with the MBTI, but they are being one-sided and ignorant when they end up seeing no value at all in the typology. The MBTI:ers tend to underrate the value and usefulness of objective validation, while Scientists tend to underrate the value and usefulness of subjectivity. Subjective validation is sometimes needed, it cannot always be replaced by objective validation, but one needs to recognize the dangers with subjective validation.

Meanwhile working on this article, I've come to realize that I myself have been simplifying in articles I've written on Jungian typology. For example, in some articles I've written about introverted intuition, without having accurate understanding of what it really is.

References and further reading

Texts that exemplify the Jungian approach

[Psychological Types](#) by Carl Jung

[Personality Types: Jung's Model of Typology](#) by Daryl Sharp

Texts that exemplify the MBTI approach

[Typology Central](#) - One of many MBTI/typology forums

[personalitypage.com](#) - One of many pages where you can read about the different MBTI types

Texts that exemplify the "Scientist" approach

[infj or estp idgaf the mbti and beyond](#)

[myers briggs test unscientific](#)

Other links

[Free Jung Typology/MBTI test](#)

[The Battle of the Giants: Big Five versus MBTI @ staffanspersonalityblog](#) - A well-written, nuanced analysis, comparing MBTI and Big Five personality classification

[My journey into \(and out of\) MBTI.](#)

Internal links

[Jung's Typology and Philosophy](#)

[Alan Watts on Science, Buddhism, Jung and Wittgenstein](#)

[Wittgenstein MBTI, Why he was Introverted iNtuitive and Feeling \(INFj\)](#)

[The task of philosophy is to use "introverted intuition"?](#)

The task of philosophy is to use "introverted intuition"?

-
"[T]he philosophers task [is] imagining possibilities" - Ludwig Wittgenstein

"The introverted intuitive moves from image to image, chasing after every possibility in the teeming womb of the unconscious" - Carl Jung

-
Earlier I presented an [article by Dawn Wilson](#), that suggested philosophy should be read in similar sense as literature rather than science. And I was thinking, the way she described how philosophy traditionally is done has lot in common with the Jungian term "Thinking", and how she suggests philosophy should be done (at least when it comes to the philosophy of Wittgenstein) has lot in common with the Jungian term "Intuition". Looking further into this I found an article by Victor Krebs ([ref](#)), reviewing the book "Duty of Genius" by Ray Monk, which discusses the philosophy of Wittgenstein in terms of Jung's Typology. Here's a couple of quotes:

"Monk explains that if mathematical propositions are understood not as truths 'about something' (mathematical objects, etc.), but as techniques or 'pictures,' mathematical thinking provides an excellent example 'of the kind of understanding that forms the basis of Wittgenstein's *Weltanschauung*.'(p. 441) The Jungian reader will recognize such understanding as intuitive."

"Epistemologically - in what concerns our mode of knowledge - Wittgenstein wants us to replace logical thinking with the 'seeing of connections.' This alternative mode of thinking (which ... we would, after Jung, call intuition), allows us not just to identify patterns but actually to see through the meaning of our philosophical language."

***EDIT 14th July 2013: This is one of the most viewed posts at this blog, and at the same time it is one of the blog posts I feel least satisfied with. The argumentation lacks sharpness and I show a lack of accurate understanding of the Jungian concepts. Here I do for example assume that "intuition" is synonymous, or almost synonymous to "imagination", which is not quite what Jung had in mind (he considered imagination to be part of all four functions). In later written posts on Jungian typology, for example in [MBTI:ers, Jungians and Scientists](#), I think I present a more nuanced understanding. If I were to do some serious reworking of this blog post, I think it can turn into something good, but I don't feel I have the time and energy for that now. As it is now, at least I don't think this post is so bad that I would delete it.

Intuition and Thinking, two different modes of intellectual activity

Both intuition and thinking are commonly associated to "thinking" and "intellectual activity", and I think it's not so easy to really understand the difference between them. In short one can say that Intuition is a perceiving (information-gathering) function which is about imagining possibilities, while Thinking is a judging (decision-making) function and is about making decisions of "what seems reasonable, logical, causal, consistent, and matching a given set of rules" ([ref](#)). (see [earlier post on Jung's typology here](#))

The Introverted Thinker

Introverted thinkers have to "accept a ready-made body of objective knowledge" ([ref](#)), and in this sense they do take interest in facts, but it is only in order to have something to work with. Jung describes introverted thinking like this:

"It formulates questions and creates theories; it opens up prospects and yields insight, but in the presence of facts it exhibits a reserved demeanour. As illustrative examples they have their value, but they must not prevail. Facts are collected as evidence or examples for a theory, but never for their own sake. Should this latter ever occur, it is done only as a compliment to the extraverted style. For this kind of thinking facts are of secondary importance; what, apparently, is of absolutely

paramount importance is the development and presentation of the subjective idea, that primordial symbolical image standing more or less darkly before the inner vision."

"[T]his thinking holds value only for its contemporaries, just so long as it also stands in visible and understandable connection with the known facts of the time. But, when thinking becomes mythological, its irrelevancy grows until finally it gets lost in itself."

When introverted thinking becomes overemphasized and depotentiated:

"It creates theories for the sake of theories, apparently with a view to real or at least possible facts, yet always with a distinct tendency to go over from the world of ideas into mere imagery. [...] However clear to himself the inner structure of his thoughts may be, he is not in the least clear where and how they link up with the world of reality."

Possible examples of Introverted Thinking philosophers (MBTI: IxTP):

Aristotle, Immanuel Kant and [Jürgen Habermas](#) (wouldn't surprise me if also Carl Jung fit this category)

The Introverted Intuitive

As for the introverted intuitive, Jung gives this description:

"The introverted intuitive moves from image to image, chasing after every possibility in the teeming womb of the unconscious [...] These images represent possible ways of viewing life, which in given circumstances have the power to provide a new energetic potential"

"If an artist, he reveals extraordinary, remote things in his art, which in iridescent profusion embrace both the significant and the banal, the lovely and the grotesque, the whimsical and the sublime. If not an artist, he is frequently an unappreciated genius, a great man 'gone wrong', a sort of wise simpleton, a figure for 'psychological' novels."

When introverted intuition is overemphasized and depotentiated:

"Intensification of intuition naturally often results in an extraordinary aloofness of the individual from tangible reality; he may even become a complete enigma to his own immediate circle. [...] His language is not that which is commonly spoken -- it becomes too subjective. His argument lacks convincing reason. He can only confess or pronounce. His is the 'voice of one crying in the wilderness'."

Possible examples of Introverted Intuitive philosophers (MBTI: INxJ):

Friedrich Nietzsche, [Ludwig Wittgenstein](#) and [Richard Rorty](#) (I'd assume that Nietzsche and Wittgenstein was more strongly intuitive and Rorty more balanced)

Why Wittgenstein was introverted intuitive, and what it means

First some note on why I consider Wittgenstein's dominant function to be introverted intuition. Here is a quote from Bertrand Russell about Wittgenstein:

"I told him he ought not simply to state what he thinks true, but to give arguments for it, but he said arguments spoil its beauty, and that he would feel as if he was dirtying a flower with muddy hands" Introverted intuitives relies on their "hunches" and can often not explain why they think what they think, as Jung said, they "can only confess or pronounce". Here I take it as if Wittgenstein is saying "please don't force me to think, I want to stick to my intuition!"

Another example, from Rudolf Carnap's autobiography: "[Wittgensteins] point of view and his attitude toward people and problems, even theoretical problems, were much more similar to those of a creative artist than to a scientist; one might almost say, similar to those of a religious prophet or seer."

These are examples of why I think Wittgenstein was most prominently introverted intuitive. But "given the compensatory principle of the human psyche, whenever any of these functions is emphasized too much it becomes depotentiated" ([ref](#)). The one who only sticks to intuition will completely lack reason, and thus never be able to express himself intelligible. Since Wittgenstein

was after all able to express himself somewhat intelligible it indicates he had developed his auxiliary functions (mainly Thinking and Feeling)

(EDIT: Now I've written a new post where I explain more in detail why Wittgenstein was introverted intuitive (and why his secondary function likely was "feeling"), you can find it here: [Wittgenstein MBTI – Why he was Introverted iNtuitive and Feeling \(INFj\)](#))

Some quotes that indicates why Intuition is important in Wittgenstein's notion of philosophy

“What kind of investigation are we carrying out? Am I investigating the probability of cases that I give as examples, or am I investigating their actuality? No, I’m just citing what is possible and am therefore giving grammatical examples.”

"[T]he philosophers task [is] imagining possibilities"

"What I give is the morphology of the use of an expression. I show that it has kinds of uses of which you had not dreamed. In philosophy one feels forced to look at a concept in a certain way. What I do is suggest, or even invent, other ways of looking at it. I suggest possibilities of which you had not previously thought. You thought there was one possibility, or only two at most. But I made you think of others. Furthermore, I made you see that it was absurd to expect the concept to conform to those narrow possibilities. Thus your mental cramp is relieved, and you are free to look around the field of use of the expression and to describe the different kinds of uses of it."

”Philosophy simply puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything. [...] Since everything lies open to view there is nothing to explain either. For what might not lie open to view is of no interest to us.”

