

Readability

– Birth of the Cluster text, part II



Arendt
described
experimental validity as
when you put forward the best or most
beautiful option as a model for other options.
She gave the example that you will not mention
the general qualities of the most beautiful rose.
You will put forward the most beautiful rose
to be able to compare it with other roses.
We do not describe the abstract or systematic
characteristics that make the rose a rose,
and we do not pay attention to the
common features that make roses
beautiful. We want the iconic
rose among our roses.

Ars Discendi I, Ars Legendi
– Introduction to the Art of Learning

Annandreas

Publications

Är texter felskrivna?

Läslighet del 1

Läslighet del 2

Typografisk manual

(Typografiska undersökningar)

Are texts wrongly written?

Readability part 1

Readability part 2

Typographic manual

(Typographical investigations)

Part I

- 1 Reading instructions, reading expectations, inspirations, ambitions, and some reservations
- 2 Pedagogical psychology and pedagogical points
- 3 Power analytics - an initial relationship to Foucault
- 4 Phenomenology and the birth of the cluster text
- 5 Critical hermeneutics and knowledge about reading
- 6 Micro power learning (learn how to write cluster text) and techniques of discipline
- 7 Deconstruction and the text in society
- 8 Positivism and the scientific method

Part II

9 Philosophy, Morality, Knowledge

9.1 Philosophy

9.2 Morality

9.3 Knowledge

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10 The non-history of the cluster text

11 Ars Legendi – reading and learning

12 Introduction to Ars Discendi – Are texts wrongly written?

Appendix 1. Discentic references

Appendix 2. References

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9 Philosophy, Morality, Knowledge

It is easier to write ten books in philosophy than to live a single philosophical proposition¹

9 Philosophy, Morality, Knowledge

An initial example - thinking about gifts

A possible introduction to philosophy

Why should we turn to philosophers?

9.1 Philosophy

9.2 Morality

9.3 Knowledge

9.4 An intertwining of philosophy, morality, and knowledge

Now we are already familiar with some different philosophies, individual philosophers, and their thoughts. We have also started to think about ethics and morality, and we have initiated a discussion about some problems of science. The cluster text forced us to do this. It is becoming increasingly clear that we need to develop relationships to philosophy, morality, and knowledge. That is the main objective of this chapter. I will address philosophy, morality, and knowledge, in that order, and I will elaborate on different phenomena for each area. I will relate all of them to each other and to the art of learning in the end of the chapter, but first I will start with making a couple of thoughts clear.

I see knowledge and morality as related to a subject, and I see science and ethics as systems of statements. The respective statements within ethics and science are related to each other. Science and ethics can be incarnated in a subject, and then they turn into knowledge and morality. Knowledge and morality can be reached by a subject, and the subject can use them as statements in conceptual systems that then can be seen as ethics and science. Science and ethics are theories in a system. Knowledge and morality are lived by a subject. Philosophy handles them all. This is a division I sometimes use. Others see philosophy, morality, knowledge, ethics, and science in other ways.

As before, I use the cluster text to show, describe, and explain different phenomena. It raises questions about philosophy, ethics, and science but also about morality and knowledge. My hope is that you should be able to become really interested even if they are new to you. If this will not be the case, then you should at least be able to understand why there are others, such as me, who are interested. Simply put: this is a continued introduction of philosophy.

A continuous problem in this book is to try to distinguish between the perceptions we use, i.e. the ones we can or want to admit, and the perceptions necessary for an art of learning. There may be conflicts between them. There can also be conflicts between individual humans and the surrounding society. A community may have other ideas that one is forced to live by and adapt to. We may need to manage all of these problems.

I will give you short expositions of some thoughts and some objections to those thoughts in this chapter. We will see if we can get a little less confused at a lower level and a little more confused at a higher level.² Some thoughts may become clearer, a great deal more unclear, but it could give us opportunity to reach clarity in the future.

An initial example - thinking about gifts

Now I will use a simple example of to what a difference a philosophical assumption may lead, what such an assumption may require of us, and not least, what it may require from philosophers.

I will use inspiration from a thought about gifts³ to highlight the possible importance of philosophy and its opportunities. Additionally, the example will show how my understanding of philosophy relates to ethics/morality and science/knowledge.

