

The role of the body and literacy in research

Mattias Solli
Philosopher - Associate professor
Department of Pedagogy and Lifelong Learning NTNU

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Plan

1. Body
2. Literacy
3. What if things were different?

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Purpose

1. Unpack philosophical implications
2. Use philosophical perspectives for discussion
 - apply the philosophical perspectives to ourselves

- ✓ Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961)
- ✓ Bengt Molander (1950 -)
- ✓ Walter Ong (1912-2003)
- ✓ Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002)

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What do you think?
What is the role of the body and literacy in
knowledge production?

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Enabling conditions

No body, no knowledge

- Banal. "Yeah. It is a necessary condition. So?"
- Profound. "How does the body shape our production of knowledge?"

No text, no distribution of knowledge

- Banal. "Yeah. We write down ideas and read the ideas of others. So?"
- Profound. "How does literacy shape our production of knowledge?"
- Profound. "Is literacy a necessary condition for knowledge production?"

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Plan

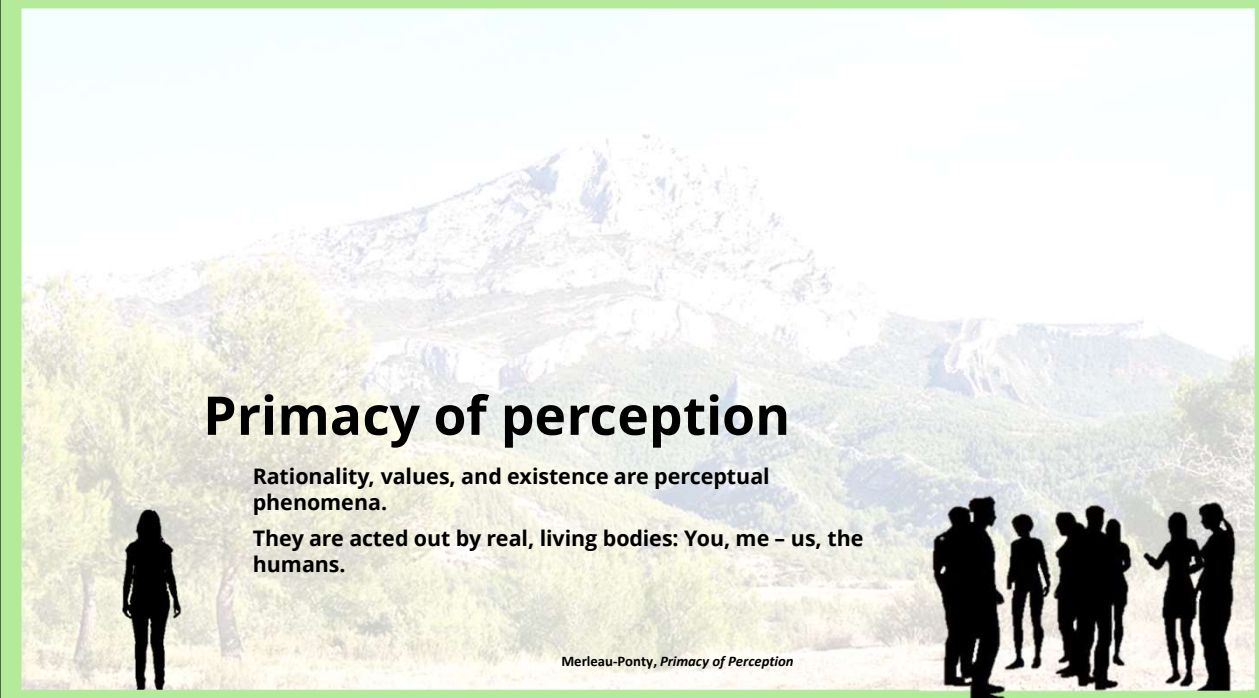
- 1. Body**
 1. Bringing the body into view
 2. Knowledge production seen from the lived body's perspective
 3. Embodied attention as openness and closedness
2. Literacy
3. What if things were different?