”One might also give the name philosophy to what is possible/present *before* all new discoveries and inventions.”

Suggesting a turn from Thinking to Intuition in philosophy?

"A man will be imprisoned in a room with a door that's unlocked and opens inwards; as long as it does not occur to him to pull rather than push it."

"The strange thing about philosophical uneasiness and its resolution might seem to be that it is like the suffering of an ascetic who stood raising a heavy ball, amid groans, and whom someone released by telling him: "Drop it." One wonders: if these sentences make you uneasy and you didn't know what to do with them, why didn't you drop them earlier, what stopped you from doing it? Well, I believe it was the false system that he thought he had to accommodate himself to, etc."

"Unrest in philosophy comes from philosophers looking at, seeing, philosophy all wrong, i.e., cut up into (infinite) vertical strips, as it were, rather than (finite) horizontal strips. This reordering of understanding creates the *greatest* difficulty. They want to grasp the infinite strip, as it were, and complain that it is not possible piece by piece. Of course it isn't, if by 'a piece' one understands an endless vertical strip. But it is, if one sees a horizontal strip as a whole, definite piece. - But then we'll never get finished with our work! Of course not, because it doesn't have an end."

(This might - in some sense or another - refer to the introverted thinking that's lost contact with reality and started to "create theories for the sake of theories". Disclaimer: The suggested turn from Thinking to Intuition, as I see it, is not in order to come closer to any "absolute truth", rather it would be (what could be called) a kind of 'pragmatic' turn. Wittgenstein says "[my] method consists essentially in leaving aside the question of truth and asking about sense instead")

Some quotes that may indicate the importance of Thinking in philosophy

“The philosophical problem is an awareness of disorder in our concepts, and can be solved by ordering them.”

”The work of the philosopher consists in assembling reminders for a particular purpose.”

"A philosophical question is similar to one about the constitution of a particular society. - And it would be as if a society came together without clearly written rules, but with a need for them; indeed also with an instinct following which they observed certain rules at their meetings; but this is made difficult by the fact that nothing is clearly expressed about this and no arrangement is made which clarifies the rules. Thus they in fact view one of them as president, but he doesn't sit at the head of the table and has no distinguishing marks, and that makes doing business difficult. Therefore we come along and create a clear order: we seat the president in a clearly identifiable spot, seat his secretary next to him at a little table of his own, and seat the other full members in two rows on both sides of the table, etc., etc."

(In these quotes, Wittgenstein stresses the importance of working systematically, arranging and creating a clear order - which I suppose requires the use of Thinking.)

Summing up - Is the task of philosophy to use introverted intuition?

The Wittgensteinian notion of philosophy has a lot in common with the Jungian concept of intuition. Part of the reason can be that Wittgenstein himself was strongly intuitive, and thus were inclined to emphasize this aspect more. However, he seemed also ready to admit that his perspective wasn't the only true perspective, as indicated in this quote by Norman Malcolm:

"When [Wittgenstein] was wondering what title to give to his book (the *Philosophical Investigations*), and [Maurice O' Connor] Drury suggested calling it 'Philosophy', Wittgenstein replied angrily: 'Don't be such a complete ass - how could I use a word that has meant so much in the history of mankind? As if my work wasn't only a small fragment of philosophy.'" ([ref](#))

As I see it, whether or not the task of philosophy is to use introverted intuition is not the important thing. More important it is, I think, to just realize the difference between intuition and thinking. Both intuition and thinking are important (as well as sensation and feeling). A problem is when Intuitives will dismiss Thinkers for lack of imagination and ability to *see*, and Thinkers will dismiss Intuitives for their lack of reason and rational arguments - failing to notice that it's actually two different modes of intellectual activity.

References and further reading

[Jung's Typology and Philosophy](#)

["Don't think, but look!" - The most common misconception about Wittgenstein?](#) - In this post I continue and develop the idea how Wittgenstein's philosophy is to be understood from an intuitive perspective (as opposed to thinking).

[Wittgenstein MBTI, Why he was Introverted iNtuitive and Feeling \(INFj\)](#)

"Psychological Types" by Carl Gustav Jung <http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Jung/types.htm>

"Don't think, but look!" - The most common misconception about Wittgenstein?

Introduction

Ludwig Wittgenstein writes in his Philosophical Investigations "Don't think, but look!" (PI 66), which (in line with Jung) implies "Don't judge, but perceive!". The most common misconception about Wittgenstein could perhaps be described like this; people assume he's making judgements, when his philosophy is essentially about perception. A turn from judging to perception may be what he is referring to when he speaks of "The reordering of understanding that creates the *greatest* difficulty".

"What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence"

In earlier posts I've argued that Wittgenstein was an (introverted) intuitive person and not a thinker ([Wittgenstein MBTI, Why he was Introverted iNtuitive and Feeling \(INFj\)](#)), and also I've argued that according to Wittgenstein [the task of philosophy to use introverted intuition](#). We note, in accordance with Jung that intuition is a perceiving function, while thinking is a judging function. And here the misconception: people assume that Wittgenstein is making judgements, when in fact he is perceiving. Example of this, is the famous quote by Wittgenstein:

What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence

To the form it looks just like a judgement, and this has also been the common interpretation. Some people have hailed it, seeing it as a defense for "rationality", while other people have criticized it for being narrow-minded and Gedankenpolizei (thought police). In both cases they regard the quote as a judgement with content, which is just as wrong.

From a thinking perspective the famous quote by Wittgenstein is naturally read as:

"What is *irrational* (i.e. not in line with "known facts" or "known rules") has to pass over in silence"

From the proper intuitive perspective it is read as:

"What is *unimaginable* has to pass over in silence" (and remember that this really a kind of perception and not a judgement)

To correctly understand it, is to understand that it says nothing at all, that it is intended to be merely a *tautology*.** From both a thinking, sensing and feeling perspective it is out of content (but people in thinking, sensing or feeling mode will be inclined to "automatically" read in something in it anyway - which I show example of below).

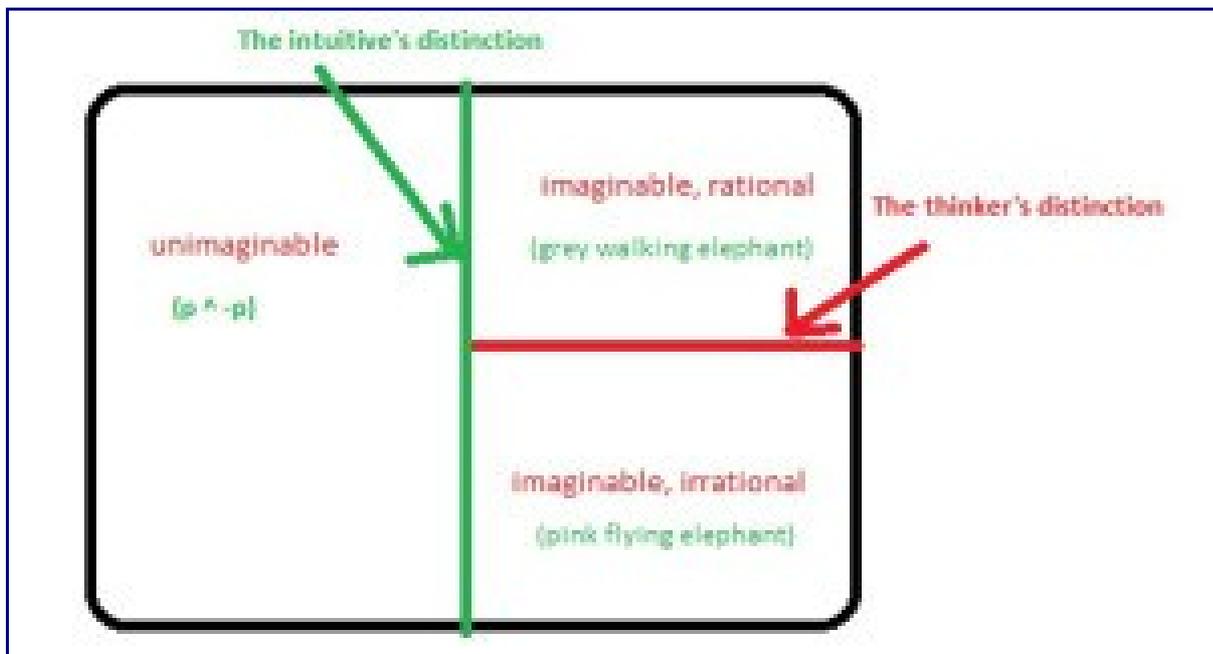
**Ray Monk, Wittgenstein biographer, has argued that it does indeed mean to say things, that it's a kind of moralistic standpoint. In a sense, he sure is right. But it's a kind of complicated reasoning, likely to cause confusion, and I don't think it needs to be discussed here.

"The reordering of understanding that creates the *greatest* difficulty"

Consider this quote by Wittgenstein, and then consider the figure:

Unrest in philosophy comes from philosophers looking at, seeing, philosophy all wrong, i.e., cut up into (infinite) horizontal strips, as it were, rather than (finite) vertical strips.

