

1.0 The Abstract Zone of Proximal Conditions - Blog

Notes From article:- Morten Nissen, Erik Axel, Torben Bechmann Jensen.

1.1 Synopsis of ZPC Review

The said problem, as stated and broadly focussed by Nissen et al, is clarifying the process of *human meaning-making* as it relates to the way humans distinguish and define terms \ words and parse language and construe translation, in respect to forming a; 'frame' \ Gestell \ settings \ recognition \ general ecology \ milieu et al, as relates to human activity as action and acting. The juxtaposition is typically labelled as, meaning through '*frame and contents*' of human action.

In this case in particular ... the 'Abstract Zone of Proximal Conditions', as extension to Vygotsky's action-performance Zone of Proximal Development - as alternative to a solely Freudian-Lacanian Oedipus word 'association' for analytic psychology, or a solely Piaget-ian empirical constructivist *developmental* schema for cognitive psychology.

Dialectic Critical Realist Roy Bhaskar highlighted the problem created when critical and analytic theory totally adopts the 'literary turn' and assumes human meaning is only, or primarily only, knowable through speech and spoken language excluding reference to action as primary motivation and means of knowing.

1.2 Vygotskyan Psychology

Nissen's assessment begins with reviewing Vygotskyan psychology which reformulates...

- Language - understood as activity where activity cannot fully translate into words. And,
- 'Changing the World' – as *Newly Forming Developmental Way of Learning through performed activity*; by comparing...

'tool and result', 'the practice of method', <i>and</i> 'completion'	Juxtaposed to	significance of societal conditions and promoting therapeutic expertise; in a phrase ...sublimation as enacted protended connation
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...and not as juxtaposition of power voices & relativism via *-perspectival-ism-* as configuring epistemology as post-modernism does.

Tool-and-Result - Practice of Method

The concept of meaning in the configuration of pragmatic language begins with finding meaning -in action- ...as per Practice Method establishing the 'capacity to solve problems'.

Hence pragmatics says, 'theory is a tool that *works by* extending previous action as works'; where the term tool is deployed in a most wide sense to mean: natural object, physical object, artifact, language or concept.

Techne`, simplistically translated as technology representation, is the psychomethodological principle of ...a tool-for-result; *instrumental* cause. Techne` when

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representing complex Method, as translated by Stiegler, is a tool-and-result matrix; *formal* cause.

Marx argued that revolution, not only solves tasks which have been raised by history but, *transforms* what history 'is'. Thus, revolution for Marx is formal cause and compelled to undo a system and the reasons for it being what it is than make a new consistent world.

Vygotsky argues human action is the transformation of self and (human) species through the use of tools with the tool *modified* in its use. The practice of method is the way of transforming the given with *method* [schema] as tool-**and**-result.

In Vygotsky's tool-and-result Techne', Self and (human) species transformation comes as transductive social relation between biological development and psychological learning. This equates to Kegan's social emotional development SED 4(5) post self-authoring stage of self-instruction. The zone of proximal development, as the uniquely human psychological social-historical unit generating the unity of learning and development is a matter of modifying the child's activity by giving their actions a new social context.

Human action, as 'acting', is tool-and-result method. But in alienated capitalistic society, 'Acting' is robot-like tool-for-result method and as such 'acting' is acting under conditions which cannot be altered; it's the alienated behaviour of coerced conformity and the performance of the sociologically determined consumerist Parson-ian [ventriloquist] Doll.

The performing of tool-and-result as method is activity changing the conditions that exist for performance to be there in the first place and persist during its course and as the matter involved in the *making* of its history. It is not just a case of changing a history so as to achieve a prescribed outcome. The claim for method is that we humans can and must create the environment and culture for making a better life and for making theoretical discoveries rather than just adapting to the environment as it already is in the hope of a different outcome.

In as much as this process of method as tool-and-result is trans-forming and makes for 'completion' [an end point] it creates a 'ZPD **Form**'; a moment that is increasingly, and more and more obviously, anti-pathetic [anti-pharmaconic] to the human species morphing in an entropically determined environment. Thus the ZPD *form* becomes a [non-changing] concrescent 'Stage' of development. The *form* of 'Stage' of development, left to its own devices, forces adaptations as non-proscribed [non-banished] developmental results. Hence, in certain stages in the development of Capitalism \ Marketeer-ism; violence, homelessness, unemployment, drugs addictions etc, are seen as the outcome of attempts at adaptation and these adaptations are clearly non-developmental and anti-progress and anti-institutional.