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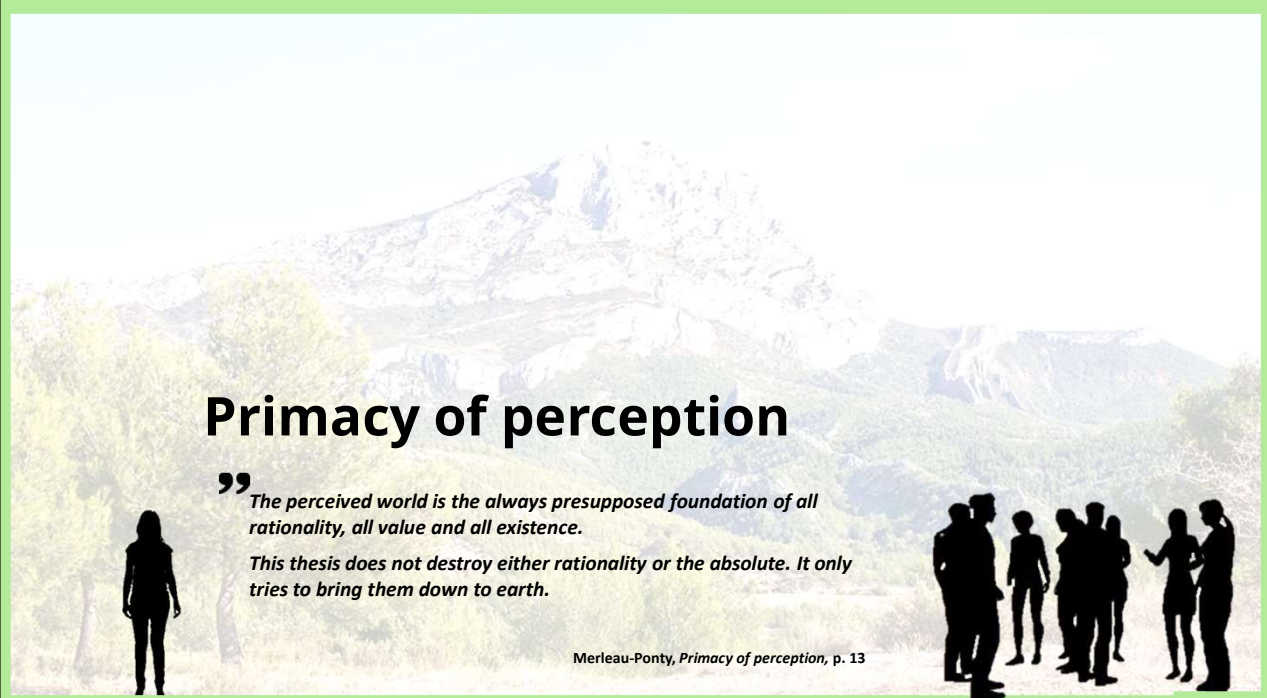
Primacy of perception

Rationality, values, and existence are perceptual phenomena.
They are acted out by real, living bodies: You, me – us, the humans.

Merleau-Ponty, *Primacy of Perception*

A landscape photograph of a mountain range with silhouettes of people in the foreground. The scene is a natural landscape with a large, rocky mountain peak in the background, partially covered in snow or light-colored rock. The foreground shows a grassy field with several trees. In the lower left, a single person stands with their back to the camera. In the lower right, a group of about seven people are standing and talking. The entire image is framed with a green border.