I think our common sense tells us that we should say thank you when we receive a gift. We should be thankful and express it. The expressed ›thank you‹ is seen as a sign of gratitude. But we could try to use a different perception and put our common sense to test. Maybe we should not say thank you when we receive a gift? An argument for this is that a giver must be respected as a giver. If you give a gift and expect something in return, it will not be a real gift. Then you are trying to oblige the recipient. A gift is not about give and take. If you say thank you, you will release the giver from the gift and turn the event into a transaction.

The giver may not want to make a transaction - s/he wants to give a gift. We could say that we are trampling on the giver when we say thank you - we do not respect the giver as a giver.

This approach requires a specific analysis of what it is that we do both when we are giving a gift and when we are saying thank you. This can of course be put into question, but I think you understand what I mean. Different analyses about what it is we do when we are giving a gift and what it is we do when we are receiving a gift cause us to relate differently to gift giving. The different analyses could cause us to conduct disciplinary actions in different ways. Institutional educators and parents nurture children to say thank you. It can lead to a discourse of well-behaved children who spontaneously say thank you. You are surely familiar with this approach. It could be wrong.

To be able to form a culture from the alternative thinking about gifts, many people must change their basic perceptions and assumptions. If many chose to do so, we would have a different culture. We would relate differently to each other. The actual effect is an empirical question. We could possibly become happier and more generous. Maybe we should concentrate on giving gifts instead of becoming calculating creatures expecting a thank you for all our accomplishments?

To facilitate a scientific study of this phenomenon we have to form such a culture. Possibly, nearby practices may also need to change for the effect to be good. It is possible that we never may be able to conduct any such studies because people will not choose to live in such a way, and then we will never know, i.e. we will never be able to conduct scientific studies. Common sense must change to enable this. This is not easy to change, and we will never be able to approach truth in this matter. Whatever the case, someone must pursue philosophy (thinking) for it to be possible. If we were wise, we could have found what could be the case. It is

more common that we continue and uphold our tradition, which is another type of rationality. We are rational, but maybe not sensible.

Philosophical reflections on morality and knowledge can be important for our ways of living, i.e. for our way of disciplining ourselves and others. They can play a large role in how we pay attention to ourselves and others. It can affect our well-being and happiness.

The above example is only one of many possible scenarios. Our culture could have been different if we would have lived by other assumptions. Empirico-scientific research is limited to how things are. Important philosophical reflections about how we should relate to different phenomena could be missing to be able to perform empirical studies. This does not only apply to the social sciences. Right now, I may be showing that by the text. Einstein showed it in physics. He had to attach a different meaning to time, space, matter, and light to reach the theory of relativity. A few years later, we were able to conduct empirico-scientific studies to check if Einstein was right. It is sometimes easier in the natural sciences where one does not depend on getting people to live in a particular way in order to examine how it is. There may therefore be reason to think about how we see the world and ourselves. It may have consequences for our ways of living.

A possible introduction to philosophy

I think it is hard for most people to read philosophy and become interested. There is too much to read for this to happen. Often, it is not enough only to read a book or two to become interested. More often, you become discouraged – it is too much and too hard. You may be discouraged already in advance because of a certain perception of philosophy. A better introduction could possibly be to start thinking about one's own life, i.e. about one's own world and the surrounding world. When you get many questions, and there

are ambiguities, you will perhaps feel the need for some help. You have accumulated thoughts and want some clarity. Then you can first try to turn to science. You may get some answers, but other things are still unclear. Then you can turn to philosophy. When you face philosophy, it can be tough since it quickly becomes difficult. You may have become accustomed to science where there is a more straightforward approach. But if you then stick to your questions, the motivation to bring clarity could cause you to stick to philosophy. With this educational assumption, you should possibly not attend a course in philosophy and start with what philosophers have written or what philosophy is all about. You should start accumulating questions and continue until the sense of uncertainty prevails and the desire to manage it occurs. Therefore, I have waited for more than five hundred pages before I turn to the general questions of philosophy, morality, and knowledge. Hopefully, you have gathered some questions, so that you really want to read this chapter. You may *feel* the need to know a little more. I have tried to bring forth issues and ways to be active that you can relate to before we enter these areas. I am trying to live the educational assumption I have thought about of how we could discover philosophy in a motivating way.

Why should we turn to philosophers?

Of course, one might wonder why we should turn to philosophy and different philosophers to reach inspiration for how we should live. I will address this.

