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Working paper:

Honoring and violating intersubjectivity:
The choreography of everyday life

Finn Tschudi
Box 1094, University of Oslo, Norway

Sigrid Sandsberg
The Social Insurance Review Board of Norway
Grønlandsleiret 27, Oslo Dep., Oslo 1, Norway

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Introduction: philosophical views on making sense of what is going on around us

Our major concern is to heighten awareness of everyday happenings - including seemingly innocuous uses of language. The focus is on the way we implicitly define self and the other in social intercourse, to what extent do we honor each other as full human beings, and what may the consequences of respecting/not respecting each other be?

During the last two decades Rommetveit and coworkers have done a variety of both empirical and theoretical studies which clearly show the inadequacy of the objectivistic tradition with its emphasis on "literal meaning", and neglect of the social context when approaching language. Rommetveit’s "Dialogically based social-cognitive approach to human cognition and communication" is summarized in Rommetveit (1989).

We will argue that his framework can be extended by a stronger emphasis on pluralism in everyday life (where we will use humour and hypnosis as illustrative examples), and that more explicit attention to the relationship aspect of communication may serve to highlight clinical and social implications of a "dialogic approach".

A major source of inspiration for our work is provided by the epochal work of Lakoff (1987), see also Lakoff and Johnson (1980), this work is highly congenial to Rommetveit’s.

Lakoff gives a broad perspective on two major strands in contemporary Western philosophy: Objectivism and subjectivism.

One of his major tasks is a radical attack on objectivism. Briefly: In objectivism the world is made up of objects, and we understand objects in terms of categories and concepts. Categories have essential defining properties. Only objective knowledge is real knowledge, and words have fixed meanings. But consider: "He’s a real genius": Has this an objective meaning? Uttered sarcastically the speaker intends to convey the opposite meaning (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 207).

Subjectivism is, on the other hand, related to the romantic tradition. It underscores imagination, and "humanness". An underlying assumption is that experience has no natural structure, and so there can be no natural external constraints upon meaning and experience. Modern offshoots are existentialism, and we might add, postmodernism and radical constructivism. 1

Lakoff major concern is not, however, just to attack objectivism, but to offer what he calls experiential realism as a viable alternative to the stultifying dichotomy "objectivism / subjectivism".

Experience is structured in terms of experiential gestalts
where the structures are not arbitrary but emerge from: "the
totality of human experience and everything that plays a role in
it - the nature of our bodies, our genetically inherited
capacities, our modes of physical functioning in the world, our
social organization" (p. 267). Experiential realism characterize
meaning in terms of embodiment, i. e. the nature of our bodies
and physical and cultural environment thus imposes a structure on
our experiences. Recurrent experiences are the basis for
categories in the form of gestalts.

Lakoff points out that we understand experience metaphorically
when we use a gestalt from one domain to structure experiences in
another domain. The essence of metaphor is understanding one kind
of thing in terms of another. This view goes beyond conventional
either/or thinking as for instance the following quotation
implies: "language is theorized as constitutive rather than
representation" (Lather, 1989). In experiential realism
language both reflects and creates reality.

Lakoff shows that a variety of metaphors are related to our
bodily being in the world. As an example he uses the CONTAINER
scheme where the structural elements are: - INTERIOR, BOUNDARY
and EXTERIOR. We experience our bodies as containers, there is
our body, a boundary separating us from the world, and something
exterior to our bodies. Lakoff further argues that abstract
reasoning in the sense of "something objective" completely
independent of our bodies is not possible. To take but one
example: Set theory, which some mathematicians claim is
fundamental to mathematics is derived form the CONTAINER SCHEME.

Furthermore the conduit metaphor for communication builds on the
CONTAINER scheme. This metaphor implies that words carry
meanings in themselves and that messages are sent as packages
independent of context and speaker. For ex.: 'This idea should
not be difficult to get across to the reader' (cf. Lakoff and
Johnson, 1980, ch. 3). The conduit metaphor may further be seen
as a basis for objectivistic conceptions of language, here
Chomsky is a prime example.