(1) This reordering of understanding creates the *greatest* difficulty



(The

quote doesn't say exactly what this figure shows, but I do think that the point is essentially the same.)

The distinction between "rational" and "irrational" is central for the thinker (2), but for the intuitive it is replaced by a distinction between "imaginable" and "unimaginable". Both the rational and the irrational is within the realm of the imaginable, therefore that distinction doesn't interest the intuitive. And since the distinction between the rational and the irrational doesn't border to the unimaginable, the thinker will feel no reason to bother about the imaginable/unimaginable distinction.

(I think this can help to explain the famous dispute between Wittgenstein and Russell whether there was any rhinoceros in the room. Russell wanted Wittgenstein to agree on that there was no rhinoceros in the room, but Wittgenstein just dismissed Russell.

To speculate whether there is any rhinoceros in the room, is to make a thinker's distinction, a distinction on what is a rational belief and what is irrational belief. In other words, it is to draw a horizontal line. If I am right on this, Wittgenstein must've found the issue uninteresting, in so far as he preferred to be in intuitive mode.)

Examples of how Wittgenstein gets interpreted from a thinking perspective

When a person is in thinking-mode, the only interest is to draw horizontal lines, that is make distinctions between what is rational and what is irrational. Anything other than horizontal lines will be considered as irrelevant and left unrecognized.

Say someone comes in drawing a vertical line, then there exists two alternatives from a thinking perspective, 1) To conclude that the vertical line says nothing at all or 2) to construct out of it a horizontal line - and thus read in something which really isn't there. In any of the cases, the thinker will regard it as useless, either because it says nothing at all, or because it is irrational. I think that the comment below can help to illustrate this:

(This is written by a fellow blogger - Thomas Cotterill - who I do respect a lot, but I think he's getting Wittgenstein wrong this time)

Dawn M. Wilson's position [when describing Wittgenstein's way of doing philosophy] is the modern one that has reduced philosophy to a branch of philology. To philosophize in the modern sense is to argue endlessly (and pointlessly) over the interpretation of texts. Wittgenstein believed that all philosophical disputes arose from disagreements over the definitions of terms: Wilson's "... a failure to see clearly whether sentences have sense." Of what use is this degree of hair-splitting to anyone other than ivory-

tower scholars? It is every bit as bad as the religious scholars arguing over how many angels you can fit on the end of a pin. Philosophy on these terms has lost its utility and led people to take up more accessible, but extremely foolish (even completely irrational) belief systems.

For example, to someone looking for answers, of what use is “The task of philosophy is not to say something, but to see clearly what can be said.” As endlessly fascinating as this imaginative speculation may be to those with nothing else to do, it serves no practical purpose in the real world. It is as they say, merely academic. ([ref](#))

The idea of Wittgensteinian philosophy as a branch of philology, that it's about arguing over interpretations, disputes over definition of terms, the usage of the word "speculation" seems to rely on the assumption that it's about thinking. (3) I don't think Wittgenstein would've recognized himself in this.

What practical purpose does Wittgensteinian philosophy serve in the real world?

However, even though one recognizes the distinction between thinking and intuition, one may still insist that the Wittgensteinian way of doing philosophy is useless, and that it “serves no practical purpose in the real world”.

Let us then consider another quote by Wittgenstein:

What I give is the morphology of the use of an expression. I show that it has kinds of uses of which you had not dreamed. In philosophy one feels forced to look at a concept in a certain way. What I do is suggest, or even invent, other ways of looking at it. I suggest possibilities of which you had not previously thought. You thought there was one possibility, or only two at most. But I made you think of others. Furthermore, I made you see that it was absurd to expect the concept to conform to those narrow possibilities. Thus your mental cramp is relieved, and you are free to look around the field of use of the expression and to describe the different kinds of uses of it.

The potential practical use of Wittgenstein's philosophy is that it makes you see alternatives, which can help you make better decisions. When you are dividing between two bad alternatives, it can be a great relief to be offered a third better alternative. (However, when a person continues without much reflection to spit out a fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh... etc alternative, then he has turned himself into a menace.)

Footnotes

(1) In the original quote the words 'vertical' and 'horizontal' are swapped.

(2) The terms "rational"/"irrational" can be used in different senses. The sense I'm using it here should not be confused with how Jung uses the terms. Another important note here is that the line between the rational and the irrational is arbitrarily drawn, i.e. under certain circumstances a thinker may also find "pink flying elephant" rational.

(3) In this post it is argued nicely why Wittgenstein wasn't a philologist, and also why Wittgenstein didn't have any "Philosophy of language", [Did Wittgenstein have a Philosophy of Language?](#)

Reference and further reading

[Ludwig Wittgenstein - "Philosophy" in *The Big Typescript*](#)
[Carl Jung – *Psychological Types*](#)

Wittgenstein MBTI, Why he was Introverted iNtuitive and Feeling (INFj)

Here I'll argue why Ludwig Wittgenstein's MBTI-type was INFj*, that is Introverted Intuition with feeling as secondary function.

The dominant function: Introverted iNtuition (Ni)

Artist and seer

Carl Jung describes the Introverted Intuitive type like this:

"The peculiar nature of introverted intuition, when given the priority, also produces a peculiar type of man, viz. the mystical dreamer and seer on the one hand, or the fantastical crank and artist on the other."*

The philosopher Rudolf Carnap, who personally knew Wittgenstein, described Wittgenstein in just the same words:

"[Wittgenstein's] point of view and his attitude toward people and problems, even theoretical problems, were much more similar to those of a creative artist than to a scientist; one might almost say, similar to those of a religious prophet or seer."

And Wittgenstein similarly described by Bertrand Russell:

"His disposition is that of an artist, intuitive and moody."

The problem of expression

Jung describes a tendency of the introverted intuitive, when the type focus overly much on his intuition, like this:

"His language is not that which is commonly spoken — it becomes too subjective. His argument lacks convincing reason. He can only confess or pronounce. His is the 'voice of one crying in the wilderness'."

Here is a quote from Bertrand Russell about Wittgenstein:

"I told him he ought not simply to state what he thinks true, but to give arguments for it, but he said arguments spoil its beauty, and that he would feel as if he was dirtying a flower with muddy hands"

Introverted intuitives relies on their "hunches" and can often not explain why they think what they think. Here I take it as if Wittgenstein is saying "please don't force me to think, I want to stick to my intuition!". I think it often wasn't just unwillingness, but actual inability/difficulty to give arguments. Wittgenstein once wrote:

"My difficulty is only an — enormous — difficulty of expression."

Making life symbolic

Another characteristic of the Introverted Intuitive, Jung describes, "he makes himself and his life symbolic". This tendency seems to apply for Wittgenstein also. For example, Wittgenstein volunteered as a soldier in the war, he was a teacher at elementary school, a gardener at a monastery and worked at hospital. He gave away most of his money, and decided to live an ascetic life.

Further posts on this blog discussing the importance of introverted intuition in Wittgenstein's philosophy:

[The task of philosophy is to use "introverted intuition"?](#)

["Don't think, but look!" – The most common misconception about Wittgenstein?](#)

Secondary function: Feeling

(According to MBTI the secondary function is supposed to be Extraverted if the primary function is Introverted, but I don't feel convinced by this, I do not want to specify if it's Introverted or Extraverted.)

One main reason why I think Wittgenstein's secondary function may be Feeling is that arguments can be made that he was not a Thinker. For example, Wittgenstein did not like reading philosophy (philosophy highly associated with Thinking). He once said "no assistant lecturer in philosophy in the country had read fewer books on philosophy than he had" ([ref](#)). Especially he seemed to avoid philosophers who were Thinkers. I.e. He did enjoy Plato to some extent (possibly a Feeler), but he didn't read Aristotle at all (very likely a Thinker). Most of Wittgenstein's favorite authors, such as Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Kierkegaard and St Augustine were likely Feelers rather than Thinkers.

Carnap wrote:

"At our very first meeting with Wittgenstein, Schlick unfortunately mentioned that I was interested in the problem of an international language like Esperanto. As I had expected, Wittgenstein was definitely opposed to this idea. But I was surprised by the vehemence of his emotions. A language which had not 'grown organically' seemed to him not only useless but despicable."

I believe that this quote may indicate that Wittgenstein had a preference of feeling over thinking. The quick and emotional rejection of an international language seem grounded in feeling rather than thinking.

Summing up

Wittgenstein relied a lot on Introverted Intuition. I've presented some arguments that Wittgenstein's secondary function was feeling, which would make him an "INFj", however, by stressing other aspects of his life and philosophy one can probably argue that "INTj" makes better sense, or that he was more or less equal in thinking and feeling.

Whether Wittgenstein really was INFj or INTj or something else, I don't consider that important. The aim is not to have any determined opinion or put a label on him. The main interest can be seen twofold, (1) to get a better understanding of the Jungian typology, and (2) to get a better understanding of Wittgenstein. What MBTI-type suits Wittgenstein best is not of central interest but rather something we may get to know as a bonus when we get better understanding of the other issues.

