

LBST 330 – Fall 2018

Module 2 – Research in Context

Response paper #2, Vilhauer – Ruspoli

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Vilhauer's paper touches on understanding one another despite our differences (gender, race, class, religion, sexual orientation etc.) and considers the abandonment of dialogues and isolationism and how the abandonment of dialogue has become all the more troubling. Hans-Georg Gadamer's philosophical knowledge touches on questions surrounding communication and understanding. He introduces the idea of discovering how understanding works and what makes understanding possible through the concept of "play" (Spiel), to truly understand how it is that we must approach the "other" to accomplish fruitful communication and to develop a higher grasp/ understanding of the subject at hand. In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer sets out to guide us past roadblocks that disturb our path to communication which can occur when there is a power dynamic when one has a stance of dominance over the "other".

Ruspoli's film goes through different philosopher's thinking and theories surrounding knowledge and how us as humans come to know what is true. Philosopher Plato theorized that we understand things and recognize things and can use things only to the extent to which we have an idea of what they are. He says that humans are rational and intellectual beings that must sit back and think rationally about the nature of the universe. Descartes on the other hand, believed that he himself was a thinking thing, which has ideas and experiences in it and a representation/ picture of the world. He said we must breakdown and disengage from all, including; society, the body, tradition and history. Only then can we work things out for ourselves and find out the truth of knowledge for ourselves. Contrary to Descartes' beliefs, Heidegger came to think that the most important thing that characterizes us as humans is not our ability to sit back and think rationally/ logically, but rather that the most important thing about us is our ability to become involved in worlds and to develop practical skills for acting in those worlds (ie. painting, handwriting, wood working, sports etc.) Heidegger explains, in order to figure out what a hammer is, you just pick it up and start driving nails. At this point in the film, Artificial Intelligence and scientist's argument of AI being able to test thousands of philosophical theories of the mind were introduced. Programmers were trying to make a computer intelligent by giving it the kind of thoughts that they thought humans had, similar the new Netflix series, MANIAC.

In terms of my research project and how the film and paper could be useful in completing the project, I think mostly of Descartes theory of being a thinking thing and the practice of being

“disengaged subjects”. My research project is one that could carry some contention as I am someone who is not in the First Nations community and some may feel as though I should not or cannot speak on the subject. In following with Descartes’ theory and also Vilhauer’s paper in order to gain an understanding, we must engage through play, and just doing. Communication, especially with a topic like mine, is crucial as I do not want to offend or bring the wrong attention to the subjects at hand. Pulling from the AI debate between scientists and philosophers, I would have to agree with Hubert Dreyfus, in that the Artificial Intelligence community was basing their research program on a misunderstanding of what it is to be the kinds of beings we are as humans. AI scientist thought they could replicate all of the things we do as humans just by writing computer programs but us humans are much more complex than that.