From the point of view of experiential realism we are struggling
to grasp a real world out there, but Lakoff has strong arguments
against any attempt to render a formal account - independent of
our bodily existence - of this world. He argues that there can
be no unequivocal representation of this world, even mathematics
cannot imply uniqueness (ch. 20).

This position is highly congenial to Kelly’s point of departure
in his seminal "The psychology of personal constructs" (1955). In
the first chapter of this book he outlines his philosophical
position: "constructive alternativism" - with the implied
pluralism. Furthermore Kelly’s elaboration of "construct": "the
spectacles through which we regard the world" implies far more
than simply a verbal label. Construing involves our whole bodies
- being in the world.

We find it especially valuable that Lakoff, a professional
linguist, underscores the necessity of seeing language as rooted in our bodily experiences.

Premises for intersubjectivity

Intersubjectivity does not require any specific elaboration within an objectivist paradigm. Using the conduit metaphor communication implies sending packages. There may be technical discussions about the most effective ways of sending messages (packages) (cf. information theory). If there are conflicts a dominant paradigm seems to be "win-loose", or to put it in different parlance "zero-sum games". This is brought forth by Lakoff-Johnson's elaboration of the all too prevalent "argument is war" metaphor - this clearly implies a winner and a looser.

Intersubjectivity requires a more elaborate description within the paradigm of experiential realism.

Intersubjectivity may be seen in terms of Lakoff's "LINK schema": In social relations there are two (or more) participants, (Lakoff uses the term "entities") and LINK connecting them (p. 274). "Our first link is the umbilical cord. Throughout infancy and early childhood, we hold onto our parents and other things, either to secure our location or theirs. To secure the location of two things relative to on another, we use such things as string, rope or other means of connection." The logic of this scheme implies that: "If A is linked to B, then A is constrained by and dependent upon B". (p.274). We may add that this schema both implies difference and union. We take for granted an "inborn sociality" - we strive to reach out towards others.

Understanding emerges from interaction, we can not take for granted any unequivocal givens "out there". Following Rommetveit (1974, 1989) a precondition for intersubjectivity is to establish / create a common here and now. This requires offering negotiations and establishing contracts. Inter-subjectivity can not be taken for granted but is an ongoing process.

It should be understood that we do not use "contract/negotiation" in the more formal sense of this term (e.g. institutionalized wage negotiations). In many cases the dominant part of the interchange may be by means of "non-verbal communication". If there is a clear conflict situation (police having to interfere in domestic violence, doctors faced with aggressive drug abusers wanting drugs etc.) "contracts offered" may be conveyed by means of bodily posture, tone of voice etc.

A good example of reconstruing (negotiating/transforming) a stultifying zero-sum structure is provided by Wertheimer's (1945) charming example of "two boys playing badminton". One of the players was clearly superior to the other, but both experienced strong frustrations by the unevenness of the games. Wertheimer acted as a catalyst in transforming the situation by the simple suggestion of changing the rules of the game to a cooperative endeavour: they should rather strive to maximize the number of
strikes which kept the ball in the air. "Keep the ball moving" may be a good metaphor for intersubjectivity! Lakoff & Johnson — in line with Kelly’s "invitational mood" (Tschudi & Sandsberg, 1984): "Imagine a culture where an argument is viewed as a dance.." (p. 5).

Within the objectivistic paradigm sentences or "what is said" have (or ought to have?) literal, unequivocal meanings. This ignores the importance of a shared social context for intersubjectivity. From our perspective any sentence may imply a multiplicity of meanings, only knowledge of the social context can help to "disambiguate" "what is meant" from "what is said". As Kelly puts it (1955, p. 200): "The sharing of personal experience is a matter of construing the other person’s experience, and not merely a matter of having him hand it to us across the desk" (as the conduit metaphor would imply).