* I write the "j" in lowercase, as I only use it in the sense to point out which of the other two functions (N and F) is the dominant, not to claim that Wittgenstein had any preference of judging over perception

* All underlines in quotes are added by me

Reference and further reading

[Psychological Types](#) by Carl Gustav Jung

[Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard: Religion, Individuality and Philosophical Method](#) by Charles L. Creegan

[Was Ludwig Wittgenstein an INTP or was he an INTj?](#) - forum discussion

[Types of eminent scientists, philosophers and literary Artists](#) - Another forum discussion debating Wittgenstein's MBTI-type. Here they agree he was foremost an introverted intuitive, and they debate whether his secondary function was feeling or thinking.

Game analysis

Game analysis pt 1 - On the distinction between game and non-game

Ken Binmore, economist and game theorist, writes:

If you drive a car on a busy street, you are playing a game with the drivers of the other cars. When you make a bid at an auction, you are playing a game with the other bidders. When a supermarket manager decides the price at which she will try to sell cans of beans, she is playing a game with her customers and with the managers at rival supermarkets. When a firm and a union negotiate next year's wage contract, they are playing a game. The prosecuting and defending attorneys are playing a game when each decides what arguments to put before a jury. Napoleon and Wellington were playing a game at the battle of Waterloo, and so were Khrushchev and Kennedy during the Cuban missile crisis.

I do not find this description satisfying. I may agree with Binmore on what it essentially means to play a game, but I don't like his assumption of who is actually playing the game. As I see it, these examples that he lists are all examples of what *eventually* can be playing of games, but in order for it to be games it requires certain commitment from the participants, and that commitment is optional, nothing to be taken for granted.

For example, the idea that the supermarket manager plays a game with the customers and "rival" supermarket managers, seems to rely on an assumption that she cares for earning as much money as possible and that she consciously calculates for this. On the contrary, she may decide the price for many different reason, i.e.

- *because it was the suggested price in a paper she read;
- *because they sold for that price before and it worked out well;
- *because she thinks the price is fair and just; not greedily high, nor so low that she won't be able to pay the workers wages
- *because that would leave a fair margin to the purchase price;
- *she decides the price 95 cents because 95 is her "lucky number".

In neither of these cases she takes into active consideration the customers nor other managers, and thus I don't think it's fair to say she plays a game with them either. That would be a too wide and liberal definition of game and leave out the important distinction between game and no-game.

It may sound picky when I say this, but I find it important to point out that to play a game is to make an optional choice. We may treat ordinary human activities as if it is games, but then we are applying a somewhat simplified model. What really motivates people is a complex story. In the examples listed by Binmore we may assume they are playing games, but then we should also admit it's just an assumption.

Game analysis pt 2 - Analysing simple and complex games

A central interest in this project on game analysis concerns philosophy, and how good philosophy can get promoted. In order for this it can be relevant to reflect on how it works within other games. We will investigate games in general and examples of various games, and after this “practice” we can deal more with “game of philosophy” later on. In order to comprehend a complex game, it can be helpful to see how it works within simpler games.

The approach has similarities with the approach in Plato's dialogue The Republic, where Socrates tries to find out what makes a just man.

Measurable aspects and ranking within games

Participants within a game can be ranked in different ways, for example:

- *who is best/most skilful
- *who is the most famous
- *who is the most popular
- *who has the highest official ranking
- *who earns the most money
- *who has been given the best practice

In many games we may assume that there is a close correlation between these different aspects. Consider for example a contest in long jumping. We may assume that the one who leaps furthest is the best long jumper. By winning the competition he also gets the most prize money, which makes him earn the most. His name is written on the headlines which makes him famous, and as a winner he is likely to hold the highest status among fans and other jumpers. Since he is recognized as the best long jumper we may assume that he is offered the best practice by the best coach.

Within other games though, there is no clear correlation between the different aspects. I.e. Take a look at the game of politics. Here one can expect that the best politician also should be the one highest in rank. Though looking at history, most would agree that this hasn't always been the case. Consider Adolf Hitler, he was famous politician and top ranked in his country, but was he the best? Most would reply ”no” to that question. Thus we have a lack of correlation.

One can point out that it is easier to determine who is the better long jumper, than who is the better politician. The long jumper has a clear goal, which is always the same, and easy to measure. For a politician it is different, the methods may be different, the conditions always changing, a short term success may lead to a long term failure etc – and there is no simple measurement. We make the conclusion that politics is a more complex game than long jump.

Examples of how one can analyse simple and more complex games

1. Who is tallest

This is easily determined by measurement from head to toe.

2. Who jumps furthest

This is also a simple measurement, however there are sources of error that may cause the one who is best to not always get full recognition. In order to be recognized as best in long jump it is only official contests that counts. The one who jumps further when no one is watching gets no recognition. During a contest the measurement is always from the same point. The one who takes off before that point will have to subtract that from the total length, and the one who treads will not have his jump counted. However these are minor sources of error.

3. Who is the better soccer player

Who is tallest, and who jumps furthest, is easy to measure, and can be documented in Guinness book of world records. But you cannot read who is the greatest soccer player in this book. Why? One can claim that who jumps furthest is possible to measure objectively, while who is the best

football player is only a subjective judgement. Yet, there are objective goals within football. The goal is to make goals, and to not let in any goals. Or in the larger perspective; the goal is to win games, win championships etc. This applies for teams though, and nothing that is achieved by individual players.

The skill of a soccer player may be judged in two criteria, skill offensively and skill defensively. To what extent the player helps to produce goals forward and to what extent he prevents goals from being let in back. We may imagine an appraisal of these two criteria gives us a ratio that tells us how skilful the player is. Since the goalkeeper has the most important position, with the special privilege to touch the ball with his hands, it is probable that he will receive the highest ratio. In order to avoid the conclusion that this makes the goalkeeper the best player, it is reasonable to judge the ratio in comparison with competitors in corresponding position. The goalkeeper may be assessed in relation to an average goalkeeper ratio, and the outfield players may be assessed in relation to an average outfield player ratio (which may be further divided into different ratios for different positions in the field).

Also further criteria may be added; for example if the player is able to put an extra effort in more important games; if he has a tendency to fail when it really matters; if he plays good consistently; if he has potential of getting better, etc. This may sound complicated but coaches and agents have pretty good grasp of this (though they may rely more on instinct than careful calculation of ratios).

In conclusion, we may say that it is sure possible to distinguish between better and worse soccer players. Further on we may add that the ones who are best at soccer, usually gets recognized for being the best. Even though certain approximation has to be made which may result in somewhat deviant judgements. We may not agree fully on that Messi is the greatest soccer player, but at least we can agree that he is among the better.

4. Who is the better musician or what is the best piece of music

What distinguishes this category from the above three, is that music is a game where there is no clearly set goal. There is no simple way of measuring who is the better. Yet we agree that one can distinguish a better artist from a worse artist. We agree that a famous concert pianist is a better musician than the completely uninterested teenager who was forced by her mother to take piano lessons.

There are several technical ways of measuring who is the better and who is the worse musician. A singer may be measured according to “pitch”, and how high or how low tones he can sing. However most people would agree on that pitch and capacity to sing high and low tones, isn't all what determines the better singer. One may also speak of more vague aspects such as “feeling”.

We may assume that who is the better artist is determined by subjective preferences. But even then there are many possible alternatives on how to measure subjective preferences objectively. For example:

*What music gets most attention or listeners? In this case we can measure who has sold the most CD's, who gathers the largest audience at concert, or who has the most views on YouTube. For example, Justin Bieber's song “Baby”, has over 700 million views on YouTube and would thus be a hot candidate.

*What music gets the most positive reviews. Here we may note that Bieber's song Baby has more than 70% dislikes on YouTube, while for example Led Zeppelin's Stairway to Heaven has less than 2% dislikes.

*What music would people prefer to listen to, if they knew the alternatives.

*What music is best according to “experts”.

*What music evokes the most sublime feelings.

*What music makes people become most non-violent.

(last two aspects are more difficult to measure objectively)

The problem doesn't seem to be that it's not possible to measure who is better and who is worse within music. The problem seems to be that there are so many possible ways of measuring it.

Game analysis pt 3 - "Games Critics Play" by Carter Kaplan

Games Critics Play is an article with imaginative associations and different topics intertwined. Kaplan is combining the philosophy of Wittgenstein with literature theory.

Kaplan points out that critics can read a text differently. One can say that critics are playing different *reading games*. Examples of reading games includes treating the text as an *artefact*, a *script*, a *subtext* or a *supersubtext*;

Artifact games are those games that involve the critic with the physical, phenomenological text itself. [...] Bibliographical critics look at a literary work as an artifact. They consider its manufacture, the style of its print, the type of paper upon which this print was applied, how these papers are gathered and sewn or glued together.

Scriptural games are those games that involve the critic with descriptions of setting, plot, characters, and the characters' most overt motives.

A **subtextual critic** might consider the political, economic, psychological or ideological variables in the author's environment that explain why the author consciously or "unconsciously" made certain creative decisions.

The supersubtextual text involves the critic in a game played in a hall of mirrors where author, character, setting, critic, ideology and culture reflect upon one another, usually to the embarrassment of all involved. [...] Utilizing the techniques of parody, pastiche, multiple coding, and self-referential.

Reading games, can also be divided into **Accurate reading** and **Appropriative reading**. I won't go into details on this, but the accurate/appropriative split seems to have much in common with the Rorty/Khunian split between "normal discourse" and "abnormal discourse".