If we will live as most people around us, we will be determined by our surroundings. We become a part of the tradition. It is one way of living among many possible. You can find inspiration elsewhere to reach other perceptions about ourselves and the world. We can, e.g., turn to comic books. At a young age, I was influenced by the sports comic *Buster*.

There are many sources to which we could turn. Different sources in the world literature, fiction, self-help books, politics, religion, other organisations of a similar nature, as well as movies, tv shows, and other media material can all provide ideas on how to live. In some cases, religion can be particularly useful. If you live in Rio de Janeiro, one of the most dangerous cities in the world, you can turn to religion. You may believe that your life is in the hands of God, and therefore, you will dare to enter the streets without any fear. Religion can serve as a way to cope with fears. God willing...

All sources that lead to ideas on how to live a life could occupy our mind with these ideas. To know a little of how we want to live our lives can feel rewarding in itself. We know a little about our goals and intentions. Therefore, some of us keep to such goals - regardless of their nature. Ideas on how to live a life can be sticky. They linger. Such sticky complete ways of living could cause problems if we want to live in another way.

You can also turn to science and to those who have completed academic-scientific educations, e.g. psychologists. A tradition that is spreading is positive psychology. It is an approach where you focus less on psychological illnesses and more on how healthy and happy people live. You could probably turn to science concerning many matters, but you will often come to a point where the issues will become more philosophical in their nature.

It is easier, and probably more common, to turning to your immediate surroundings. We turn to parents, friends, and other people we come in contact with in your everyday life. They contribute with ideas on how to live. Furthermore, they constitute a limitation. We must relate to them. In a way of life, someone close may cause us to pay attention to mistakes that we are about to commit, but those people could also be the ones that support us in making a mistake. The most common is probably that we are led by our

environment, i.e. our tradition, our surrounding world, on how to live and to our thoughts on how to live.

We can have different goals of what we are looking for in a philosophy of life. One possibility is to seek sources that contribute to a particular mood or feeling. Then you can turn to poetry, music, or some metaphysical philosophers. You can also live in a way that leads to emotional highlights, i.e. you can live as a sensation-seeker.

Artists, actors, influencers, and other idols are also possible role models that could contribute with views on how to live that some people take interest in. Some want to become celebrities, rich, or both. Others want to do good deeds.

But we can also turn to philosophers and philosophical discussions to reach answers on how to live. A problem in our time is that many of them are academic philosophers writing for other academics. They can use technical terms and work with certain problems in a special branch of philosophy. Then it is not certain that you can turn to them. In this sense, they have more in common with scientists who are trying to solve a particular problem, and then we may not be able to turn them if we are not interested in that same particular problem. Philosophers may have become academics that do not address the issue of how to live, and in this sense, philosophers may not be true philosophers anymore. Another problem is that they often are educated at universities and have lived, and still lives, as examinees and examiners. If we are not interested in how to live a life in a room at a university – who should we turn to then?

When I am thinking about a turn to philosophy, I do it in the sense that philosophers should ponder the questions of life and how to live. They read, or should read, much about those who have tried to give answers to such questions. You can get different answers from different philosophers, or philosophies, on how to live. It would have been particularly helpful if we could turn to different descriptions on how to

live. Then we could have followed them when are trying to live our own lives. Unfortunately, such descriptions are rare. Academic philosophers do not usually help us with such issues. They are doing other things. To whom should we turn if the philosophers will not help us? To answer these questions, in a helpful way, can be considered being *the* task for philosophers. Otherwise, someone else may do it, which might lead to consequences other than those we may wish for.

A particular reason for turning to philosophy is that it can provide assistance that will enable us to vary our own thinking, which I have tried to show you in the previous chapters. I have presented a number of perspectives that can assist our thinking. I have tried to show their possible advantages and how we can use them to reach different thoughts, i.e. to think differently. Therefore, we could also turn to philosophy for support to deal with our own thinking, which later may affect how we choose to live.

A great advantage of turning to philosophy is that it is (mostly) anti-authoritarian and at least partially hostile to tradition. Philosophers do not require that we should follow their thinking. They expect us to try to form our own thinking. For those wanting to break out of a tradition by doing something else, something possibly better than to live in a supposed tradition, it could be advantageous to turning to philosophy. Many philosophers have done just that. Philosophers often represent a peaceful way of life. They battle with their best arguments – with words, not weapons. You are not expected to destroy someone’s life or indoctrinate someone based on your ideas. In philosophy, you are expected to think. No one will tell us what to think, but many will object to how we are thinking. We can be grateful for that. It means that we get the chance to be notified when we think wrong, and it can provide opportunities to improve our thinking. It could lead to a better life, and that is why we should turn to philosophy.