On the other hand, the '*reflexive* proscriptive community collective' *re-values* a ZPD as a contribution in meaning-making and appeals directly to the public regarding requisite economic re-direction and stays independent of institutions whose function is purely to maintain any status quo. Simondon named contributions that are surplus to constitutively prescribed zoning and thus protensive of re-zoned re-directed re-valuations, 'individuations'.

Psychology as Pseudo-‘science’

Techne` as Tool-and-Result - Practice Method - means the concept of psychological ‘science’ and the *constituting* of a psychological ‘science’ is hugely problematic and, as regular [constitutive] constitution, no more than a hoax.

Conventional *pseudo-‘science’* psychology includes...

- "The myth of the individual, ...of personal mental illness ...and of linear personal development"

Pseudo- ‘science’ psychology needs to be replaced:

- ...with non-interpretative, non-classificatory, a non-explanatory approach" ...such as Stiegler’s ‘negentropy’.
- ...by a program simply constituted of negations of ordinary psychological science [DSM] categories and procedures.

Pseudo-‘science’ psychology is no more than

- ...data packaged as findings and sold as ‘knowledge claims’ about bogus individuals.
- ...the managerialism of mental illness and mental health marketed as ‘normalizing the abnormal’.

1.3 Abstract Zone of Proximal Conditions

The Abstract Zone of Proximal Conditions is: "a community *for* itself, which at once supports development, and has as its; non-instrumental, non-pragmatic (tool *and* result) activity, and, the development it supports", and the approach of "...our purpose is not to change the world (for we have no purpose, hidden or otherwise), but our commitment is to be the becoming world: Not to take it over, but to be “taken over” by "being in the world" with the surprises one must expect with being part of something bigger than one-self.

The Abstract Zone of Proximal Conditions presupposes self-reflection, modesty and self-critique.

In the practice of *society-making* the Abstract Zone of Proximal Conditions:

- "is not that there are no causes or causal talk in our development community; it is just that our community is not a *causally connected* one. It is not connected with or by any conceptual code [cement]. It is not at all *connected per se*".

as such...

- the development community is not concerned with neither the objective study of subjectivity nor the subjective study of objectivity - but merely interested in discovering - in practice - a logic of development.
- The operative question is how we can collectively further develop: the modality of the world appearing in practice, it is mediated by the logic of practice, and everything we are able to do stems from this logic; which, in futuring terms, bends towards life sustainability consistent with Stiegler’s negentropy.

The society-making *community for itself* Abstract Zone of Proximal Conditions knows the world is not just ZF-C Sets composed from divine probability [primary retention supplemented by omniscient secondary retention] but also the tertiary retentions of decisions of dynamic [SED 5\6] agents configuring responses as Category Theory Maths.

Performing a Community - Via or Contra Post-modernism

Nissen et al recognise implications of Marx' Feuerbach theses. The famous 6th which states that we should not seek an abstract essence of humanity in the individual, and the first, second, and 11th, in which ...practice, as of a sensuous *subjective revolutionary activity*, is proposed as the foundation of a new kind of theoretical thinking.

The issue at stake is fundamental assumptions about relations \ objects \ etc and of matter as the very idea of *sameness*. The controversy in this notion comes about through the idea of doing away with 'basic epistemological bias' with consequence that one cannot just stop at performing interpretation but go on to making and *re-making* sense and reconstruing instrumental or responsive rhetorics and constructing and re- de-constructing ever *new* discourses.

The problem is the argument that ...one needs to engage in revolutionary practice to achieve understanding. If revolution means change of *relevant conditions* this is credible; but otherwise the argument begs answers to the question of how we know \ understand which particular practice is requisite for revolution \ insurgency affording sustainable life-form and when.

Note: for Stiegler, the idea of 'Practice' consistent with such ZPD re-organization to configure ZPC as an 'Institute for Short Term Psychotherapy' within a long-term non-contradictory milieu, is parsed in a-transcendental terms as; meta- stability \ consistence \ re-currence \ [...] made transparent as 'idiotext'.

1.4 Preliminary Concluding Remarks

Stiegler's particular translation of Pharmaconic Techne` is credible as explicating the requisite a-transcendental category; and in making transparent the necessity of parsing language in order to unpack the dualistic [subject-object] nature of the meaning of words.

Stiegler's idea of MICE [management institute for contributory economy] as catch-all term regarding conditions for adopting institutional transformation management is as good as any to date. He nominalized it as, 'trans-individuation'.

What is needed is the *understanding* of the concrete conditions and possibilities of "Developing Development Community" in the middle of the persistent "structural antagonisms" that is the greater system's milieu.