An example elaborated in great detail by Rommetveit (1989) is a married couple in Scarsdale who walk past a garden, and upon noticing Mr. Smith mowing his lawn the wife says:

"Mr. Smith is mowing his lawn"

The intended meaning of this seemingly simple sentence will rarely if ever be a simple description of an objective state of affairs. (cf. Lakoff: Frequent examples used by linguists and philosophers like "The cat is on the mat", is atypical of language in use). Inspired by Rommetveits analysis here are some examples of what the intended message might be:

"Mr. Smith is showing good Scarsdale citizenship" (there may be an implied contrast, what about you?)
"Mr. Smith is avoiding his wife"

Mr. Smith is a model of physical exercise (perhaps a friendly pointing at a budding stomach again implying, "what about you?")

Without knowing the social context, including the history of the interaction of the married couple, (and taking into account intonation, and accompanying non-verbal behaviour) "what is meant" will be hopelessly ambiguous.

A union is created as an ongoing process. We have all experienced not being part of a union and thus not understanding "what is going on" if we find ourselves entering in the middle of a conversation. We may then understand the words, but feel at loss to understand the meaning because we lack knowledge of how the specific social context has been created.

Complete sharing of a common here and now is an unattainable ideal. Since we have different experiences and develop our understanding on the basis of partly different metaphors, even to reach a partial mutual understanding may be hard work. If we are too fixed in our metaphorical thinking, this will hinder mutual cooperation. As an example: Historically a serious stumbling block towards better understanding between USSR and USA may have been a persisting image of the other as the enemy.
The emphasis on "negotiations and contracts" implies that any situation is inherently ambiguous, and may thus be given a variety of meanings. This is certainly in line with constructive alternativism (pluralism).

But how well does this account fit our everyday mundane existence? Our next step is to argue that the ubiquitous ambiguity is hidden by taken for granted social 'traffic rules'. Rommetveit (1989, p. 3) states that: "Aspects of that 'external world' generated on the basis of firmly shared ecological-cultural background conditions tend to become objectified and acquire the status of shared social realities." This perspective, however, leads to an underemphasis on the precarious nature of 'shared social realities'. We wish to point to humour and hypnosis as two phenomena which on occasion may 'de-objectify' 'shared social realities' by revealing implicit premises and definitions, and thus further highlight pluralistic ambiguity.

Everyday life - common set of premises taken for granted

Kelly provides an excellent point of departure for discussing everyday life. He uses driving on the highway to illustrate different levels at which we can construe what other people are thinking: "The orderly, extremely complex and precise weaving of traffic is really an amazing example of people predicting each other's behaviour through subsuming each other's perception of a situation." (1955, p. 95.) This, however, may be seen as construing the other on a low level as implied by further quoting Kelly: "if we are to understand oncoming drivers at higher levels, we must stop traffic and get out to talk with them" (p. 96).

We see a quite general point in the above analysis: There is no reason to downgrade our mundane low levels of construing. Everyday transactions would be impossible or come to an impasse if we had to "stop traffic". 2

A large part of our everyday life is governed by agreed upon "traffic rules". This makes "negotiations" about a common here and now unnecessary; what is at issue is handed down to us by societal rules. Society provides the participants with a common set of premises, and there is thus no need to negotiate about underlying premises. The outcome of a particular encounter may be an issue for negotiation, but the kind of situation - e.g. the occurence of a traffic collision - is not at issue.

Humour and confusion techniques: implicit premises challenged

One important function of humour is to challenge everyday fixation of background conditions and perspective. We are thus amused by the behaviour of Sid Krassman, a character in Southern's (1970) novel who:
stepping into a crowded elevator might intone with tremendous authority: "I suppose you're all wondering why I called you together."

Koestler's (1978) farranging analysis of humour is useful in our framework. The structural aspect he sees as a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for humour is a "sudden clash between two mutually exclusive codes", and this clash "compels us to see a situation in two selfconsistent but mutually incompatible frames of reference" (p. 112). Our example illustrates this analysis; the usual construction or frame for seeing persons in an elevator is a a more or less random collection of persons, whereas Sid Krassman deliberately violates or challenges this frame, by acting from a contrasting frame: a purposeful meeting.