Your time was: minutes. This chapter contained 3000 words, the table of contents and footnotes excluded.

Your result: Words/minutes = 3000/ = wpm.

Reading speed in wpm	Reading time in minutes	The pedagogical points
100 wpm	30 min.	Biographies object background experiences
200 wpm	15 min.	
300 wpm	10 min.	Zone performativity of proximal development
400 wpm	7.5 min.	
500 wpm	6 min.	initial relations
600 wpm	5 min.	concepts stories

1 Leo Tolstoy, I think, I do not know the source. Bio. Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910). He is best known for *Anna Karenina* and *War and Peace*, but he also wrote a great deal about moral and social issues. He inspired Wittgenstein and many others.

2 Still confused but at a higher level, as the saying goes.

3 I do not remember whether I read it myself, or how I would otherwise become aware of this kind of reasoning. I thought it was from Levinas that I got the idea. But it could be Derrida. I may also have mixed thoughts from both. I remembered something about gifts but not more than that. That was before I thought I would have to use references, before I ever thought I would write something.

9.1 Philosophy

One might also give the name »Philosophy« to what is possible before all new discoveries and inventions⁴

9.1 Philosophy

9.1.1 The concept of philosophy

Etymology

Analysis

What is philosophy?

9.1.2 The actions of philosophers

Philosophical wonder

Philosophy as the art of posing questions

Philosophical despair and wonder

The difficult philosophy

Philosophy as the art of giving answers

The quest for clarity

9.1.3 Philosophy and other activities

Philosophy and religion

Philosophy and art

Philosophy and the history of ideas

Philosophy and science

Philosophy, science, and doxology

Philosophy and common people

9.1.4 The philosophical self

Putting down the rules for your own self

Philosophical skills

A philosophy of life

Academic philosophy

Philosophers as generalists

9.1.5 Problems and tools

The problems of philosophy

The tools of philosophy

Philosophy and language

Intertwinings and separations

9.1.6 An initial division of philosophical areas

Ontology/metaphysics

Epistemology/theory of knowledge

Axiology/value theory

Synthesis

9.1.7 A philosophical encyclopaedia

Logic

Argumentation theory

Philosophy of language

Philosophical semantics

Rhetoric

Philosophy of science

Aesthetics

Political philosophy

Ethics and action theory

Philosophy of mind

Cognitive science

Philosophical anthropology

Social philosophy

The history of philosophy

9.1.8 Philosophy in some other divisions

Theoretical and practical philosophy

Continental and analytical philosophy

Speculative and analytic philosophy

Philosophy and applied philosophy

Philosophy in different areas

9.1.9 Philosophers through history

A brief list of philosophers and other thinkers
who have influenced our thinking

A short history of thought and philosophy

The philosophy in our time - philosophy then,
now, and in the future

9.1.10 Philosophy and life - action theory/philosophy
of life

Philosophy and the active life

Philosophy and the contemplative life

9.1.11 My philosophy

9.1.12 Introduction to the Art of learning -
Philosophy

9.1.13 Food for thought

In the last chapter, I tried to destabilise science, even though its goals and methods should not be dismissed. In this section, philosophy is probably in need of a stabilisation. It seems as if many still have an idea of philosophy as dry, fuzzy, or obscure. In this chapter, I would like to give you an opportunity to change that perception. For those who already appreciate philosophy, I hope to contribute to a chapter, and a whole book, that you should be able to recommend as a good introduction to philosophy. Those are some of the main ideas behind this whole book, and it is particularly evident in this section 9.1 and the whole ninth chapter.

In the previous chapters, I have had the intention to make an initial exposition so you can enter into the field of philosophy, and at the same time, I wanted to establish initial relations for the art of learning. It is of course so that the initial relations may not last forever. They can change as our thinking changes. They can change as the art of learning changes. In a beginning, you follow a direction, and I want to clarify it. This is also an example of how philosophy can be used. You can see how I try to use it to create an art of learning, and you can try to use it to create your own project.

It is not easy to know where to start when you should introduce philosophy. How should you describe it to someone who does not know much - who even may be hostile to it and see it as fuzzy or obscure, i.e. as something you cannot use? How do you show the importance and the possibilities of philosophy? I have used this question to try to write this book, this chapter, and particularly this section 9.1. In addition, I am trying to take it one step further. How should we establish a relationship to

philosophy? I will patiently try to address this and some related issues.