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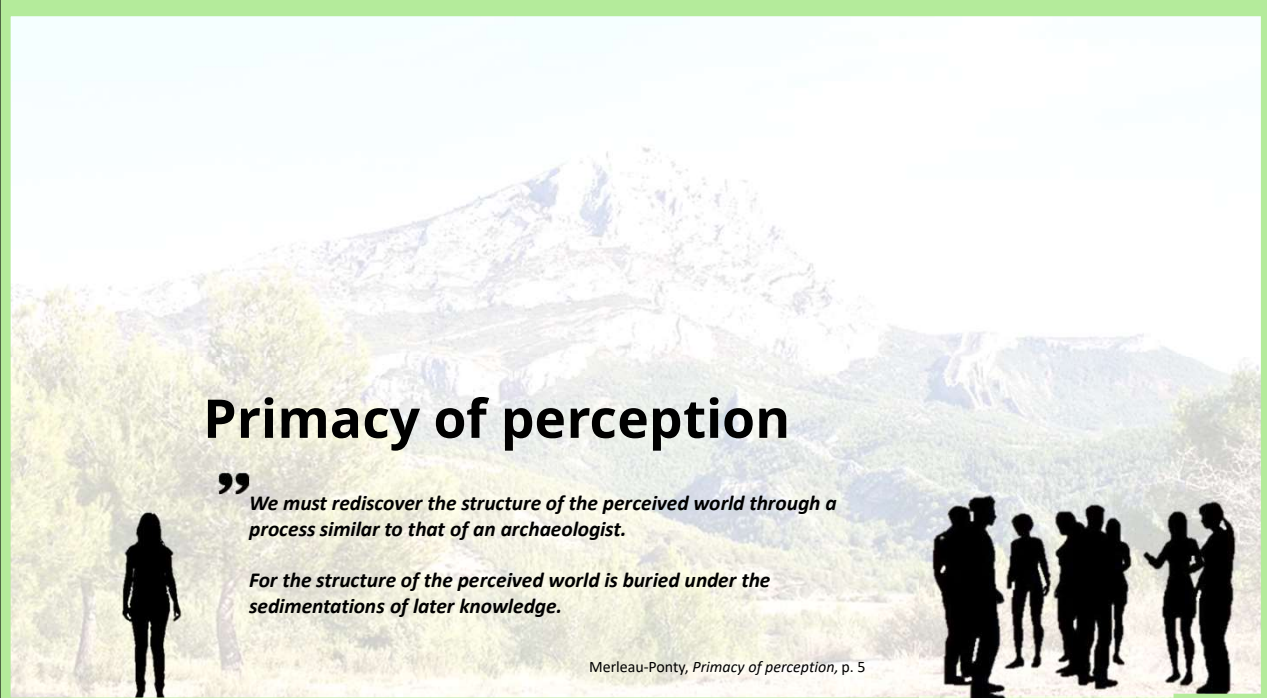


Primacy of perception

” *The perceived world is the always presupposed foundation of all rationality, all value and all existence.*
This thesis does not destroy either rationality or the absolute. It only tries to bring them down to earth.

Merleau-Ponty, *Primacy of perception*, p. 13

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Primacy of perception

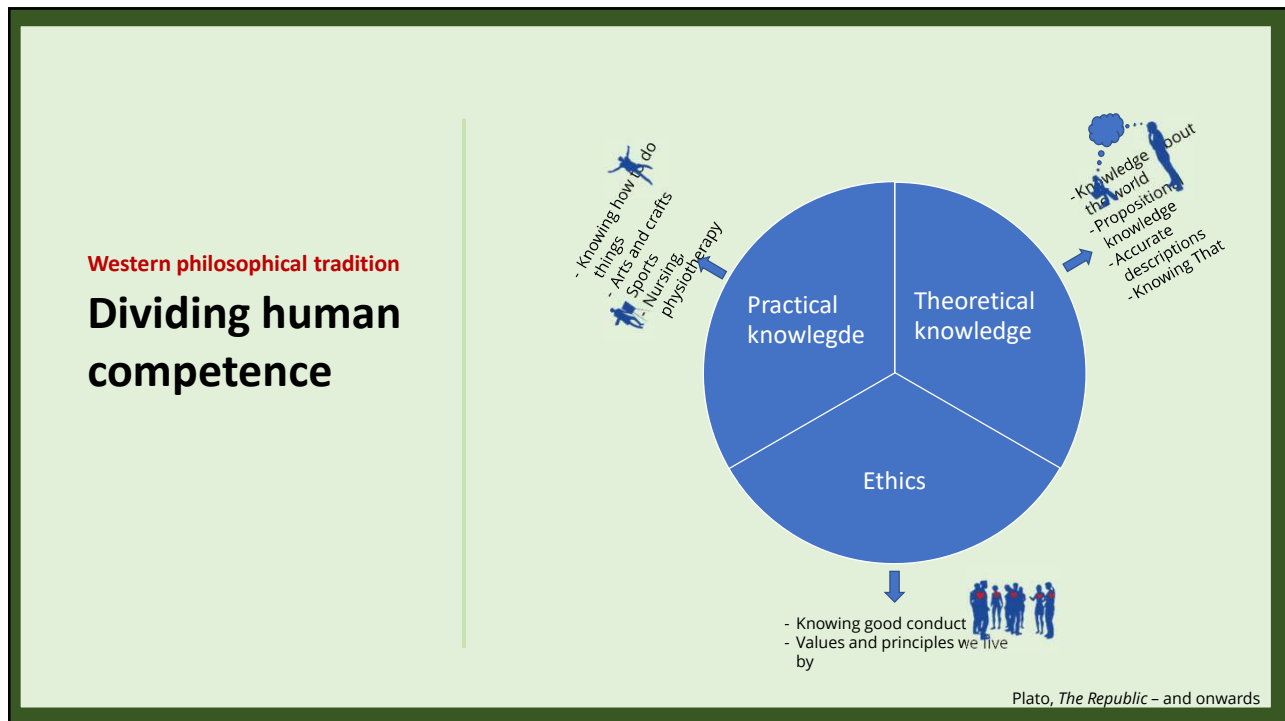
” *We must rediscover the structure of the perceived world through a process similar to that of an archaeologist.*
For the structure of the perceived world is buried under the sedimentations of later knowledge.