Kaplan presents a table of **Dialectical Traditions**, including the *Cat-alytic* (mix of the words cathogorical, analytic and catalyst) and the *Syn-aesthetic* (mix of words synthetic and aesthetic). In a previous post on this blog I presented a table on *Philosophy* and *Science*, claiming that *Philosophy* is Logic, Analytic, Deductive and A priori whilst *Science* is Empiric, Synthetic, Inductive and A posteriori. Link here:

[Distinguishing between philosophy and science with help of Wittgenstein](#)

Kaplan does just the oppsite, and puts *Philosophy* in the same category as the Empiric, Synthetic, Inductive and A posteriori (that is the Syn-aesthetic cathogory). And just as I used Wittgenstein to support my points, Kaplan uses Wittgenstein to support his points.

I find it peculiar that Kaplan puts philosophy in the synthetic/empirical category. Personally I wouldn't say that philosophy is empiric, but I wouldn't want to say I disagree with Kaplan either, before I understand what he means by claiming it.

I may write more on Carter Kaplan later on. He has written a book on Wittgenstein and literary theory entitled *Critical Synoptics: Menippean Satire and the Analysis of Intellectual Mythology*, which appears interesting!

Link to article:

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3684866>

Link to Carter Kaplans blog:

<http://carterkaplan.blogspot.com/>

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Game analysis pt 4 - Rorty and the game of philosophy

In an article entitled "Recent Metaphilosophy", Richard Rorty starts off by presenting an "inconsistent triad of philosophy", and then continues by reviewing two books on metaphilosophy by Everett W. Hall and Henry W. Johnstone Jr. Some issues brought up here I plan to discuss later on. Now I'll just give short presentation of this article.

Inconsistent triad of philosophy

"(1) A game in which each player is at liberty to change the rules whenever he wishes can neither be won nor lost.

(2) In philosophical controversy, the terms used to state criteria for the resolution of arguments mean different things to different philosophers; thus each side can take the rules of the game of controversy in a sense which will guarantee its own success (thus, in effect, changing the rules).

(3) Philosophical arguments are, in fact, won and lost, for some philosophical positions do, in fact, prove weaker than others."

Abandoning (3) or (2)? No abandon (1)!

Abandoning (3) Rorty calls "metaphilosophical scepticism". Subgroups are "positive scepticists" and "negative scepticists" (negative scepticists makes the conclusion that philosophy is pointless, "nothing for grown up men"...)

Abandoning (2) Rorty calls "metaphilosophical realism". Subgroups are "common-sense realists", "historical realists" and "eschatological realists"

To abandon either (2) or (3) seems to many people be the only alternative. I will not present these positions further here, as it is not the way to go anyway according to Rorty. Rorty's solution would be to abandon the first (1) statement.

"[P]hilosophy is the greatest game of all precisely because it is the game of "changing the rules." This game can be won by attending to the patterns by which these rules are changed, and formulating rules in terms of which to judge changes of rules."

(One can tell Rorty is going to put himself in trouble for saying things like this. I.e. I found a blogger who picked up this quote by Rorty and wondered if Rorty wants to turn philosophy in to a game of [Calvinball](#). I think though that Rorty is concerned with cruelties of this world, and that his philosophy is intended to be read from that kind of perspective. Philosophy is genuine concerns for him, and not merely light-hearted fun.)

Henry W. Johnstone Jr.: *ad hominem* arguments are the only valid philosophical arguments

Rorty reviews two books on metaphilosophy, Everett W. Hall's *Philosophical Systems*, and Henry W. Johnstone Jr.'s *Philosophy and argument*. Here I will just quote some of the things he mentions about Johnstone, as I found that book more interesting:

"In Johnstone's eyes, philosophizing is not a transaction between a man and a non-human reality against which he checks himself, but essentially and primarily a transaction between two or more human beings."

"If the truth or falsity of any philosophical statement is relative to the argument that establishes or disestablishes it, then, unlike the truth or falsity of a scientific statement, it is not relative to objective facts. Hence there is no *argumentum ad rem* [to the thing] to establish or disestablish any philosophical statement. This leaves open only the possibility of an *argumentum ad hominem* [to the person] ." (Rorty quoting Johnstone here)

"Since we cannot decide the validity of a philosophical argument either by an appeal to evidence or to internal consistency, the only alternative is an appeal to consistency with the intention of the original propounder of the argument. The general schema of an *argumentum ad hominem* is that it

is a reply to a previous argument which shows that the first argument 'defeats its own purpose'"
(this line-of-thought makes an argument why philosophy in a sense *has* to be therapeutic)

Looking forward, Rorty's conclusions

"It is quite as important to ignore irrelevant distinctions as to formulate relevant ones, and fruitful philosophical controversy is possible only when both sides have the patience to investigate their opponents' criteria of relevance."

"[T]he considerations which both men [Hall and Johnstone] present badly need to be backed up and filled in by discussion of the relations between philosophy and other disciplines. In isolation, metaphilosophical reflections can easily be dismissed as "abstract," "formalistic," and "parasitic." United with analyses of scientific procedure and political controversy as they are, for example, in [Polanyi's "Personal Knowledge"](#) they have more force, and are less easily ignored."

Reference

[Richard Rorty - Recent Metaphilosophy](#)

Internal links

[Introduction to some ideas and concepts of Richard Rorty](#)

Miscellaneous

The unshakable truth (a.k.a. the bird and the ape)

There is a forum on the Internet intended for philosophy discussions. A policy there is that one may not start threads about the meaning of already established concepts. For example, if somebody would like to discuss **what is philosophy** (this is the example taken from their policy) that is not desirable. Instead one is then referred to the place where the unshakable truth in this issue is once for all already settled. And now it's not spoken of the Bible with big B, as one could've supposed, no, but in *dictionnaires* and *encyclopedias*, such as Wikipedia (!).

However, I sometimes get incited when it comes to concepts such as "philosophy", "rationality", "morality", "opinion", "racism" and "prejudice", and when I read about these concepts in dictionaries and encyclopedias, this incitement tend to only increase. There is an enervating frustration within me. And why is that? That is what I'm intending to discuss here.

As commonly known, man is a hybrid. We've got an ape's brain and a bird-brain. When it comes to the writing of encyclopedias it is naturally the bird that starts the process. The bird posts a draft to a committee of apes for consideration. This draft is in bird's language, which causes problems for the apes since they haven't got the ability to understand that language (though they may practice and somehow learn how to deal with it). Ultimately the apes have to guess and make some "free interpretations". Foremost the apes must shorten the draft a whole lot, since the bird-brain tends formulate itself endlessly long, repetitive, incoherent, weird and complicated. When the apes are done with their processing, they send the script back to the bird. The bird then replies with *flap flap* and *chirp chirp* which the apes don't understand much of. Onwards the apes send a final report to the publishing department, where it may stand something in line with:

Hello!

We want a thousand bananas to eat, and lianas in the trees to swing around with.

Best regards from the Bird and the Ape

When turning the pages in an encyclopedia you can't help but feel the unmistakable smell of ape. Don't now think I would like to oppose to this. No no, in general I do think that the writers of it are making a solid work. I have a lot of respect for the encyclopedia-writers. I admire their sound and coherent reason, education and marvellous style purity. The apes who've done the process are highly intelligent, and been thinking of almost everything. A bird may perhaps defeat an ape by cunning rhetoric, but scarcely by factual arguments. This is one of the reasons why the bird isn't allowed larger space in the encyclopedias.

If it is birdsong one is looking for, one can dedicate oneself to the fine arts instead. In the fine arts the cooperation between the ape and the bird works differently. There the ape is often more, so to say, liberal and unselfish in the interpretation of the birds draft. The result of the apes interpretation may in this case result in a script that is sent to the artists consciousness telling her that she is a bird, and that she can fly.

However, earlier I wrote that I couldn't quite feel any satisfaction by reading the encyclopedias, and I asked the question why. I cannot explain why. But let me make an attempt.

The meaning of a word can be seen from different perspectives. For example, we may consider:

- (1) The literal meaning of a word. For example 'philosophy' can be derived from the Greek words *philia* = love, and *sophos* = wisdom, and thus one may claim philosophy is love for wisdom.
- (2) The intended, most desirable and most reasonable meaning of the word. This is what the word should mean when one, so to say, has understood it correctly. (a.k.a the *scholastic point of view*)
- (3) What effect the word has when it is actually used. This may be in accordance with (2) the "correct meaning", but doesn't need to. People may have misunderstood the intended meaning of the word, or purposely chose to use the word in another sense.

For a writer of an encyclopedia the second alternative, the intended meaning, is close at hand. But often different approaches are used in the encyclopedias, and then may all these three alternatives be represented. It is emphasized that a word can mean different things under different circumstances seen from different perspectives etc.

However, the encyclopedias don't take much consideration in the fact that the usage of the words and their position in our consciousness (and sub-consciousness) to large extent relies on aspects far from what "officially" defines the word.

If I use the word "profit" I carry with it an association of greed. Do I write the word "committee", associations are that it something serious and official. If I write weird, with strange punctuation, forwarding odd theories with incoherent reasoning, you may think to yourself that I am stupid and dumb and don't know what I'm talking about. Some may feel sympathy for this while others instinctively will dislike it.

