

Picture-Image, Alleged Smart, and Perception

SERIES INTRODUCTION

Chris Lorenz (2024) recently produced a review essay of Jonas Ahlskog's *The Primacy of Method in Historical Research: philosophy of history and the perspective of meaning*. What Lorenz has to say about Ahlskog's thinking is a good introduction to an emerging field of "Cognition Histories" (and Cognition Sociology). The sociological thinking is rolled into person's historical thinking because, the other new emerging fields, Public History, and Public Sociology, speak *the same language*. As a few lines in Lorenz's abstract, global scholars speak to the older fields of social philosophy-social psychology, the philosophy of history, and the philosophy of social science, which are being revised inside the new fields, **and I am sorry to say, that my Australian history and sociology colleagues (old and new) appear completely *stump* at the cognition:**

Jonas Ahlskog presents a critical and lucid engagement with contemporary philosophies of history and makes a sustained case for a return to the ideas of history and social science as developed by R. G. Collingwood and Peter Winch. What philosophy needs again is, first, a recognition of the "primacy of method"—that is, the insight that *what* one knows about reality depends on *how* one knows it. Second, philosophers need to take "the duality of method" seriously again and to recognize that the modes of explanation in the human sciences and the natural sciences are categorically different from each other—especially now that this difference has been blurred in recent debates about the Anthropocene. Ahlskog's book is thus also a contribution to the classical debate about causal explanation versus meaningful understanding. On closer analysis, however, Ahlskog's "untimely meditations" on "historical method" suffer from an insufficient engagement with counterarguments. A first line of critique challenges the idea that human action cannot be explained causally. A second line of critique challenges the idea that all aspects of human action can be "understood," because the unintended aspects and consequences of individual actions cannot. These require causal explanation. A third line of critique concerns Ahlskog's denial of the fundamental plurality of ideas of history and the social sciences. Squeezing this plurality into one philosophical mold comes at a price. Unintentionally, Ahlskog's "untimely meditations" also show that much. (Lorenz 2024:1)

Cognition Histories. Essay 2 of 3-Part Series

In my cognition history and sociology studies I agree with the challenges that Lorenz has stated. In this series I explain, from various overlapping fields (multidisciplinary-interdisciplinary education), the difficulty for persons to understand even their own cognition; to understand:

1. Key and Relevant Concepts
2. Picture-Image and Language
3. The Politics of Thinking
4. Neuroscience and Perception
5. The Humanities Discipline as Primary

The three-part series has a postscript whereby there is a demonstration of the practice for understanding persons having to live through a brutal period of a confused economy.

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Picture-Image and Language



Figure 1. Featured Image: August 10, 2012. I arrived home this afternoon to a wonderful surprise provided by my lovely daughter, Genevieve . I walked into my office and my chair was missing, and in its place was a box. I said to myself, “where’s my chair?” and “what is this box doing here?” Genevieve had given her dad a new office chair. What a kind and beautiful daughter!

The world has completely changed in 12 years for me (as “pictured”), although you can point out unimportant perennial themes, such as the *wall items* are the same in the office (pictured above). It goes to how the ‘stupid’ read images in an image-obsessed culture. There are too many (pre)assumptions in a person’s thinking for/in the perception of an image, and that without historical knowledge ([Australian Historical Association](#)), the fool population are stupid, and lifelong learners need to say it, and say it loud.

Cognition Histories. Essay 2 of 3-Part Series

Manganiello (1983) in an article entitled, "Ethics and Aesthetics in 'The Picture of Dorian Gray'" wrote:

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray* Wilde examines frankly the consequences of substituting an aesthetic for an ethical conscience. He raises a fundamental question about the aesthete's creed: how can art, which is imbued with good and evil, be both aesthetically beautiful and morally destructive? Lord Henry Wotton uses Wilde's language of paradox and the circular and contradictory logic of *The Critic as Artist*, but he cannot be taken simply as Wilde's mouthpiece. He ultimately challenges the basic premise of the book, that of transformation. Dorian and Basil Hallward also reveal aspects of Wilde's psyche. Basil through his portrait and Lord Henry through his word painting both recreate Dorian in their own image and likeness. This narcissism, whether linguistic or sexual, acts as a central metaphor for indulging in sterile and fruitless actions. Wilde compounds his book with not one but three versions of the Faust legend to reinforce this point. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is at once an attack on dualism (the soul/body, art/life split) and an exposure of the aesthetic attempt at reconciliation as a widening of that split. (25)

What this means is that persons of the fool population **do not understand** what they think they see in the Image. It is *only* in **the open conversation** that we "discover" (a moment of 'revelation') the understanding/meaning of the Image.