Merleau-Ponty, *Primacy of perception*, p. 5

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Western philosophical tradition
Dividing human competence

- Knowing how to do things
 - Arts and crafts
 - Sports
 - Nursing
 - Physiotherapy

- Knowledge about the world
 - Propositional knowledge
 - Accurate descriptions
 - Knowing What

- Knowing good conduct
 - Values and principles we live by

Plato, *The Republic* – and onwards

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Western tradition
Dividing the human

Plato

- Soul (eternal) partaking in body and environment
- Rational organization
- Dualist tendencies

Plato, *The Republic; Phaidon*

René Descartes (1596-1650)

- Body and soul separate
- Soul is rational self-reflection
- Soul can and should follow method
- Body is mechanism
- Sharp dualism
- Mind and environment separate

Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*

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Separating knower and known

The written word




- Technology for information distribution
- Person-independent
- Transgresses time and place
- Accumulating common knowledge
- Favors intellectual understanding?

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1. Why do you think humans downplay the body's role in knowledge production?
2. How is it in your research field?

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Different perspectives on/from **the same body**



Körper

- Physical body
- Third-person perspective
- Experienced body

Leib

- Lived body
- First-person perspective
- Experiencing body
- Holistic experience
- **Lived perspective**

Husserl, *Ideen 2*; Zahavi, *Husserl's Phenomenology of the body*

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Lived experience
Self-concealment

When everything works, it's just there – in the background

- **Body**
- Language
- Health
- Tools
- Routines
- Agreement
- Moral
- Tradition
- **Lifeworld**

Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of perception*; Heidegger, *Being and Time*; Gadamer, *Truth and Method*

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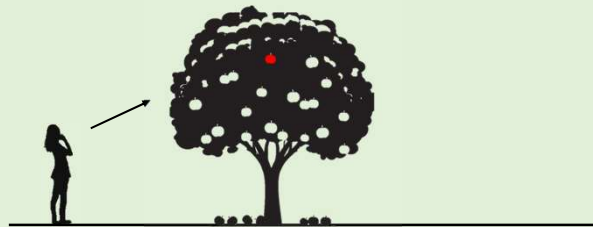
Lived
experience
Self-
concealment



Artworks bring the concealed
dimensions to the fore
- as **perceptual phenomena**

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Lived experience
Consciousness
as directedness



Consciousness

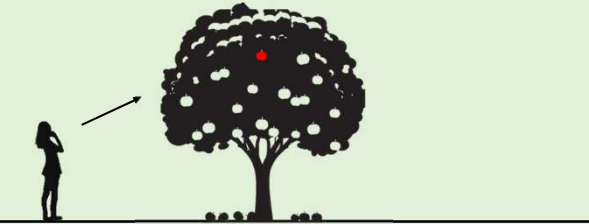
- is consciousness of something **FOREGROUND**
- is consciousness of itself as a consciousness of something
 - How we do things
 - Sub- or pre-conscious structures of behavior

BACKGROUND

Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*

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Knowing **that** Knowing **how**



Aspects of knowledge

- Knowing **that** **FOREGROUND**
- Knowing **how** (you act, for instance, when you see what you see)

Molander, *Practice of Knowing*, 52 ff. Distinction from Ryle

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Plan

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Practice is prime


- Subjective and collective
- Explicit and tacit knowledge

Body image & Body schema

What we do when we do stuff – and how we do it

We discover beneath intelligence and beneath perception a more fundamental function.

... a global, practical, and implicit notion of the relation between our body and things, of our hold on them



Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 137
.....Merleau-Ponty, *Primacy of Perception*, 5

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Practice is prime.

And this is where the prejudices can be most powerfully at work.