Koestler coins the term bisociation to emphasize two simultaneous frames and he offers his analysis as a back door to creativity where getting a new perspective is essential.

This perspective on humour serves to bring forth that situations we ordinarily take for granted can be construed from quite different vantage points. This of course, is very much in line with constructive alternativism.

We venture to suggest that any everyday situation can be "opened up" for alternative constructions, and further study of humour may well serve as a front door in this respect.

Opening up everyday situations for alternative constructions may have very strong effects. This is illustrated in detail by Milton Erickson's confusion techniques where he - partly exercising his own sense of humour - acts in ways completely incompatible with the "taken for granted" definition, and this may produce confusion to the extent of cataleptic states. As we previously have discussed (Tschudi and Rommetveit, 1982) if our implicit premises are suddenly and strongly challenged this may "uproot" us. How hypnosis then can be valuable in "rerooting" (reconstruction) is discussed in detail by e.g. Lankton (1983). Here the point is that confusion techniques may provide another front door to constructive alternativism regarding everyday situations.

Usually we are not aware of the vast possibilities for alternative constructions in everyday life. As Berger (1977, ch. 1) discusses we take the reality of our social world for granted. But on closer analysis maintaining a stable world is an achievement, an ongoing process. Our social world needs to be validated, perhaps because of an ever present glimmer of suspicion as to its social manufacture and relativity. (Tschudi, 1983). Reading the morning newspapers, watching television, etc. serve to validate "the widest coordinates of my world" It is as if we are saying to ourselves: "The world exists, and there is continuity in my relation to it". Conversely deprivation of this form of validation may lead to serious disturbances.
Shor (1979, p. 122-123) states that: "Normal everyday life is characterized by there being in the immediate background of attention a network of cognitive understandings about reality which serves as a context or frame of reference within which all ongoing experiences are interpreted. If such a context of generalized understandings were lacking, ongoing experiences could not have their abstract interpretative significance. This usual context of generalized understandings may be called the generalized reality orientation (GRO)."

We now claim that the GRO is to a large extent socially mediated. Rommetveit (1989) states that "The developing human mind is dialogically constituted" (p. 4). We would like to add that the adult human mind is also dialogically sustained, and that 'a common here and now' presupposes both an explicit and implicit definition of the other as a person in her/his totality. This implies paying particular attention to the relationship aspect of communication.

Content and relationship both implied in all communication

Watzlawick et. al. (1967) emphasize that communication always involves both a content and a relationship level. At the relationship level the sender offers a definition of the kind of relation, or using Lakoff's metaphor: the type and intensity of a LINK. This proposed definition also involves a self-definition: "This is how I see myself" and we would like to add "in relation to you and to the world". In Kellian terms this implies that core constructs "those that govern a person's maintenance processes—that is those by which he maintains his identity and existence" are involved in all communication.

Watzlawick et. al. provide several examples of how the same content from a sender may propose very different types of relationships (symmetric, asymmetric, complementary), and the main focus of the book is on the ongoing negotiations (or power struggles) on how a given relationship is to be defined, and the clinical importance of laying bare the patterns underlying such negotiations.

In the present context the important point is to underscore the LINK aspect of communication, and its ubiquitous presence. What is often thought of as "sheer expression of ideas" also has the "function of constantly rebuilding the self concept, and offering this selfconcept to others for ratification" (p. 84).

As Bateson (1951, p. 213) puts it: "When A communicates with B the mere act of communicating can carry the implicit statement 'we are communicating'. In fact this may be the most important message that is sent and received [the relationship level]. The wisecracks of adolescents and the smoother but no less stylized conversation of adults are only occasionally concerned with the giving and receiving of objective information, mostly the conversations of leisure hours exist because people need to know that they are in touch with others."
In more technical terms this underscores the importance of what Malinowski (1923) emphasized as phatic communication: "emplying or involving speech for the purpose of sharing or revealing feelings or establishing an atmosphere for sociability rather than for communicating ideas" (Webster's dictionary). Phatic communication, we claim, is a basic aspect of all communication, sadly lost from view in most contemporary studies of language in use.