1.5 Actions Greater Than Words - Schema

RATS (reprised analytics of techne` schema) research group referenced Nissen's Abstract Zone of Proximal Conditions article as theory backgrounding CESS-P laboratories contrasting approaches to psychology - as medium for evaluating *action*-performance. The various psychology approaches are tabled as follows.

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Psychology Schools Contrasts Table

School	Approach	Characteristic	Tenant
R.D. Lang	Anarchical Anti-structuralist	Anti-psychiatry	Libertarianism. 'there is no sick individual only punitive systems & adaptations. Words construct systems.
Nietzsche	Immense Regression	Sublimation	Sublation knowledge as understanding Beyond Tragedy as Good & Evil. Aphorisms convey meaning.
Piaget	Cognitive Structuralist	Cognitive Development	Pre-op – Concrete Op - Operational – Formal Logic Stages - 'readiness' to learn. Constructs construct meaning.
Pavlov - Skinner	Behaviourism	Observation Method	A Human is observed exterior behaviour without any ghost in the machine. Words proscribe [banish] certain meaning.
Freud-Lacan	Structuralist Biological Drive	Oedipus Complex - Lack - Talking Cure via word association.	Unconscious drives affect Ego & identity. Adaptations need repressing via super-ego Words proscribe [banish] certain meaning.
Winnicott	Organological	Transitional Objects	Attachment Theory [M Kline] The Actions of the adequate mother requisition meaning.
Vygotsky	performed activity	Zone of Proximal Development	Actions proscribe [banish] conditions for undoing maximal learning community.
Nissen	performed activity	Zone of Proximal Condition	Actions proscribe [banish] conditions for undoing conditions for MICE.
Moreno	Organological	Psychodramatic Role – Dynamic Relations	Reflexive Enactments proscribe [banish] conditions for undoing Socionomic System Axioms.
G.H. Mead	Organological	Social Role	Social Role Action proscribe [banish] conditions for in- completing Adoption.
Stiegler	Techne` Pharma- nomics	Cinematogrammic Writing of Production	Actor Productions completes Negentropic Idiotext.

Colour Key

Word Based Psychology

Action Based Psychology

1.6 Proscribe Definition

The term 'proscribe' is used here in the sense of setting [listing] the limits determining a respective boundary, to function as it does, and that are required to be exceeded for restraints in the contents within the boundary to be superseded. What is framed 'orthodox' is sanctioned as belonging within the prescribed system and what is framed as 'un-orthodox' is proscribed as [banished] outside the system.

The boundary is said to condemn [banish] certain contents to be outside the frame as not able to be adapted to, but can nonetheless still yet be adopted and still be accepted as changing the contents and even transformatory. A case in point is a passive parasite that invades the host and changes the host over time. The parasite is banished [proscribed] as remaining forever outside the system but nonetheless re-transfigures the form inside the boundary and transforms the system from being impermeable and 'closed' and to become 'permeated' and thus become a more non-closed system and subsequently a more 'open'-like system.

The assumption in the use of the term 'proscribe' is that, in a complex environment, any 'new' discovery and new information pertains to the milieu being of an 'open-like system' and therefore the 'new' germ – seed is outside and beyond and surplus to any prescription indigenous of a 'closed system'. *Actions*, in respect to proscription [banishment], are performed without known or expected consequences while *words* are spoken with meanings that are prescribed to expect sensical \ frameable \ recognizable responses from the inner-boundary perspective as language. A banished child may thrive or deteriorate but a prodigal son can always fit back in.

Proscriptions detail what is outside of [banished from] the boundary's inside perspective and what provides permissions to belong. In the literary case ...proscription is what *Action* banishes from, and says is outside of, known language and so can only be adopted as an unknown [un-named] known. As with the case of the parasite, the host [actor] accepts what is outside of being able to be named and interpreted and without knowing the long-term consequences of being adopted. Polynomial maths refers to such unknown [un-named] knowns as 'variables' in order to convey the extent that they are estranged and thus forged as an abstraction and never fully realized and 'known'.

The term proscription is much complicated in contemporary parlance because of the micro-biology concepts of genotype and phenotype. Genotype is used to specify species categories; apes for example being of one genotype and monkeys another. Phenotype is used to specify 'family' categories within a species; dolphin pod 'A' belonging to one phenotype [family and language group] and dolphin pod 'B' belonging to another phenotype [family and language group]. What proscription [banishment] makes for the boundary of one phenotype being distinct from another is often of much contention. As is the case when, due to climate change, dolphin pod 'A' extends their habitat into dolphin pod 'B' habitat; making the claim they are now, due to the category of locality, of the one phenotype even though they are still adopting each other's language.