Every person associates differently. Some associations are awoken only by a few people, while other associations arise within almost all. People within a social group will often develop similar ways of association, for example encyclopedia-writers or members at a philosophy forum on the Internet or World of Warcraft-players or Arabs. Associations will often carry with them expectations of what will come, and how one should adapt according to it. No matter how irrational these associations are, they may have a strong impact on the meaning of words in our consciousness. - But in the world of encyclopedia's you'll find very little of it.

The reason why I get incited over previously mentioned concepts is that I recognize irrational, unconsidered associations which they awaken. Then I want to write something that both entices and challenges these associations. But that is not all of the truth. When I write about these concepts I also want to argue for what the words ought to mean - argue for the most reasonable and rational meaning. I don't accept that what's written in encyclopedias as any complete unshakable truth.

Meaning and truth in communication

Abstract

1. Describing parts of communication; sender, recipient and message. Presenting a model with; sender-meaning, recipient-meaning and message-meaning, described as; intention, interpretation and 'literal meaning'.
2. Dismissing the idea of message-meaning as a 'literal meaning'. Describing the message-meaning as context-dependent.
3. Explaining why the message-meaning is independent from sender and recipient.
4. Leading us to conclusion that the message-meaning is to be seen as determined by a third part, "a judge".
5. Investigating attributes of this judge. Borrowing the concepts of 'doxa' and 'habitus' from Pierre Bourdieu.
6. Dismissing the idea of the sender-meaning as an intention and dismissing the idea of the recipient-meaning as an interpretation. Follow up and further develop the sender-meaning and recipient-meaning. Putting this in context with the newly developed judge-meaning.
7. Illuminate similarities and differences between the meanings.
8. Discussing the significance, possibility and privileges of each of the participants.

1. Three kinds of meaning in communication

1.1. What we got in communication?

1.11. (1) a sender, (2) a recipient and (3) a message.¹ I.e. what we got here is (1) me who is writing (the sender), (2) you who are reading (the recipient) and (3) a document with the title "Meaning and truth in communication" (the message).

1.2. Next thing I ask: what is the meaning of the message in communication? For example if somebody states "I want a banana", what is the meaning of that message?

1.21. Simply one may answer, the meaning of the message is that he (the sender) wants a banana.

1.22. This is what could be called a 'literary meaning' of the message.

1.3. But now, the author of this text who just wrote "I want a banana" (me that is), is it reasonable to interpret it as if I wanted a banana?

1.31. Perhaps you reply: "No, you just wrote 'I want a banana' to state an example for this philosophical investigation, there's no reason to believe you actually do want a banana."

1.32. A fair reply, I would say. But really, what can you as a reader know about my intention? Isn't it possible that my intention could be something completely different, unknown to you?

1.33. On this point you have to agree. You can't know anything certain about my intentions. When you said the message was given as an example for a philosophical investigation, that was just your own *interpretation*.

1.34. One can imagine that the writer of this text could have other intentions; perhaps I'm just working as a translator, translating this text from French into English and not intending anything in particular by it except for making a proper translation.

1.4. Now we just carried out our first investigation. In this I wanted to make clear the three parts of communication; the sender, the recipient and the message. Also I wanted to show examples on how

¹ That is the concrete elements of communication. Abstract elements (or 'constitutive factors') of communication may be added such as: context, channel and code (see model by Roman Jakobson).

one can consider different 'meanings' in communication. At first we mentioned 'literal meaning', a meaning that's oriented towards the message (we may call it message-meaning), secondly we spoke about intentions - a meaning that is oriented towards the sender (sender-meaning) and then interpretations - a meaning that is oriented towards the recipient (recipient-meaning).²

1.41. What we've concluded now may be rearranged and turned into something else later on, but I think this will bring a good basic notion for these investigations. Later on I will show that the message-meaning can be more than just a *literal meaning*, the sender-meaning more than *intentions*, and the recipient-meaning more than *interpretations*.

1.5. Summing up this session; we have (1) a message, a sender and a recipient, and (2) a message-meaning, a sender-meaning and a recipient-meaning.

2. The message-meaning as dependent on the context

2.1. In the previous session we spoke of three different meanings; one tied to the sender, one tied to the recipient and one tied to the message. When we spoke of the message-meaning, we mentioned it as a 'literal meaning'. However, we can imagine the message-meaning to be more than just a literal meaning. Consider how the message 'I want a banana' can be used in different situations;

a) it can be *constative*, the stating of something, just to inform, in similar sense as one can say "I want to become a pilot" without expecting anything in return from the listener.

b) it can be *performative*, express a wish or desire, like the child says to her mother "mum, can I have a banana?"³

c) it can refer to the fruit banana

d) it can refer to a candy with banana shape and banana flavour

e) it can be part of the lyrics of a song or a poem, which one sings for the sake of the song, not because one has any particular desire for banana

(the list could be made much longer, only imagination puts limits).

2.3. When we have so many alternatives to choose from, what determines the *actual* meaning of the message?

2.31. One answer could be that the actual meaning has to be according with the dictionary, and refer to the fruit banana.

2.4. Would it then be the same, in another country, speaking another language, where all the people understand the message 'I want a banana' as 'there is key under carpet'?

Translating from English to this foreign language you find:

I = *there is* want = *key* a = *under* banana = *carpet*

2.41. Here we are inclined to admit, that a word or a message can have different meanings in different languages.

2.5. So then if the language currently spoken is English, then the actual meaning of the word 'banana' has to refer to a fruit?

² The concept of 'meaning' is here to be understood in a wide sense.

³ Constative and performative are central concepts used by J.A. Austin. The constative utterances can be said to have a truth-value (either true or false). The performative utterances on the other hand have no truth-value but instead said to be either happy/felicious or unhappy/infelicious, depending on if their aim is succeeded or not. The main work of Austin is called *How To Do Things With Words*, which title refers to these performative acts.

2.6. At a jewellery store, looking at earrings in shapes of different fruits in miniature. There are earrings looking like tomato, cucumber and banana etc. The customer looks at these and says to the salesperson: "I want the bananas".

What would be the expected reaction of salesperson here? Open the fridge that's behind her back and get the two 'real' bananas that happen to lie there? Or unlock the two tiny pieces of metal painted yellow that the customer is looking at?

2.61. You'd reply the latter. The word "bananas" does here seem to refer to tiny pieces of metal. How come? Because we are at a jewellery store, and here we are expected to talk about jewellery; because customer is looking at certain pieces of metal, and then we expect her to refer to what she's looking at; because these jewellerys are painted yellow, similar colour to the fruit banana. The bananas in the fridge was something the customer didn't see, and thus she is not expected to talk about them.

2.62. Though we are speaking English here, the word 'banana' doesn't refer to a fruit. Here we are inclined to say that the message-meaning cannot simply be determined only by knowing which language is spoken (unless we widen the meaning of the word 'language'), it is the circumstances around, the context, that determines the message-meaning.⁴

2.7. Let's now agree on this: It is the context that decides the message-meaning.

3. The message-meaning as independent of sender and recipient

3.1. In the jewellery store (see 2.6), the customer asked for "the bananas". We came to the conclusion that the meaning of this message was that she wanted earrings with banana shape. How could the message "I want the bananas" mean this? Why didn't it refer to the real bananas, that was in the fridge?

3.11. One could say that the meaning of this message referred to earring-bananas because that was what the sender intended.

3.2. A customer enters a flag-store, says to the salesperson "I want an Austrian flag". "All right", says the salesperson, and shows an Austrian flag to the customer. "No" that's not the flag I meant replies the customer, "this flag you show me is white and red, but the flag I want is blue with red stars and a cross in the upper left corner". "Ah, you mean this", replies salesperson, and shows an *Australian* flag. "Yes, exactly, that's what I meant" says the customer.

Was it the customer (sender) that was mistaken about the name of Australia, or was it the salesperson (recipient) that misunderstood the message?

3.21. Of course it wasn't the salesperson who misunderstood the message, the customer asked for an "Austrian" flag and salesperson showed her an Austrian flag. The customer though seemed to be mistaken since she asked for an Austrian flag but really wanted an Australian flag.

3.22. By this we draw the conclusion that the senders intention does not decide the meaning of a message.⁵

3.3. Can we then say that it is the recipient who gets to decide the meaning of a message?

4 One may argue that the message refers to earrings because that's what the sender intends, and thus making it more of a sender-meaning than message-meaning. A reply to that could be what's stated in 1.41. However this is a situation where I wouldn't want to apply this kind of 'extreme scepticism'. I will develop further answer in session 3.

5 Of course we could insist, say it's indeed the sender that decides the meaning of a message. But it wouldn't be in line with what people in general think. I'm interested in 'ordinary sense opinion'.

Imagine this similar situation: A customer asks for an "Austrian flag", and the salesperson picks up a Polish flag, thinking this got to be an Austrian flag, and shows it to customer.

3.31. In this situation, the sender thinks of an Australian flag and the recipient thinks of a Polish flag, but both were wrong, the real meaning of the message "Austrian flag" referred to an Austrian flag.