We see Rommetveit as mainly being concerned with content in his analysis of intersubjectivity ("joint attention to a set of aspects of some state of affairs"), and not explicitly concerned with the relationship aspect which we see as related to core constructs and GRO.

**Everyday life - core constructs as ground, peripheral constructs as figure.**

Usually we are not aware that core constructs are involved in everyday communication. Using the well known figure/ground metaphor we may say that the content ("what's in the news, will it rain to day, will you do the dishes" etc. etc.) is equivalent to **figure** in visual perception, and mutual validation (invalidation) of core constructs is equivalent to **ground**.

Core constructs as figure in everyday communication

Watzlawick et. al. emphasize that much of disturbed and distressing communication can be seen as communication where the definition of the relation is present as "figure" and the focus of quarrels (who are supposed to decide what). There are, however, less malignant types of interchanges where core constructs are focal. One example is "being in love". When commenting upon a movie jointly seen both partners will typically be more aware of how wonderful the relation (and the other) is than of the specific content of the movie. Bannister and Fransella (1986, p. ) provide a good point of departure for further studies of love by tentatively defining it as "active elaboration of core role structure".

Returning to mundane activities, it is probably the exception rather than the rule that our "being in the world" is fully validated in everyday encounters. What you may construe as being of central importance for you may be more or less trivial for the other and vice versa. But since most of us (most of the time) are fairly well grounded in our existence, this is usually not of great concern. Most of us get sufficient validation (or strokes to use an apt expression from transactional analysis, Steiner, 1974) - or to use a Kellian metaphor, our core constructs get sufficient sprinkling, "nourishment" to sustain us.

Conversely we have "buffers" helping us to sustain invalidation. In Kelly's terms: For healthy persons core constructs are not too
permeable, otherwise one would be "likely to see too many new event as having deeply personal significance", perhaps leading to paranoia (Kelly 1955, p. 482).

In the next section we discuss some cases where the relationship aspect - the implicit definition of the other - is particularly important, and may have immediate consequences. The final sections carries the argument further by considering implicitly downgrading definitions which may have less immediate, but nevertheless serious consequences.

On the clinical importance of heightened awareness of core constructs as ground

For those who society does not construe as responsible players on the societal arena, the relationship aspect is likely to be of particular and immediate importance, since "buffers" may be poorly developed. Incidentally we do not subscribe to any view that such constructions mainly reflect critically on society (e.g. Scheff, 1966). There are usually good reasons for barring some persons from full participation in everyday life (cf. Gullestad and Tschudi, 1981).

Here we will flesh out the general argument by considering two groups who are barred from full participation in normal everyday life: so-called "deteriorated schizophrenics" and "borderline" inmates sentenced for severe violence. For such persons the relationship aspect of all encounters (the implied definition of the client that the staff provides the clients with) may be of vital concern.

This was brought to the foreground in a discussion one of us had with Don Bannister about the most ambitious and important part of his project on schizophrenia, the attempts at serial validation. This implied arranging situations so that incipient constructions about regularity in social life could be consistently validated, thus making the social world of schizophrenics less chaotic.

In previous work Bannister had argued that serial invalidation was involved in the schizophrenic process and he was thus putting his theory to the crucial test of whether it might provide guidance for the basic project of trying to reverse the schizophrenic process; to bring the schizophrenics back to normal, everyday life (cf. Bannister et. al. 1975). While he pointed to hopeful signs of improvements, he readily admitted to less than complete success.