The term proscription has much in common with the term prescription [perscripto in Italian]. Prescription literally means to 'write out in full'. Thus to proscribe what must be outside a boundary is to fully prescribe [write in full] how it is to be outside and not inside the boundary.

1.7 Action Based and Non-Action Based Psychology Approach Comparisons

Action Based Psychology Approach			Non-Action Based Psychology Approach	
Tool-AND-Result <i>Action as Tool</i> Accessing Subjectival Modality as Correspondence to Objective World		⇔ ⇔	Tool-FOR-Result <i>Word as Tool</i> Accessing Objectival Modality as Correspondence to Subjective World	
Winnicott	Enacted Organological Transitional Objects		R.D. Lang Anti-psychiatry	Anarchical Anti-structuralist
Vygotsky	performed activity in ZPD		Nietzsche	Mentation Immense Regression Sublimation
Nissen	Action as Proximal Condition		Piaget	Cognitive Structuralist Development
Moreno	Psychodramatic Role enactment		Freud-Lacan	Oedipus Complex \ Lack Semiotic Talking Cure
G.H. Mead	Enacted Social Role Adoption		Pavlov - Skinner	observed exterior behaviour without any interior reference
Stiegler	Techne` Pharma-conomics			

1.7.1 Action Based Approach to Psychology

The following Schools each with *Action-Based* Approaches to Psychology assume organological bodies with Action-Tool as orthotic and Tool-AND-Result method accessing subjectival modality for being-there.

Schools are ranked in decreasing order of compleat comprehension.

	School	Approach	Characteristic	Tenant
1	B. Stiegler	Techne` Organological Pharma-conomics	Default memory acquisition via Cinematogrammic Writing of Production	Actor Productions completes Negentropic Idiotext
2	D. Winnicott	Organological Management	Transitional Objects	Attachment Theory – [M Kline] Actions of adequate mother enabling meaning requisition
3	L. Vygotsky	Organological Performed Activity	Zone of Proximal Development	Actions proscribe [banish] conditions for undoing maximal learning community.
4	M. Nissen	Organological Performed Activity	Zone of Proximal Condition	Actions proscribe [banish] conditions for undoing conditions for MICE.
5	G.H. Mead	Organological Management of Role Activity	Social Role	Social Role Action proscribe [banish] conditions for in-completing Adoption.
6	J.L. Moreno	Organological Management of Role Activity	Psychodramatic Role – Dynamic Relations	Reflexive Enactments proscribe [banish] conditions for undoing Socionomic System Axioms

1.8 Schools Correspondence to DCR Morphogenesis

Schools Correspondence to Dialectic Critical Realism Morphogenesis.

School	Approach	Tenant	DCR Correspondence
Stiegler	Techne` Organological Pharma- conomics	Actor Productions completes Negentropic Idiotext	Protended Morphogenesis
Winnicott	Organological Management	Attachment Theory – [M Kline] Actions of adequate mother enabling meaning requisition	Morphogenesis
Vygotsky	Organological Performed Activity	Actions proscribe maximal learning community	Morphogenesis
Nissen	Organological Performed Activity	Actions proscribe conditions for Management Institutes for Contributory Economy [MICE]	Morphogenesis
G.H. Mead	Organological Management of Role Activity	Social Role Action completes Environmental Adoption	Central Causation. Agents & Structures Equally Force Change
J.L. Moreno	Organological Management of Role Activity	Reflexive Enactments proscribe Socioeconomic System Axioms for agentic creativity	Upwards Causation Agents Force Change

Morphogenesis is used here to mean capacity to adopt changes in ‘shape’ that are still consistent with the original shape and thus long strands of ontogenetic trans-individuation.

1.9 Concluding Remarks

In as much as Stiegler’s Exosomatic Techne` aligns with the Action Based and Tool-**AND**-Result approach to unpacking Psychology as capacity for meaning-making, it is much at odds with the Word-AS-Tool and Tool-**FOR**-Result that is a Non-Action Based approach in respect to unpacking Psychology as meaning-making. Thus, Stiegler’s Exosomatic Techne` is anti-thetical to adopting the ‘literary turn’ approach as requisite of *Real* social science.

Although each school of psychology seeks to remediate object and subject duality as endemic to both language [words] and action [behaviour] they end up preferencing either words or action as founded datum and so subsequently primarily accessible through both subjectivity and objectivity.

