

Tractatus Sociologicus-Ontologicus

Draft (1)

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A brief introduction: I started this work in the 4th week of my degree (October 2022) as my classes got me thinking about social ontology and the Goffmanian thesis. Following an interaction I had with a seminar teacher of mine I had come to realise that my ideas were worth writing down. This work is heavily influenced by the prose of Ludwig Wittgenstein, hence my use of a checklist-like system, akin to the one he used. Eventually this work will be book length. It covers a wide range of topics, and if it feels like I am jumping from one topic to another seemingly at random, it is because I am.

1. **The social world is the manifestation of its entities**
2. The entities of the social world are its actors (they make it so..)
3. Social propositions are what is said to be the case in the social world
4. **Every social proposition is an approximation**
5. All social propositions are tautologies
6. ***What is the case in the social world is an interpretation***
7. ***All social propositions are a model of social reality as imagined***
8. All propositions are inherently social but not all propositions are social propositions
9. The social proposition is a form of proposition that refers to the ontology of the social world - “she is a good person”..”they have nice hair”..”such and such a percentage of the population is racist”..etc etc - ***social propositions picture parts of the social world***
10. It is like: the social proposition reveals what we see in the social world...
11. **The landscape of social ontology is not a fixed territory but a map drawn in language**

12. If I said I knew a proposition's truth value with certainty, with such an utterance I must necessarily imply that knowing a proposition for sure is a social function. I might say I know my friend because I can pick their face from a crowd, I might suggest I have such and such a knowledge because my professor said I was good at such and such, I might say I know for sure the party is at half 8..because I checked it with the organisers...in all the cases we see: **knowing requires other people.**
13. In order to know a proposition for sure we would need to verify that we know
14. The verification requires a source external to us...another person (or a tool, say a calculator, whose knowledge it is built upon came from others).. here we can see: **logic is social (or more so...its manifestation is social)**
15. Social propositions are atomic in that they are either true or false..however it would be wrong to assume social propositions are purely logical
16. The social proposition is a mirror: it reveals ourselves back at us..
17. ***My world is the totality of my social propositions (and can be no more...)***
18. Sociology creates descriptive mappings of the social world
19. **All social thought is a manifestation**
20. The paradox of sociology is that we are its manifests
21. To study society is to study ourselves

22. The question: **how can social propositions exist outside of logic?**
23. **The ontological space of the social proposition is a duality....**
24. In a way there are two types of social proposition...there is the social proposition that internally says: this is the case in the social world (what we might term an internal tautology)...and there is the social proposition that says: this might be the case in the social world (what we would call internally atomic)
25. If the truth value of social propositions is seen in the social entities then it follows: social propositions are internal tautologies; they reveal what we see - but we don't all see the same thing
26. ***The point: I see the social world but this social world is my own***
27. ***In the realm of social propositions, truth is not an inherent quality but a function***
28. The concern does not look like: "how did the picture of the social world arise"...the concern looks like "how I see the social world...I see it because it exists for me..."
29. **One can easily give oneself a false picture of the social world..**
30. **The limit of the social proposition is the limit of metasociology**
31. ***The difficulty is knowing where our social world ends and another starts***
32. What can be revealed is not always true
33. The social world is what it seems..to me
34. Social propositions have a limit..

35. ***The propositional bounds of the self are the propositional bounds of the social world (they are not the same but manifest as such...)***
36. ***The trick of social ontology is the seeming one-to-one link between the self and the apparent social world***
37. **The point: our propositions act as bridges from one apparent truth to the next; but the bridges are weak...**
38. The mundane hints at the sublime (the sociology of everyday life..)
39. No social proposition holds itself perfectly still
40. The issue...not all social propositions are tautological in the logical sense
41. How do we get clear on the ontological space the social propositions exists within
42. I almost want to say: the social proposition exists outside logic...
43. Imagine I said to you: "the woman is in a wheelchair"
44. Now imagine I worded it like this: "the wheelchair is under the woman"
45. Both of these statements are logically identical yet one makes significantly more sense than the other
46. ***There is something hidden in the structure of the social proposition: the force between logic and language***
47. **The ordering of the propositions and the way in which we think about them are influenced by our language: logic cannot exist in cold rational isolation. It therefore follows that the reason two logically equivalent propositions can create an absurdity and a reasonable sounding statement is because language has profound influence on logic.**
48. This however goes both ways...

49. **Language cannot create anything ontologically tangible: it can only describe it**
50. Imagine I said: the camera is blue
51. **I am using language to say something about the camera. But the thing that is about the camera is ontologically tangible (it exists metaphysically), but the language itself is not ontologically tangible. Therefore the question arises: what is language picturing?**
52. **The answer is simple: Language is picturing the logical structure that exists in reality**
53. In this sense both Wittgensteins are correct; **The logical structure of reality is what language attempts to picture however it cannot be a perfect mirror of it...because language also greatly influences the way we use logic...**
54. **Here the duality of the social proposition revealed itself: it is both logical and linguistic, it attempts to picture the underlying reality of social ontology but can only get so far due to the influence of language.**
55. **Social Propositions revealed...Logic is the same duality as language...**
56. **Language limits thought; thought limits language...**
57. Through interaction, the entities of the social world create and maintain it (It is the everyday life that binds society)
58. *If we say the social proposition is what is the case in the social world, how do we establish what is happening in the social world?*
59. We must look at what makes the social world..
60. The social world is a human construction...
61. What makes the social world is the social entities within it
62. Social propositions break off into different contexts..