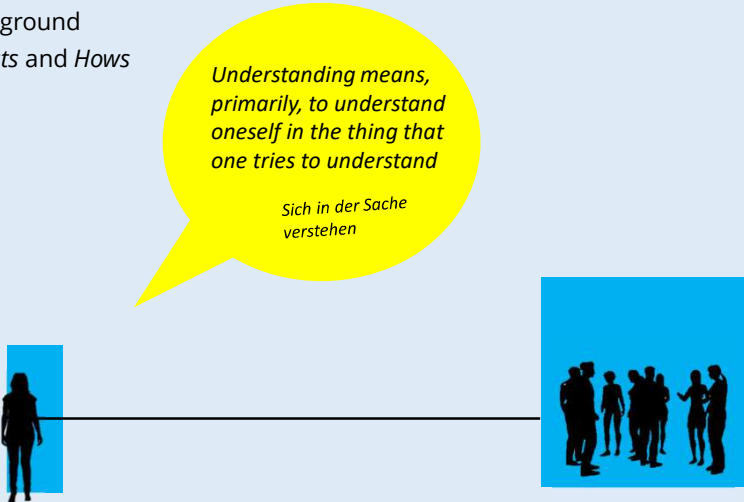
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Attention is key

- Foreground
- Background
- *Whats and Hows*

Understanding means, primarily, to understand oneself in the thing that one tries to understand

Sich in der Sache verstehen



Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, 299
Molander, *Practice of Knowing* p. 66 and 77

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Environment affords behavior...



We enact possibilities

- Active probing
 - Sensorimotor
 - Affective
 - Symbolic
- Exploration
- Orientation

Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*; Gibson. *The ecological approach to visual perception*.

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Gadamer: Application!


1. How do you enact your way in your research field?
2. What do you use for orientation?
3. What do you do when the method does not fit the phenomenon you are about to explore?
4. How much of this is expressed and how much is tacit knowledge?

Write down three or four points that capture your activity.

Orientation

- Goals
- Values
- Objectivity
- Subjectivity
- The perspective of others
- Questions
- Tools
- Norms
- Examples
- Familiarities
- Justifications
- Sorting relevant facts
- Forces
- Overview

Research field



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Method as a way to proceed


” *Whoever wants to learn a science has to learn to master its methodology. But we also know that methodology as such does not guarantee in any way the productivity of its application.*

Gadamer, *Universality of the hermeutical problem*, 11

Methods

- Securing correct, shared, and transparent procedure
- Objectivity
- Truth as *Veritas* (not *Aletheia*)
- Person-independent and objective
- ... yet always acted out by someone, somewhere
 - ... not like following a rule blindly, is it?

Research field



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Primacy of perception

Openness towards other perspectives

”

Can I seriously say that I will always hold the ideas I do at the present – and mean it? Do I not know that in six months, in a year, even if I use the same formulas to express my thoughts, they will have changed their meaning slightly?

Merleau-Ponty, *Primacy of perception*, p. 5

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Two ways of engaging in knowledge production