In retrospect he could point to a forgiveable naivete: it was far too optimistic to hope for great changes when his staff only visited the hospitals for a few hours a week. A real test of the theory, he pointed out, would require joint cooperation by all the staff, twenty four hours a day. Otherwise good work in a limited session might easily be undone, or not followed up the rest of the time. In the present context it is even more important that insufficient attention was given to the
schizophrenic in her/his totality, and too much emphasis on limited areas. 3

The vital necessity of how the other is (implicitly) defined is highlighted by considering a project in a Norwegian prison, established in order to rehabilitate prison inmates sentenced for violence, and having a "borderline" diagnosis. It proved difficult, if not impossible, to train some of the staff to react to the budding responsible, "adult" part of the prisoner. As an example: when one of the inmates refused to wash the floors (as he was supposed to do) one of the staff ironically appealed to his "muscles" (he was a body builder). It was lost on this staff member that appeal to the more narcissistic parts ("muscles, body building") could serve no useful purpose, whereas for instance: "let's do it together" (built on a totally different definition of the situation and of the relation self/other) might have been a small step to bring forth social cooperation. As another example frequent strong verbal aggression was treated as something which should be punished instead of as an occasion for heightening the inmate's awareness of his inner life, to help him construe his emotions in ways which could point to alternatives to violence.

Working with such clients require the utmost sensibility to the client's "being in the world". We know of an incidence in a mental hospital where a smile which was interpreted as ironic lead to a life-threatening knife-stabbing. Put otherwise: some people have no tolerance for what they construe as violating their being in the world, (core constructs are too permeable) and must thus receive far more professional concern than the rest of us.

What is at stake is not only the specific behaviour, and how to deal with this, but the implied "choreography" as Åse Nilsen, (deeply involved in the project, personal communication) has expressed it. This metaphor conveys a strong imagery of simultaneously paying the utmost attention both to minute details of everyday encounters and to the context in its totality, with an overarching concern for aesthetics.

For both inmates and staff it was a vital concern to establish a common here and now both non-verbally and verbally: to try to shape a chaotic experience into words, using language both to capture and reshape the world. 4

If an ironic smile may lead to stabbing, the other side of the coin would be that a warm smile addressed at a casual stranger, may on occasion prove sufficient to restore viability of life, and reverse a stranger’s decision to take one’s own life.

We have argued that more attention should be paid to the implicit definitions of relations when working with severely disturbed persons. The next step is to try to heighten awareness of implicitly downgrading definitions of (to use Mao’s phrase): "half the sky" - women - in ordinary language.
Sexism and cognitive imperialism: implicitly downgrading the other

Consider the simple statement: "Girls ought to get as much education as boys", used in a survey of "traditional sex role attitudes" (Holter, 1970).

Following Tversky's (1977) analysis of similarity statements (see also Lakoff on metaphors) Holter's statement is asymmetric. What is mentioned in the first part of such statements is technically called a variant ("girls" above), what is mentioned in the last part a standard, or reference point. ("boys" above).

The asymmetry is brought forth by the simple expedient of reversing the statement. While "girls ought to .." sounds perfectly natural, the reverse statement "boys ought to get as much education as girls" has an odd sound to it. This is brought forth even clearer by considering asymmetric statements from quite different domains: "97 is about the same as 100", sounds perfectly natural while "100 is about the same as 97" definitely sounds odd. (Systematic evidence on experienced asymmetries in "naturalness" from both Norwegian and American studies is discussed in detail elsewhere, Tschudi, 1979). Qualitative comments made by participants in this study point to the possible consciousness-raising function of presenting a variety of asymmetrical statements as the above. The following quotation serves to illustrate the seductive power of language:

"Forms of expression may to a dangerously high degree be determined by the surroundings and only to a small extent by my own opinion."

"I must admit that as a feminist it was difficult to rate as "more natural" sentences which I knew would not promote rock bottom feminist issues, but which nevertheless intuitively had to be admitted as "natural". For instance: 'men are as domestic as women'. This just admits to an 'oldfashioned' attitude on my part, in that I admit that women are domestic, concerned with looks etc."

Comments as the above raise the unsettling possibility that even if you consciously want to and think you transcend stifling sex roles, you may yet in your use of language serve as a carrier of the very attitudes you want to transcend; like persons carrying and infecting other with a virus, without being ill themselves.