3.32. This shows that it's neither sender, nor recipient that decides the meaning of a message.

4. Message-meaning as a meaning according to a third part judge

4.1. What is it then that decides the message-meaning?

4.11. In part two I showed how complex the message-meaning can be. You simply cannot just refer to a dictionary, or something like that. In order to understand a message, you need to understand the context. But then, what is this context? How can a context decide something? A context doesn't have any consciousness, "context" is just an abstract term.

4.12. I'm inclined to say that the message-meaning needs some kind of human interpretation, and in session 3 I showed why not sender's intention nor the recipients interpretation can be accepted for deciding the message-meaning, thus I'm inclined to say we need to take a third part into consideration, leading us to the conclusion:

4.2. The message-meaning is it's meaning according to a third part judge.⁶

5. Attributes of the third part judge

5.1. We may say that the meaning of the message is decided by a third part judge. So who is then this judge?

5.11. Well, we cannot be expected to present any exhaustive description, but I will give some outlines, and hopefully you'll see where I'm getting at.

a) The judge knows what language is spoken and is well oriented in the current context.

b) The judge has to be respected and awed by the people involved, else it won't get attention.

c) The judge is to be considered as an imaginary person, existing in thought but not in physical presence. However any kind of 'real judge' may serve as an embodied metaphor, for example a judge in the court, a referee in a sports game, an examiner in school or the constructor of a quiz.

d) The judge may be considered as a representative for the 'official truth'. Mark well though that official truth might not be the same as actual truth.⁷

e) As representative for 'official truth' the judge may always get overthrown and replaced by a new judge when one official truth is replaced by another official truth. For example until year 2006 it

6 I will from this point use the concepts 'message-meaning' and 'judge-meaning' synonymous. However, one could argue that the 'judge-meaning' should be separated from the 'message-meaning' - and let the 'message-meaning' be used in a wider sense, as including all of sender-meaning, recipient-meaning and judge-meaning

7 From this point on there is a lot of talk about 'truth', how do this word become central in our investigation? The relationship between 'truth' and 'meaning' is something that could be investigated further. Sometimes I tend to use these concepts synonymous, and at some point I found it more reasonable to use the word 'truth' instead of 'meaning' (explanation how I all of a sudden started to use the word 'truth')

was official truth that Pluto was the planet furthest off in the solar system, and then well respected people with authority to speak concluded that it wasn't sustainable to call Pluto a planet at all. Now Neptune is considered to be the planet furthest off. Even though it wasn't actual truth that Pluto was the planet furthest off in year 2000, it still was an official truth and thus we may imagine it was the judge's truth.

We could use another more trivial example for this; right now it is official truth that it is year 2012, but in one years time this truth will have become overthrown. The date-judges are short-lived on their thrones.

f) As representative for 'official truth' the judge's dispositions not only changes in time, but also in space and context. This is more or less what already has been pointed out in a), but to give some examples; in (most of) USA it's official truth that Neil Armstrong was the first man to walk on the moon, in Russia it's widely considered as false; among some religious groups it is official truth that the earth is no more than 10.000 years old, and among other people that's official falseness.

g) Criterion e) and f) has to be understood in the light of criterion b). It is because of criterion b) that the judge is said to represent official rather than actual truth.

h) Judges meaning have a tendency to always appear natural, obvious and indisputable

i) It is us humans who are creating this imaginary judge, yet the point is that s/he aren't completely under our control. Perhaps we could draw a parallel with the dictionary; at first we write the dictionary (writing down what we created by our own imagination) - and then we let the dictionary rule over us (as we are correcting ourselves after it).

j) The judge is only in part known, and in part unknown. We cannot completely understand the judge, because that would play out the function of the judge as an independent representative. If the sender or the recipient completely knew the judge, the judge would become an integrated part of the agent itself, and the judge would then lose part of it's function (a completely unknown judge would on the other hand be useless). I.e. when I said that the judge's truth is that Neptune is the planet furthest off in the solar system, it was only intended as an example on how we can imagine it to be.⁸

k) The judge may be viewed in different ways, just as we can view the position we are in, from different perspectives. For example, we could consider a particular situation in a wide sense i.e. "context of speaking in English language", or a more narrow sense i.e. "context of (English) child talks with her mother at the dinner table". Depending on what perspective we choose to apply we can invoke different judges. Possible mistake when speaking of the judge would be to invoke an old conservative, out-of-date-judge, failing to see that the judge one is speaking of is in fact not the actual judge (the actual judge avoid scorn by hiding itself, and let others think that somebody else is current judge)

l) The judge-meaning may be seen as similar to the concept of 'doxa', described as a 'common belief or popular opinion'. "The power of doxa is in its hidden nature which claims that what it claims to be 'reality' is the one and only 'truth' about the nature of existence".⁹ This could also be said about the judge-meaning.

m) Also we can draw a parallel between the judge-meaning and Pierre Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus'. Both habitus and judge-meaning can be seen as ways of embodying (objective) structures. Habitus is described as "a set of dispositions which incline agents to act and react in certain ways. [...] The dispositions generate practices, perceptions and attitudes which are 'regular' without being consciously co-ordinated or governed by any rule". The judge-meaning can also be seen as a set of dispositions (and this is very important remark), but we locate these to the imaginary judge instead

⁸ This is a rule I will often break in this text, but it's not because I don't believe in it myself, it's for the sake of being pragmatic. It becomes very difficult to speak about the judge when the judge is someone unknown and abstract. To simplify I will therefore sometimes speak of the judge in prejudiced concrete terms and let the words "we may imagine..." be implied.

⁹ Description of 'doxa' from <http://www.elizd.com/website-LeftBrain/essays/practice.html>

of the sender or recipient. We may imagine these dispositions have strong influence on the sender and recipient, but we don't have any intent to describe how and in what way. We must note that 'habitus' is mainly a sociological term, and our investigations are of another kind.¹⁰ (Further effort is required to describe the relationship between judge-meaning and habitus.¹¹)

n) What we are looking for is a judge that is *not too intolerant and nor too tolerant*. For example a judge that is tolerant enough to agree with us that "bananas" can refer to pieces of metal, that has similar shape to bananas and that's painted yellow (as concluded in 2.5.1), but not so tolerant that it would agree on that a flag which only got two bands of red and white (like the Polish) can be referred to as an Austrian flag (as concluded in 4.3.1).¹²

Examples:

1a.



1b.



1c.



2a.



2b.



2c.



Many would probably agree on that 1a and 1b are bananas, but not 1c. And that 2a and 2b are Austrian flags, but not 2c. It needs some degree of tolerance to agree on that 1b are bananas (one can mark that it's not real bananas, they just look like bananas), and it needs some degree of tolerance to agree on that 2b is an Austrian flag (for example, one can mark that the bands are not

10 Wittgenstein: "Our interest does not fall back upon these causes of the formation of concepts; we are not doing natural science; nor yet natural history - since we can also invent fictitious natural history for our purposes" (it might not appear as if we are always faithful to this (and we aren't going to be faithful for the sake of faithfulness either))

11 Some further comments on habitus, "the modes of behaviour created by the habitus do not have the fine regularity of modes of behavior deduced from a legislative principle: the habitus goes hand in glove with vagueness and indeterminacy. As a generative spontaneity which asserts itself with an improvised confrontation with ever renewed situations, it obeys a practical, inexact, fuzzy sort of logic, which defines one's normal relation to the world" and Habitus "conception is primarily dynamic and operational, as opposed to static and ontological."

12 We may choose to interpret the judge in the narrow sense, as someone who doesn't tolerate anything but perfect logic, or we may interpret it as an infinitely tolerant person, who never claims anything about right or wrong (philosophic discussion tend to hover between these two extreme standpoints on truth (which I think is unfortunate)). However, what these two judges have in common is that they've never visited planet earth, and don't know what a human is. In case we take interest in things that got to do with specific human conditions, they can't be of any help for us.

Compare with Wittgenstein: "The more narrowly we examine actual language, the sharper becomes the conflict between it and our requirement. The conflict becomes intolerable; the requirement is now in danger of becoming empty. [...] The crystalline purity of logic [has got us] on to slippery ice where there is no friction and so in a certain sense the conditions are ideal, but also, just because of that, we are unable to walk. We want to walk: so we need *friction*. Back to the rough ground!"

What W. calls 'friction' is similar to what I call 'tolerance' (though analogy can't be made fully)

the correct size, the white band shouldn't be bigger than the red ones).¹³ One could say that 1b indeed are bananas, but it's not real bananas (yet then one have admitted it is bananas), and that indeed 2b is an Austrian flag, but it is disproportionate and badly painted.

My point is not to argue that 1b are bananas and 1c is not a banana. I just want to point out that what is considered as banana and what's not considered a banana is arbitrary, there is no set line which distinguishes banana from non-banana. Some degree of tolerance is necessary, but infinite tolerance is useless. The perfect amount of tolerance is determined by the context. I cannot tell the perfect amount of tolerance, as I can only speak within my own context.¹⁴

o) We need a different judge for every different situation. And there will be judges who's going to say that sure 1c is a banana, and other judges who refuse to agree on that 1a is a banana. Some would say it's neither true or false that 1a is a banana, seeming to imply that 'it's true that it's neither true or false...'¹⁵ What each of them have in common though, is that every judge will have people around them who will support and think their current judge's opinion is the very most sensible and correct.