Model 1

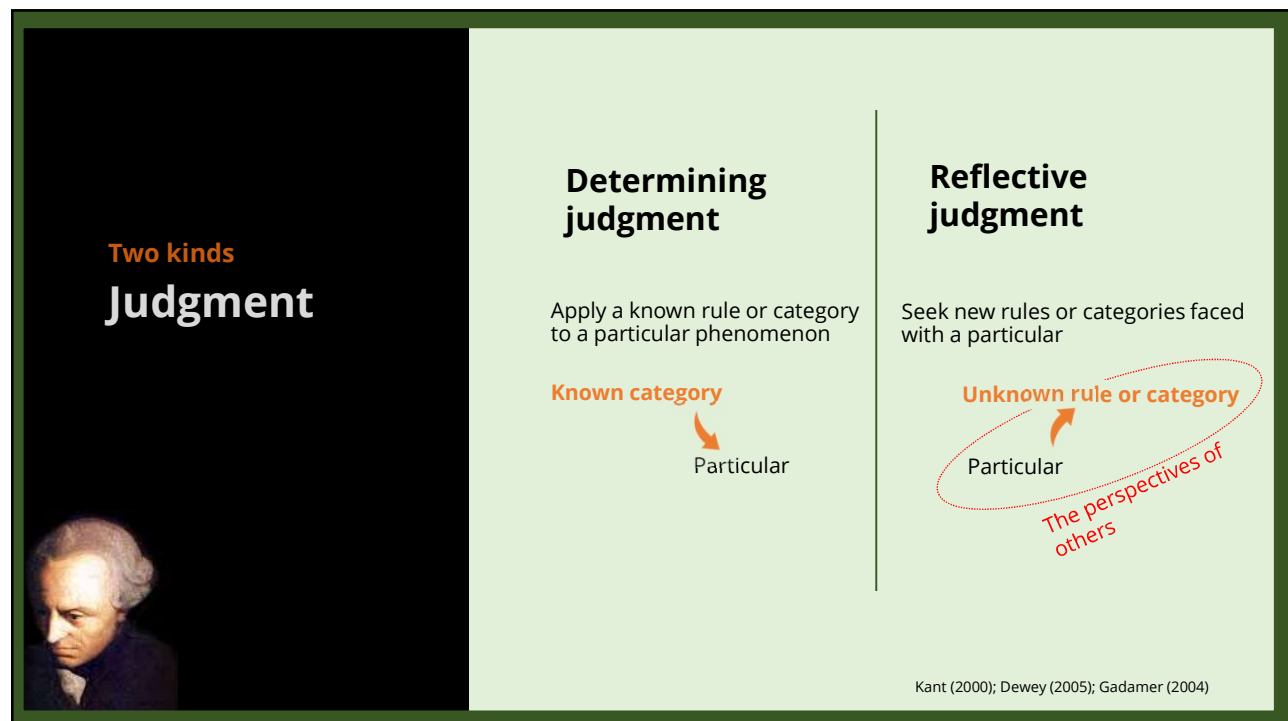
- Ego-centered
- Personal goals-oriented
- Rational and controlled
- Criticism difficult

Model 2

- Dialogical
- Task-oriented
- Criticism welcomed
- Making of well-informed and free choices is favored

Molander, *Practices of Knowing*, 171-2; Donald Schön, *Education the Reflective Practitioner*, 257-8

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1. How do Models 1 and 2 steer your knowledge production?
2. What exemplifies determining and reflective judgment in your work?



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Plan

1. Body
- 2. Literacy**
 1. What's up?
 2. Historical background
 3. What does it mean today, from the embodied perspective?
3. What if things were different?

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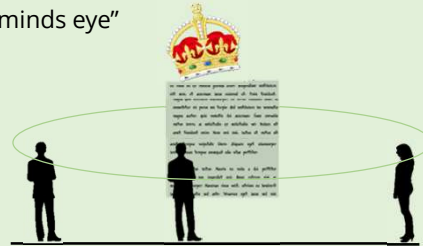
Literacy

” *Writing and print and the computer enable the mind to constitute within itself – not just on the surface or on the computer programs – new ways of thinking, previously inconceivable questions, and new ways of searching for responses.*

The mind does not enter into the alphabet or the printed book or the computer as much as the alphabet or print or computer enters the mind, producing new states of awareness there.

Ong, *Interfaces of the Word*, p. 47

- Enables thought processes inconceivable without
- “Moving information” misleading idea
- More significantly “within” the mind than outside it
- Printed words considered more “real” than spoken words
- Neatly associated with intellectualization, “minds eye”



Ong, *Interfaces of the Word*

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Around 500 BC

No coincidence that philosophy emerged with the alphabet

- Fixating points in language
- Thought relates to itself
- Alienation
- Abstraction: Language «consists of» phonetic units



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No coincidence that Learned Latin was the language of academic life

- Cut off from mother tongue
- Learned with the help of writing
- Book language
- Language for abstract formulas
- Male activity

” *The entire academic enterprise out of which modern science emerged has been conducted in an international no man’s language.*

Ong, *Interfaces of the Word*, 38



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No coincidence that new print technology intensified processes

- **Large-scale book production**
 - Large-scale abstraction
- **Democratization**
 - More people receiving education
 - Girls in schools
 - Women in Academia
- **Diversity**
 - More voices
 - Globalization
- **Critical thought**
 - Questioning of authorities



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Academic literacy today?



- **Language:** Academic English
- **Format:** Short papers
- **Incentive:** The more, the better
- **Condition:** Competition and time pressure
- **Popular set-up:** Interdisciplinary dialog
- **Tools:** Computer, internet

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How does contemporary literacy influence your knowledge production?