When saying "women are as intelligent as men" the implication is that men are standards. In such pairs 'women/man' is linguistically similar to 'short/long' in that "man" - as "long" - is the unmarked member of the construct. By definition the unmarked member also serves as a name or label for the whole construct (we say "how long are you"; "how short are you" sounds odd.) Similarly we may still see in published works: "when I use 'man' it is just a linguistic convenience, it should be understood that this refers to both women and men". Adams-Webber (1982) has summarized a variety of evidence that the unmarked
member of a pair generally receives higher evaluative ratings than the marked member. (Notice that in cases where women are standards (as "domestic") the domain is generally not highly evaluated.)

We have just touched a small corner of sex biased use of language. For reviews and discussions see Henley (1977), Blakar (1979, 1989). In the present context sex biased language may be seen from the point of view of "cognitive imperialism/respect" (Berger, 1976). Cognitive respect means that one takes with utmost seriousness the way in which others define reality, and is based on "a postulate of the equality of all empirically based worlds of consciousness". As discussed above sex biased language implicitly denies such equality (men are the standards in the most valued cultural domains). There is thus - buried-in our everyday language - barriers for women to fully elaborating their lives.

Linguistic structures may mediate far more immediately pernicious consequences than what may be apparent in the above analysis.

Lakoff argues that "animal metaphors" in connection with sex may be involved as one contributing factor in rape. He gives numerous examples of how sex and violence are closely linked in the Western mind (without even considering pornography!). In a formula his argument can be stated: "Anger + lust = rape." His analysis can be carried further.

From our point of view degrading of humanness is implicit in "animal" metaphors ("bitch", "chicken"). There is a duality in this degradation. The first step is degrading the other ("bitch") - but what should be underscored is that this in the final analysis also leads to a degrading of the offender. Rape is prototypical of the antitheses of good social interaction: there is no negotiation, no sharing. In the extreme asymmetry of rape there is no LINK, since this presupposes both contact and differentiation. A further sad fact about rape is that society is all too inclined to "blame the victim".

Lakoff points at the frightening fact that even if we find the conceptualizations involved in rape abhorrent, (his basis for this is linguistic analysis of interviews with rapists) still they are all too easily assimilated (cf. "carriers" above). What is important is that the conceptualizations partly are governed by implicit structures which are taken for granted and mediate behaviour. This seems to be common for men and women.

What we find missing in Lakoff's otherwise excellent analysis is, however, an elaboration of alternative metaphorical structures. Many metaphors concerning sexuality has its basis in masculine reality, such as allusions to war, weapons and conquests, and hunting. Granted: metaphors from feminine experience are in daily use (birth, breasts, midwives' work). Still our impression is that such metaphors are understood from an outsider's point of view.
In talking about midwives' work attention is usually directed at the role of a "helper", and not to the deep female experience of nourishing another body inside one's own (fusion), the birth labour which deals with the capacity to "let go", the necessity of cutting the umbilical cord, and to accept that part of oneself has turned into an autonomous being - a baby to take care of and nourish.

We are not the first to use Henrik Ibsen as an example of a writer with deep understanding of the world of women. In his play "The lady from the sea" the leading character Elida in the midst of an existential crisis tries to get across to her husband that he can "have her" provided that he sets her free. She can choose to be linked to him only if he is willing to release her of the existing strings between them.

As we see it the same paradoxical pattern is strongly embedded in the early relationship between mother and baby. The balance between closeness and separation is apparent when the baby reaches out for her mother in order to get the safety of knowing both where she is and where the mother is, constituting a constant confrontation between "holding on to" and "letting go". The "choreography" reveals a close parallell to what is essential for reciprocity in human relations.

The profound physical experience unique to women does not seem to have entered metaphorical domains as the world of men has. This - we think - is a serious imbalance. Lakoff provides a valuable task by pointing out destructive consequences of "male dominance". A more complete analysis, however, would make it not less important with constructive contributions from the female realm. Creativity is highly called for in the realm of how to jointly articulate closeness and separation!