It is not only in "art" that this is true. A long time ago, Elkin (1946) wrote: "The [soldiers'] language reflects (1) the soldier's self-image of solidarity, freedom from social restraint, and strength and (2) his attitude to authority. The expressions indicate that the soldier dislikes authority but accepts it with varying degrees of resignation, bitterness, and satire." (414)

The Politics of Thinking

Very morning, when I wake up, I hear on the media, on the national broadcaster (ABC) *even*, the *nonsense*. We're expected to believe that "this" person is "smart", that the economy is "smart", and that "A.I." is smart, all based in false assumptions. And it is not only the "media" in how persons of the fool population think. The *Academic Lecture* itself falls for what Friesen (2011) calls a "Transmedial Pedagogical Form." Friesen brings out the benefits of human lecture spaces against the online experience:

The lecture has been much maligned as a pedagogical form, yet it persists and even flourishes today in the form of the podcast, the TED talk, and the "smart" lecture hall. This article examines the lecture as a pedagogical genre, as "a site where differences between media are negotiated" (Franzel) as these media coevolve. This examination shows the lecture as bridging oral communication with writing and newer media technologies, rather than as being superseded by newer electronic and digital forms. The result is a remarkably adaptable and robust genre that combines textual record and ephemeral event, and that is capable of addressing a range of different demands and circumstances, both practical and epistemological. (95)

What Friesen overlooks is that the benefits of the Transmedial Pedagogical Form, as technology, **does not address the traditional-historical problem of propaganda** which does not go away, since the technology merely promotes instrumental rationality, and there is no due consideration, *for the fool audience*, of the lecturer's actual mission, purpose, and content claims of the lecture; existing as an unquestioning *subscriber*. We have a fool population of technicians, wilful ignorant of the content to **question**, of why, why not, and who?

Neuroscience and Perception

We need to say,

“...you-I-we are *projecting* into the image what you-I-we **think** you-I-we perceive, but the measure of what is **correct** in that perception, is to the extent you-I-we know the history, and know it because you-I-we have opened your-mine-our mind to *open learning* and prepared to put aside your-mine-our presumptions (the prejudices of assumptions).” (authors constructed quote from Buch 2021, 2023, 2024)

For example, in the picture (above), are now the absence of persons which changes completely what is perceived in the picture (image). The key concept here is **perception**. Nanay (2017):

...argue that what we pretheoretically take to be pain is **partly** constituted by sensory stimulation-driven pain processing and **partly** constituted by mental imagery. This general picture can explain some problematic cases of pain perception, for example, phantom-limb pain, and it also has important consequences for some recent philosophical debates about the nature and content of pain. (485; my emphasis)

....

How does the conceptual framework I argued for above help with this debate? I want to argue that it poses some challenges for imperativism [¹], but not for indicativism [²]. I do not think that it provides a knock-down argument against imperativism, but it draws attention to a number of questions imperativism would need to answer. (493)

¹ Imperativism proposes to explain affective phenomenal character by appeal to imperative content, a kind of intentional content that directs rather than describes.

² Indicative. 1. serving as a sign or indication of something. "having recurrent dreams is not necessarily indicative of any psychological problem"; denoting a mood of verbs expressing simple statement of a fact.

...

In short, if what we pretheoretically take to be pain perception is really a mixture between nociceptor-driven pain processing and mental imagery, then imperativists about pain would need to say much more about a number of details that are not made explicit in their account. And, as we have seen, indicativism has a straightforward way of accommodating the picture I argued for in this paper, according to which pain is partly constituted by mental imagery. (495)

In examining the neuro-philosophy of the above quotation in basic terms of ontology, reduction in the science cannot explain the integration of thought and emotion, and the explanation can really only come down to the language of science, the only language we have to describe the brain. Indicativism is to *denote*, meaning here that all we have is the language of the experience, and not an affirmative ontology. The cases of *hard rationalism in the politics* of attacking another person's claim is **pure nonsense**.

What is frustrating for the teacher in attempting to unmark the prejudice-dismissal thinking of the student towards Cognition History and Sociology is that, the knowledge of how personal imagery shifts around perception, ***has been known for some time*** (e.g., Noll *et al* 1985, Clark 1986, Van De Bogart 1990, Howard 1996, Behrmann 2000, McMahon 2002). We have to ask *why persons in the fool population cannot perceive such influence* upon (each) their lives. Is it **wilful ignorance** or is it **cultural anti-intellectualism**?

Cognition Histories. Essay 2 of 3-Part Series

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