For Freud [Lacan], word association is the key to accessing the objectivity sequestered in the unconscious and the ‘object-a’ is surfaced as a unique word analysis of an individual’s intention.

Because word association is an individual [in their head subjective] commitment, in respect to the individual’s agency, it becomes an objective intentionality independent on the collective’s response; analysis as object-a is thus fully determinative of ‘reality’ and functions as a ‘sane me’ against the less than sane [potentially schizoid] social collective. The resultant ‘objectivity’ is thus ‘non-mystagogical’; leaving nothing to chance or to social system variant ‘emergence’.

For Moreno, social actor action is the key to accessing the subjectivity sequestered in social action's protention. Because social actor action intentionality is non-objective, in respect to the individual's agency, and dependent on the collective's response, it is less than fully determinative of social outcome and thus retained in the nexus of the individual's and collective's subjectivity. In as much that that is not the fully determinative result of the 'averaged' community agent's drives and desires it remains 'mystagical' in respect to 'science' as discipline.

1.10 Afterward

1.10.1 Remarks

Analytic and positivistic philosopher Donald Davidson, in discretising the distinction between action and language, reasoned that so long as interlocutors intentionally behave (e.g. speak) so as to be interpretable with respect to their individual perceptions and beliefs about a shared environment, then there is **no need for recourse to any particular language** in accounting for the possibility of language (ibid, pp. 114–17). Indeed, Davidson even goes so far as to argue that **languages qua language do not strictly exist** (2005, pp. 89–109) – meaning that, while individuals certainly **approximate the normative conventions of a particular language, there is and can be no absolutely standard form** of any given language; ...for it is impossible to conceive of an absolutely fixed convention marker (e.g. 'By 'x', I mean, x') that can resist being reinterpreted. For instance, an **audience correctly understanding what an actor on a theatrical stage means when calling out, 'The theatre is on fire and this is not part of the play', as all part of the play)** (2001b, pp. 265–281). The mystagical interpretative theatrical door remains ajar.

These notes are drafted in the hope of gaining more understanding of the place of 'symbols and diabol's' in human meaning making as thought by Bernard Stiegler's in his unpublished work named, 'symbols and diabol's'.

1.10.2 Theory Of Change Correspondence

In the absence of further clarification by Stiegler we are left to ponder relations of 'action-and-result' meaning making with contemporary change theory such as that provided by the, 'Theory Of Change' movement. [\[wikipedia.org/wiki/Theory_of_change\]](https://wikipedia.org/wiki/Theory_of_change).

Weiss's popularized "theory of change" [ToC] schema aims to describe the set of assumptions that explain both the mini-steps that lead to the long-term goal of interest in and the connections between program activities and outcomes that occur at each step of the program. Weiss's popularized "theory of change" schema are attempts at depicting requisite diagramata of complex community-based initiatives. The ToC aims to enable agents to improve their overall evaluation plans and strengthen their ability to claim credit for outcomes as predicted in their schema 'theory'.

Reference Resources

- Center for Theory of Change - theoryofchange.org [\[8\]](#)
- Theory of Change Online software. [\[9\]](#)
- ActKnowledge [\[13\]](#)

1.10.3 Logical Framework Approach

wikipedia.org/wiki/Logical_Framework_Approach

Program Logframe

The ToC Logical Framework Approach is arranged as follows.

<i>Respective</i>	Program Narrative	Program Description	Program Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVIs)	Program Means of Verification (MoV)	+ve Assumptions + <i>killer assumptions</i> => negative impact
Activities					
Outputs					
Purposes					
Goals					

Logframe Reference Resources

The Logical Framework Approach, Handbook for objectives-oriented planning, Fourth edition, [NORAD](#), 1999, [ISBN 82-7548-160-0](#).

Strategic Project Management Made Simple: Solution Tools for Leaders and Teams, by Terry Schmidt. (Wiley, 2021) [ISBN 978-1-119-71817-8](#)

1.10.4 Qualifying Remarks

From Stiegler’s mnesic approach where certain memories are unable to be recovered and as good as forever banished [damnatio memoriae proscriptions], ToC diagramata are best understood as pragmatic configurations framing proscriptions [banishments] and prescriptions [inclusions] conducive to ‘rational miracles’ and as such are redactions derived from the Zone of Proximal Conditions and therefore always one step removed from the negentropic outcomes achieved via mystagogical reflexive practice. Outcomes from using Weiss’s ToC method correspond very much to *cycles* of short-term individuation rather than *spirals* of long-term negentropic trans-individuation.