9.1.1 The concept of philosophy

All answers you could think of, whatever the question will be, will necessarily contain concepts and propositions. The potential eternal task of philosophy may be to investigate concepts, propositions, and system of propositions. The belief in definitions and unambiguous concepts was probably strong in the first half of the 1900s, but it proved difficult to implement. If language, society, and the world would have been stable, like a frozen world, philosophers would possibly have had a chance to succeed in reaching such unambiguous terms. This might never be the case. It may be important to abandon such a rigid attitude without abandoning the hope of achieving greater clarity. A significant part of the philosophers work, perhaps the most important part, is to develop ideas and methods, so we will be able to deal with concepts, propositions, systems of propositions, and how different systems of propositions relate to each other in a sensible way.

Etymology

Etymologically⁵ philosophy means the love of wisdom. Philia and Sophia are in Greek, and they translate to love and wisdom.

There are different types of love. There were different concepts of love already in antiquity. Agape, eros, and philia are such examples, and I will soon return to them. There are also different kinds of wisdom or knowledge. Etymologically, we may not reach much longer.

We can turn to history and ask what kinds of concepts of love and wisdom have been used, when they were introduced, and what they meant at a certain time. It was probably Pythagoras who started to use the term philosophy

2500 years ago. He used it to mark a contrast to sophists. Sophists were wise men who taught rhetoric for payment. They got a bad reputation. Philosophers would never stoop to such a level that they would charge for what they did. It is of course easy when you are rich. The philosophers considered themselves conducting another love of wisdom than the sophists.

Analysis

To ask about what the word philosophy means can be an analytical exercise in compliance with chapter 8. In an analysis, you split a word into its components. The word philosophy, philosophia, can be split into philia and sophia - love and wisdom. In an analysis, the goal is to split a concept as far as possible. You can investigate the concepts individually and then put them together again.

Love may include the nature of friendship (agape), respectfully love, love of thy neighbour, love of a loved one, love for objects, or erotic love (eros). But it is probably not about any of these forms of love when we concern ourselves with philosophy. Philia is a more quiet love. It is about a disinterested interest of wisdom for its own sake and not for its benefits or pleasure. This influence is seen in scientists who is working in science for the sake of science (and not for their own sake). This is also the case for the truth seeker who seeks the truth for its own sake.

Wisdom, sophia, can also be interpreted differently. Knowledge is a kind of wisdom. One possibility is to interpret wisdom as a kind of knowledge of how to live. This happens with perceptions about the world and humanity. Then knowledge and wisdom is about what the world is like and how we should live in it. It is probably in this direction we initially should think about philosophy.

If we relate the concepts, we have a special kind of love of wisdom. It is an interest in the love of wisdom for its own sake. This is one possible analysis - among others.

What is philosophy?

Both the etymology and the analysis led to the conception of philosophy as a love of wisdom. We can expand this view. We can assume that philosophy ceases to be philosophy when the love of wisdom turns into another category. When the love of wisdom turns into a love that is dependent on the benefits of what you do to achieve success in a society, it may no longer be philosophy. When you are no longer interested in the wisdom of the world and man for their own sake, but rather want to make money, it might not be philosophy. But perhaps it should also be seen as a philosophy. It is a certain kind of philosophy of life. However, the proper love is lacking for it to be regarded as »true« philosophy.

For some, philosophy could be seen as when a person or a group of people live with a particular faith, i.e. a system of beliefs. In that sense, philosophy is a philosophy of life. For others, philosophy is a rational examination of our existence. Then it can also be about personal decisions concerning existential questions. To understand the existential questions can also mean that you try to understand reality. It can therefore include all science. For others, philosophy is an activity that is characterised by a method and a goal. This you have seen in the earlier chapters. You can use them to explore our existence.

There are other ideas about what philosophy is. Of course, all philosophers do not have the same idea about what philosophy is and what it is not. Some of these differences can be noticed through this section and throughout this book. Different philosophers give different answers to what philosophy is and how you should, or could, be active with it. One possibility would be to gather all the different perceptions of philosophy and if there then is a common feature among all of them, it would be the essence of philosophy, i.e. we could try to find the essence of philosophy. In such a view, we might say that the essence of

philosophy is abstract thinking. Philosophy is thinking about thinking – it is the means we can use to reflect upon our thinking. This thinking includes actions and reality, i.e. the world of man and the world.