5.12. Summing up the judge-meaning, we may call it; *the meaning (including opinions, dispositions...) or truth according to an imaginary judge with highest status in the current context.*

6. Relationship between sender-meaning, recipient-meaning and judge-meaning

6.1. In the first session I described the sender-meaning as an intention, the recipient-meaning as an interpretation and the message-meaning as a literal meaning. Later on I described how the message-meaning can be understood as more than just a literal meaning. Now I will show how sender-meaning can be more than an intention and the recipient-meaning more than an interpretation.

6.2. Imagine a guy says to a girl at a bar, "you have a nice dress".

6.21. Let us imagine he said this very spontaneously, he was confronted with the girl and simply thought that the girl had a nice dress, and he just wanted to tell her so. Yet there may be still a lot of other background information on why he said this. I.e. the guy felt sexually aroused by the girl, and would have liked to have sex with her. This might be true, but is it an intention if he never consciously thought of this when he made the utterance? Probably not.¹⁶ Another factor that made him speak to the girl might have been that he wanted to impress on his friends, show them he wasn't afraid of starting conversations with strangers. He might have been inclined to speak to the girl, because she looked to be similar age, and he estimated her to have about the same level of attraction as himself. If she had looked more posh, he might not have dared to speak with her, and if she looked stupid, he might have wanted to avoid her. The reason he was appealed by the dress might have been because his mum had worn a similar dress when he was a little kid, but he had no conscious memory of this and wasn't aware of the connection.

6.211. The list of explanations may be made much longer, more or less involving the entire state of the mind of the sender, and all of this I mean can be tied to the sender-meaning.¹⁷ The sender-

13 Strictly spoken, it also needs some degree of tolerance to agree on that 1a is a banana and that 2a is an Austrian flag.

14 The philosopher and the philosophical discourse of course cannot stand outside of this. Wittgenstein writes: "Philosophical problems arise when language goes on holiday", that is, when we take a word and try to look at it in isolation from its context.

15 Compare with Austin: "Suppose that we confront 'France is hexagonal' with the facts,[...] is it true or false? It is good enough for a top-ranking general, perhaps, but not for a geographer. [But] how can one answer this question, whether it is true or false that France is hexagonal? It is just rough, and that is the right and final answer to the question of the relation of 'France is hexagonal' to France. It is a rough description; it is not a true or a false one."

16 It cannot be in our interest to try to define what's an intention and what's not.

17 This can be compared with the concept of 'Background' developed by John Searle, described as "the set of abilities, capacities, tendencies, and dispositions that humans have and that are not themselves intentional states". I'm inclined to say that all this may also be involved in the sender-meaning. Here's an interesting article that compares Searle's

meaning may be any description of the sender's mind in relation to the message sent.

6.22. In similar sense we may imagine the recipient-meaning be any descriptions of the recipient's mind in relation to the message received. We may imagine the recipient-meaning as an interpretation, for example; the girl thought that the boy meant her dress looked nice, or; the girl thought the boy was sarcastic, and really meant the dress looked ugly. It may also be reactions of the girl after she had made the interpretation, i.e.; the girl felt happy or; the girl felt insulted. Though the recipient-meaning *may not involve any interpretation at all*, i.e. the girl didn't really listen to, or understand what the guy said; she just thought for herself that he spoke with a funny accent, or; the girl was struck by the thought how peculiar it is that strangers often speak to her when she's at the bar, yet it never happens that strangers come up to her when she's at the school restaurant (and she starts developing a theory about the causes of this).

6.221. Thus, the recipient-meaning may be described as any kind of reaction of the recipient when receiving (or, after receiving) the message.¹⁸

6.23. Further on, we may imagine the judge-meaning to be just as complex and multifaceted as the sender-meaning and the recipient-meaning. Considering the judge-meaning in the situation presented above, we may imagine the opinions of an observer viewing this from the outside.

6.231. Examples of possible judge-meanings; 'the guy really thought the girl had a nice dress', 'the girl might have thought he was being sarcastic', 'the guy was probably trying to pick up the girl', 'the girl didn't understand that the guy's real intention was to have sex with her', 'the guy used a clumsy pick-up line', 'the girl should have shown more gratitude', 'the guy shouldn't have tried to start conversation with the girl, because it was obvious she was too good for him'.¹⁹

7. The difference between the sender-meaning, the recipient-meaning and the judge-meaning

7.1. What is the difference between the sender-meaning, the recipient-meaning and the judge-meaning?

7.11. Well there is one obvious difference, and that is that the three different meanings are located to the three different people. But apart from that, is there any essential differences in form or in subject?

7.12. Consider the sentence 'the girl felt happy' from the previous session (6.2.). One may be inclined to call this a recipient-meaning, since it's about the reactions of the girl. However, if we consider what we've concluded earlier, that might not be the case. It might just have been an interpretation of the sender or the judge. Imagine the girl felt bored, but pretended to act happy because she wanted to show good manner. In this case it would be sender- and/or judge-meaning that 'the girl felt happy' and the recipient-meaning that 'the girl felt bored'.²⁰

7.121. This indicates that there is no essential difference between the three different 'meanings' in form or in subject. You cannot look at a single sentence, and say whether this is a sender-meaning,

concept 'Background' and Bourdieu's concept 'habitus': <http://www.springerlink.com/content/r854052115m43714/>

18 The recipient-meaning can be seen as more or less equal to Austin's concept 'perlocution' - *what comes by an utterance*. Austin describes this in a more narrow sense than what I do, and focus on other things - such as *actions* rather than *reactions*, but essentially it seems to be no major difference in concept (though, it needs further effort to explain this well).

19 These examples enlightens the connection between the judge-meaning and Bourdieu's concept of habitus. Notice how the judge-meaning here is understood in a wider sense than in session 2-3, yet it is the same concept.

20 One may then answer that only the recipient can *know* what she felt, the sender or judge can only *guess* about her feelings. Well, but if you look at reality, you notice people usually don't do any guessing - the sender will often take for granted the girl felt happy, and never doubt about it. And if we consider judge-meanings, why would they permit any expressions of doubt or uncertainty? (Compare; you rarely see a commercial with the slogan "choose our product, it is *probably* better than the other choices!")

recipient-meaning or a judge-meaning, it may be any of these.

7.2. Then, how is the relation between the three different meanings to be understood?

7.21. Imagine a student said in year 2000 that Neptune is the planet furthest off in the solar system, the teacher told her she was wrong and that 'Pluto' was the right answer. By this time teacher's meaning was in line the 'official truth'. In year 2010 same procedure played out; a student said 'Neptune' and teacher responded 'Pluto'. However now the 'official truth' had swayed. What was a sender-meaning in year 2000, had become a judge-meaning in 2010, and the judge-meaning in 2000 was just a recipient-meaning in year 2010.

7.22. This shows that the different meanings are interchangeable; what once is only a sender-meaning may turn in to a judge-meaning and a judge-meaning may turn in to just a recipient-meaning etc.

8. The importance and privileges of each of the three different meanings

8.1. There seems to a need for a single meaning that stands above other meanings.²¹ This is often referred to as the real, actual, correct, objective or true meaning. However as we examine this, we notice the arbitrariness in what people consider as the true (or correct, real etc) meaning. The judge-meaning may be seen as a stand in or deputy in the eventual absence of a real objective meaning.²²

8.2. What we do is that we subjectify what's considered as official truth by calling it a 'judge-truth' or 'judge-meaning'. By doing this we also in a sense discrown the official truth, making it just a meaning among others. Then it stands on equal level with the sender-meaning and the recipient-meaning.

8.3. None of these three people; sender, recipient and judge, have any given prevail over the other two, but each of them have their own special privileges; The sender as the creator of the message knows better than anyone else the conditions under which it was created, the recipient as a recipient of a gift who's free to do whatever s/he wants with what's given to him/her, and the judge with the strongest authority of the context, so strong that it makes people believe that the judge's meaning is the one and only real meaning (making both sender and recipient believe they got to correct themselves after it).

8.4. Imagine a student hands in a story he's written to the teacher. The teacher has got some alternatives, she may (1) treat it according to what's expected of her in the current context, i.e. judge the story according to nationally outworked guidelines,²³ or (2) on the depth try to understand the sender, i.e. by reading closely and ask the student further questions, or (3) use her imagination and do what she pleases, i.e., take the text that's been given to her and fold paper planes.

21 This is quite obvious; acceptance of more than one meaning would quickly lead to misunderstanding. It could for example never be accepted in scientific studies. One can compare this with how Bourdieu describes the doxa: "the unsaid in the field of cultural possibilities, making it seem as if there are not multiple, but only a single possibility" ('possibility' can here be seen as synonymous to 'meaning')

22 However it's not to be understood as a denial of any objective meaning. This text doesn't have any ontological approach. It's only a matter of applying perspectives. Nothing prevents the judge-meaning from being in line with objective meaning (neither does sender-meaning or recipient-meaning).

23 I present this as option number 1, as it probably will be the first thing that crosses her mind.