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Plan

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Academic hierarchy?



” *The printed word is [assumed to be] the real word.*

Ong, *Interfaces of the Word*, 21



- Written knowledge higher status
- Misinterpretation of non-scriptural knowledge systems?

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Examples

Contemporary non-scriptural knowledge systems

- Folk music
- Jazz



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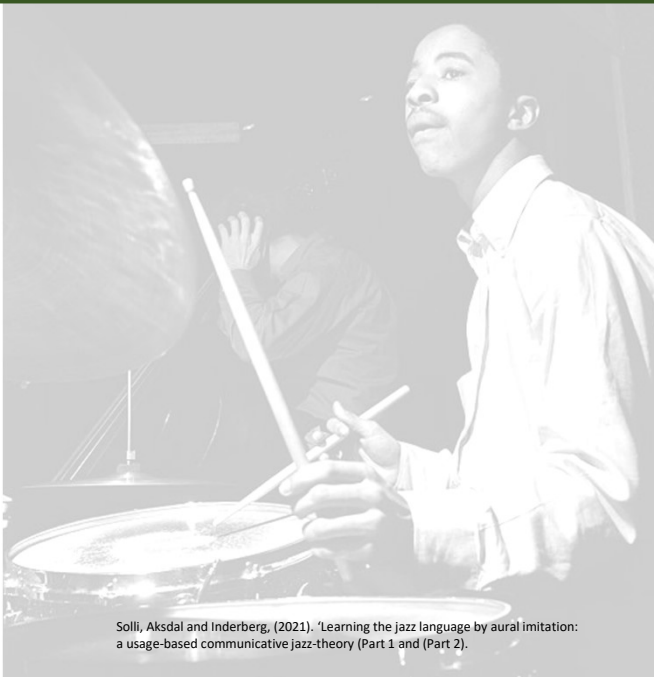
*I can go on a long time
singing this stuff*

Tony Williams

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Aural-musical learning

- Very precise imitation
- Embodied learning
- Exploring aural-musical communication
- Developing generative powers in music
- **No intellectualization**
- **No use of written material**


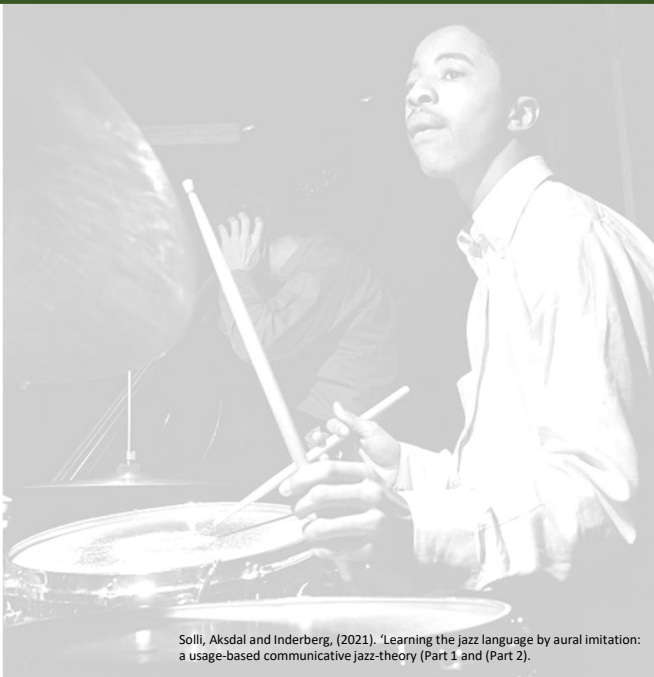



Solli, Akسدal and Inderberg, (2021). 'Learning the jazz language by aural imitation: a usage-based communicative jazz-theory (Part 1 and (Part 2)).

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Aural-musical learning

- hear not only how things are played, but also how they could be played
- follow the musical attention of the other
- lead the attention of the other towards self-perceived musical potentialities
- **Structural similarities to fundamental language acquisition**
- **Develops reflective judgment in music**

Solli, Akسدal and Inderberg, (2021). 'Learning the jazz language by aural imitation: a usage-based communicative jazz-theory (Part 1 and (Part 2)).

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1. How do you value non-scriptural knowledge systems within academia?
2. If you were to study a non-scriptural knowledge system, how would you approach it?



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Plan

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Thank you for your attention