

PICTURES, CONTENT, AND NORMATIVE STATUS

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Upon different cases of pictorial representations, I will argue that despite of being nonpropositionally structured, pictures of different kinds can be decomposed into constituent parts that can be recombined in systematic ways in order to form further thoughts; and thus have conceptual content. These considerations challenge not only the thesis that there is a necessary connection between conceptual thought and linguistic medium, but also the thesis that a propositional structure is necessary for conceptual thought. By means of this analysis, I will explore some of the ways in which different kind of representational mediums differs from – and relate to – each other in descriptive as well as in normative manners.

SPACE AND ACTION FOR REASONING

Valeria Giardino (CNRS/Archives Henri Poincaré, Nancy)

Much of the research on human semantic and inferential competence has focused on language as a powerful tool for scaffolding memory and structuring reasoning. However, this almost exclusive focus has risked undermining the comprehension of other non-linguistic tools for thought. In particular, cognitive artefacts such as diagrams or sketches are widespread and persistent in human culture but little is known about conditions for their successful use.

The present talk will address the question of the cognitive capacities and predispositions that are required in order to invent, produce, exploit, read diagrams and other spatial cognitive artefacts, by making the hypothesis that there exists something like a (human) capacity of *diagramming*: of recruiting a variety of cognitive systems that have an indisputable survival value and are already available in other contexts (for ex. spatial perception and action systems) with the *specific* aim of reducing cognitive loads for memory and assisting problem solving. By connecting these systems, humans have invented a class of cognitive artefacts capable of assisting them in solving new problems originated in the course of their cultural evolution – the nature of which would have made it impossible to address them using one of those systems alone. Spatial cognitive artefacts are not simply visual tools, as the dominant view argues, but *dynamic* devices, allowing for new inferences by being acted upon; they are the medium where space perception and orientation, action planning and regulation and other cognitive systems (e.g. visual and conceptual) operate in coordination in view of a cognitive task. In the talk, several hints on how to explore this hypothesis both experimentally and theoretically will be given.

PROMISING PICTURES

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In contrast to the *epistemic* and *deontic* functions of *descriptive* or *directive* pictures, *promising* pictures expose a *commissive* dimension of visually specified voluntary obligations. In normative regards, promising pictures can visually characterize the satisfaction conditions of obligations toward the promisee, where the promised state of affairs is the obligation's content. In epistemologic regards, promising pictures thereby inform about the promisor's intentions with respect to visually individuated mental states. Examples for promising pictures range from individualized graphic gift certificates over children's drawn treasure maps up to visualized advertising promises or even election pledges. Since no illocutionary force indicator can be depicted, the practice of pictorial promising might ultimately depend on rich social language games. But pictures can play a vital role with respect to the appearances of the promised: *Pictorially* specified intentions, actions, obligations and entitlements are concerned about states of affairs in *visual* respects. Unsurprisingly, if we want to communicate some actual or future state with regard to its visual appearance, we regularly favor pictorial representations over propositional ones.

PAINTING THE LAW: NORMATIVE DRAWINGS IN AN INTER-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE. LEARNING FROM AUSTRALIAN AND JAPANESE EXPERIENCES.

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This work will explore the main theoretical implications of a general tendency, nowadays partially admitted and recognized by State courts, in virtue of which traditional Indigenous paintings and artworks have acquired an important role within judicial debates on Indigenous culture and land. Indigenous artworks are indeed able to show a strong connection between art, land and unwritten (customary) law. The main purpose of this work is to demonstrate, by means of anthropological and linguistic accounts, that Indigenous sacred art is conceived as a “totemic polygon”, encompassing mythical ancestors, the land, sacred Law, and the artwork itself. Within this conceptual construction, each vertex of the polygon is *connected* to the others. Therefore, by means of showing artworks, Indigenous are *showing their Law*, namely the law which shapes their relationship with land. The great importance of this revelatory act (of “showing the Law” to outsiders), along with the necessity for outsiders to previously understand the totemic connection between art, Law, and land will be highlighted. Also, the cultural impact of Indigenous artworks within intercultural dialogue will be discussed. This work will thus specifically focus on instances of the aforementioned cultural and legal phenomenon, as observed within Australian and Japanese frameworks of intercultural negotiation: with particular references to the “Yirrkala bark petition” and “Nibutani Dam Decision” cases.

A COMMON SOURCE FOR SENTENTIAL AND PICTORIAL MEANING: PRECONCEPTUAL EXPERIENTIAL CONTRARIETIES

Pauli Pylkkö (Ph. D., Taivassalo, Finland)

Without either demeaning or overstating the distinction between sentences and images, it may be enlightening to search for a common source that is utilized both by verbal and visual meaning generation. Determining such a source might help us, not only understanding the origins of pictorial meaning and its relation to verbal meaning, but also casting light on how imagination, verbal imagination in particular, works.

Imagination and imagery is essential for *all* meaning generation. Any naturally evolving and unfolding verbal discourse, a dialogue for example, isn't viable without the ability of introducing new and altered meanings for words and other expressions, and new and altered concepts to be applied to unpredictably changing situations. Any genuine discourse, from everyday talk to religious and scientific discussion, introduces and determines unforeseen entities to be considered. This ability to generate new worlds requires spontaneity and flexibility of language, but it is hardly an overstatement that these properties are not valued in most of the prevailing linguistic and logical theories of natural language.

It is suggested that preconceptual experiential oppositions, *aconceptual contrarities*, comprise the lowest level of all meaning generation. Therefore it provides also the common ground from which both pictorial and verbal meaning must be generated. By *aconceptual experiential contrarities* we mean such primordial experiential dualities as desire-aversion; pain-pleasure; similar-different; male-female; old-new; real-irreal; warm-cold; now-earlier; near-far; above-below; inside of something-outside of it, and so on.

The list is, of course, infinite, though not denumerably so. *Aconceptual contrarities* comprise a kind of 'givenness' which isn't yet conceptually structured. However, the emergence of a totality of *contrarities* isn't a subjective experience, not at least in any normal sense of 'subjective,' but requires a community, its social order and a way of life, to arise. Because *aconceptual contrarities* are inherently contradictory and seriously ambiguous, explaining the processes in which *contrarities* are conceptualized, requires a contradiction-tolerant approach. In practice this means a version of dialectics, *aconceptual dialectics*.

DEONTIC VISUAL SIGNS.

BETWEEN NORMATIVE FORCE AND CONSTITUTIVE POWER

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The most of legal theories in the twentieth century have always asserted that rules are product of linguistic utterances and that they have nothing to do with "visual culture." In this paper I show, on the contrary, that the visual dimension is crucial to understand and found some legal-philosophical discourse.

Outlining an initial distinction in the relationship between law and image we could recognize "visual rules" and "normative images:" on one hand there are norms that are manifested through the language of images, whereas on the other hand there are images which have an undeniable normative force in the eye of the beholder. The relationship between images and law is always bi-directional, by the first direction following the way from law to images, and by the second one, *vice versa*, passing from images into the universe of normative discourse. In these pages I do not explore the second direction; I limit myself to investigate the first way asking two questions relevant for the construction of the legal order: Are there visual signs in the normative language? And, if so, what function do they have?