63. If the social world is defined by its entities then the nature of the social proposition must exist within the social entities themselves. We can see: social entities give the social world its meaning
64. The social proposition's truth value is determined by the social entities that take part in them...
65. **Social propositions are interactive..**
66. Sociology consists in looking at the social world and seeing what it does..
67. **We must look at the picture of the social world**
68. When we look at the social proposition it seems as if it is doing something striking
69. Where does social ontology end?
70. Social ontology consists in being tied up in its own limits. What we can know can only be shown..what we cannot know is what cannot be shown. The social world is what we see..
71. Where does social knowledge come from?
72. What happens if I doubt "I am talking to this person in front of me"...
73. Imagine: I doubted the existence of social entities I interact with
74. Where does this lead us?
75. **It must be the case: the social proposition is limited by its own nature (it can only reveal what can be shown)**
76. But what does this limit look like?
77. Is it reasonable for me to doubt my friend exists?
78. Let us say I doubted the existence of social entities around me and such
79. **It is the case: Our doubt must have an end..**

80. **The doubt presupposed something..**
81. **With this doubt I am saying that there must be something to doubt. The doubt presupposes some kind of implied certainty about the existence of social entities**
82. **In everyday life we do not doubt the existence of our social propositions...We hold them to be true**
83. **"I stand fast my friend exists"...**
84. I am trying to say: the social proposition must have a potential truth value in order for it to be doubted..
85. If something can be doubted, then it must also be possible to hold it true..
86. **It is like saying: I am doubting that I can doubt..**
87. **The doubt cannot be limitless: in endless doubt there is certainty at the foundation**
88. **"I am certain that I should doubt..."**
89. **Where does doubt come to an end? When it makes sense for it to..**
90. What is the point in supposing: what if my friend doesn't really exist
91. The doubt seems absurd
92. **There are differences in the reasonableness of the doubt: what we must do is check if the doubt makes sense**
93. **The point: doubt must exist in relation to some other object..the object being certainty**
94. **Our doubt presupposed something, but we could not see it, for doubt seemed to deny it again and again. We could not get outside doubt by doubt alone**

95. "I am certain I should doubt that certainty exists..." "I am certain I should not doubt that certainty exists..."
96. **The social proposition is a piece of the social world. We must look at the picture of the social proposition in order to see the social world (the social proposition created an image of the social world...)**
97. **The social world reveals itself to us (it manifests)**
98. Sociology reflects life
99. The question arises: what is the social world ontologically contingent upon?
100. If the social world is the manifestation of its entities then the Goffmanian answer to this question creates a tautology...
101. I have realised: this is impossible to escape. If everything in the social world exists within it then whatever the social world is contingent upon creates a paradoxical tautology: the social world defines itself...
102. Even if you answered every sociological question in existence you would still have a tautological ontological foundation that escapes reason. You would still have the paradox of social ontology at the heart of all of it
103. The fact the social world is a tautology expresses the great incompleteness of all sociology. The social world can never ontologically be determined by something outside of it. It follows from this that sociology could never be a complete theory because, even if everything else was solved, the social world would remain a paradox
104. Embedded within metasociology is an inescapable paradox...
105. It can be said: the structure of metasociology is itself..

106. Sociology can be symbolised by the ouroboros. It exists in itself, it is defined by itself: nothing exists outside of it, nothing influences it ontologically but itself..nothing defines it...but itself
107. Sociology is in a permanent state of paradox...
108. There is no clear boundary to the secrets
109. **We cannot explain the social world; we can only describe it...(the limits of the social world are the limits of metasociology...)**
110. The social world is a recursive algorithm
111. Over the horizon of that which can be seen in social ontology, there is a vast unknown..
112. The social world is a perpetual dance of definitions
113. **A thought strikes one: at the foundation of the mystery is the realisation that our questions are our answers**
114. **The sociologist sees a fragmented mirror...**
115. We cannot dissect the dance all the way...
116. **We are trapped inside the constraints of language...**
117. The limits of my ontology are the limits of my language...(Wittgenstein was right..)
118. **The purpose of sociology is illumination, not solution**
119. **The point: the canvas of social ontology is vast yet our brushes are finite**
120. Sociology, at its core, is a reflection on the mirrors we hold up to ourselves

121. **It is like: certainty rests on doubt, doubt rests on certainty**
122. Behind the social persona lies the personal
123. The social world is a kaleidoscope...
124. **All of sociology hitherto can be defined as the flashing glimpses of the social world showing themselves to us**
125. **We are Newton on the Seashore..**
126. We know so little, yet we feel as if we know so much..
127. **There is an entire mythology buried in the social world**
128. **There is no impartial sociologist**
129. The social world is a cosmos..
130. **Mills was right...we inherit the threads of history**
131. True sociological understanding comes in flashes of insight, not systematic theories
132. **All sociological theories are incomplete..**
133. **Sociology leaves everything as it is**
134. Sociology orbits the elusive centre that language cannot reach
135. **The greatest truths in sociology cannot be spoken but only felt**
136. **Sociologising is an emotional process**
137. We are the doctors of society
138. Problems in society arise when society becomes an echo of its past mistakes..
139. **Politics is the creation of myth to live by**
140. Every social norm began as a novelty..

141. Tradition is peer pressure from dead people...
142. **It is like: we build cages of culture, then lament our captivity**
143. The point is to become the body without organs
144. ***The problem of sociology hitherto is that the social proposition reveals a world; my world only***
145. ***A social proposition cannot reveal the totality of the social world but picture only my own microcosm thereof***
146. ***Sociology is much deeper than we go...we only see the surface because we are trained to..***
147. A sociological theory is at some level a sociological tautology
148. The point: **The social proposition is a tool that we use to navigate the social world, but it is a tool that is also limited by its own nature**
149. Sociology is not necessarily about theory but more so; it is about activity
150. There are things that cannot be put into social propositions; they make themselves manifest; they are felt..
151. Our social propositions are a mirror...