Comments on cognitive imperialism and the role of the "expert"

Finally we want to elaborate the perspective on "cognitive imperialism" in a different domain. It is not always evident that 'experts' (serving as consultants, therapists, or generally 'helpers') may unwittingly perpetuate their own models, and that this may have harmful consequences for clients.

The importance of not imposing one's own perspective is the focus in Bråten's (1983) book. He has a refreshingly critical view on "Socratic dialogues", often presented to us as an ideal (p. 166) Closer analysis reveals that rhetoric persuasion - as discussed in Gorgias - is very far from a balanced, symmetric conversation allowing both parties to explore their own construct system. It is Socrates who guides and draws the boundaries for the conversation, and he also poses his questions in a way which anticipates the outcome. Socrates concludes by advising the other to listen to wise men until you are able to think and speak for yourself.
Bråten coins the term "model power" and his main concern is the pernicious effects of the status of "expert" in negotiations. This usually leads to the client - who may have a less persuasive model of the world - taking over the model of the expert, and thus being barred from elaboration of his/her own model. He gives numerous examples and has a variety of suggestions for encouraging a more pluralistic outlook.

Perhaps the saddest contemporary illustration of Bråten's perspective is what has happened as consequences of - perhaps well-intentioned - programs for "aiding the developing countries". It is difficult, if at all possible, to find examples of Galtung's (1978) suggestions that all projects should be bilateral, the "developed" countries should also be recipients of help, not just act as "benevolent" helpers. The consequences of this onesidedness are evident: the "developing countries" being ever more saddled in insurmountable debt, decrease in conditions of life, and usually with extremely rich elites, taking on the values of Western society, but often sadly estranged from the rest of the population.

We need viable metaphors from all the downtrodden whether women or non-Western cultures. This is necessary in order to get a more healthy and balanced choreography.
NOTES

1. These developments may, we think, have quite dangerous implications. Downplaying the notion of "truth" may open for abuse of power, this is argued further elsewhere (Tschudi, 1989a).

2. As previously argued (Tschudi and Rommetveit, 1982, p. 236-238) there is an optimal level of construing the other. This provides a perspective on Weber's classical arguments in support of bureaucracy. Formal handling of complaints may be a guarantee against nepotism, bribery and various forms of injustice or inequity.

3. A critical comment on some PCP research

When referring to Bannister's work on schizophrenia the main issue is not the content of this theory, but his emphasis on paying detailed attention to what is happening to and with the clients during the entire day. From this point of view I read with sadness later PCP contributions to the literature on schizophrenia. One typically finds discussions about "the generality of inconsistency in schizophrenic" (Dingemans et. al., 1983) or "Cognitive imbalance in schizophrenia" (Carroll, 1983) but these reports seem to us ("schizophrenically"!) disassociated from the schizophrenics "being in the world". What is missing is attention to the microstructuring of daily life ("choreography").

This is not to downgrade grid work (where I have done yeoman's duty, Tschudi, 1989b) but to point to the utmost necessity of combining qualitative clinical work with quantitative methods, Tschudi, 1989a). Put otherwise: what should be figure: "the schizophrenics being in the world" disappears from view, and we are left with "disembodied" research. Rhetorically: where is the PCP work on schizophrenia which builds on the field notes of Bannister and his coworkers in the project on serial validation?

Wedding grid hypotheses to detailed clinical observations, and further putting the hypotheses to the litmus test of whether they aid reconstruction are to us essential. Somehow, somewhere, the batton passed on by Bannister seems to have been lost.

4. Is it redundant to add that this task not only is vital, but also extremely difficult?
We will be redundant. This project had a tragic ending, a prisoner raped and killed one of the staff and the project was closed down. The ensuing public discussion has highlighted the inadequate way the project was planned, see Falck (1989) for a review of this project. Little, if any attention, was paid to the vital necessity of training the staff. This, we think, reflect a more general insensitivity to the importance of the definitions of self and other being offered in everyday encounters.
References