If we are not looking for an essence, we could try to answer the question of what philosophy is in another way. An alternative is to present different perceptions of philosophy without seeking an essence. Then the answer will be non-reductionist, and one can show the similarities and differences in the perceptions of philosophy. In a linguistic-philosophical analysis, we could ask how we use the concept of philosophy – without striving for an essence.

The essentialist and the non-reductionist answers are examples of how philosophy has developed since the beginning of philosophy. The most common view has probably been to search for essences, and then you try to build systems starting from them. More recently, philosophy has become more non-reductionist.

What philosophy *is* is possible to answer in different ways, but what philosophy *really is* is not easy to answer. Now it seems fuzzy and obscure, but the issue may not allow for any precise answer. Giving precise answers where they cannot be found could be perceived as nonsense. It is a false precision. Answers should be as precise as the issue permits. Those who believe philosophy to be fuzzy and obscure, may rather live in false certainty than in a more accurate uncertainty.

Hopefully, we have become a little wiser, but we are still not sure about what philosophy is. Let us look for some answers in a different direction.

9.1.2 The actions of philosophers

A concept analysis is an example of a tool that philosophers can use. You can use it to try to figure out what a concept

could mean. If we instead ask what philosophers have done, we can make a further contribution to the perception of philosophy. There can be a whole practice of actions in a theoretical concept, and then we could assume that philosophy is about what philosophers are doing, have been doing, or will do in the future. In such cases, we turn to the history of philosophy. That is what I do. I have outlined ways to become active with different kinds of thinking in the first eight chapters.

Now, I will mention something more of how philosophers have thought, felt, and acted in a general exposition.

Philosophical wonder

Wonder is the beginning of philosophy - Aristotle wrote. Philosophy can be seen as a wonder, and especially as a wonder about our lives and our world. In wonder, we may end up in the Socratic insight that we do not know. We end up in a Socratic attitude. Socrates expressed that the only thing we know is that we do not know. We end up in a Socratic humility. If we know that we do not know, we have to be careful when we present our answers, and we should thus be motivated to continue asking questions and seeking answers. We need to learn how to pose questions and give answers. If we succeed in calming some of our wonders, we can follow another wonder.

There are assumptions in everything we do. Such assumptions have implications for how we view the world, i.e. for what we could think about the world and ourselves. We could describe philosophers as cosmologists. Cosmos means world, and then philosophy can be understood as a wonder about the world. It could be questions about the philosophy of nature and the natural sciences, but also about social philosophy and the social sciences. Philosophers are cosmologists seeking to understand the world. Understanding begins with wonder. We can understand the world scientifically and philosophically. In

the beginning, in ancient times, there was no difference between them as science, as we know it, was not invented/discovered. To try to understand the world means that we initiate drafts of meaning and share them with others to hear what they have to say.

To understand the world or cosmos also means to understand man, which after all is part of cosmos. Most importantly - we started to pose questions. Even if you cannot use the scientific method, you can begin to speculate. In some cases, it may seem as wild speculations, but in many cases, you try to speculate in a sensible way. Philosophy is all about brightening and enlightening where there so far only has been darkness. It can happen when the rational drafts improve. Usually, it is the first questions that are the most difficult to pose. You can get quite far with a single question. It leads to an answer. It can begin with wonder. Those who do not wonder will often just act as usual. They follow the tradition. It is not very philosophical.

Philosophy as the art of posing questions

With wonder, questions arise. Sometimes, philosophy is said to be the activity where you are looking for answers to the deepest of questions. Thus, philosophy can be seen as an art of questioning, i.e. the art of posing questions. It is a way of learning how to pose questions. I think I have become better at it by my reading of philosophy. More and more questions pop up, and you can pose them in more productive ways. With a good question, it is easier to reach answers. With a non-proper question, or a weird problem, you can be led in the wrong directions. Some philosophers have achieved most of their fame by posing proper questions and guiding our thinking in a new direction. It is always difficult to be first with a question. It is characteristic of some philosophers that they were better at posing a question in a productive way than to give satisfactory answers.

Philosophical despair and wonder

With many unanswered questions, you may feel some despair. Our questions can be difficult and our answers unsatisfactory. Despair is an obstacle you have to get past. Most refrain and call philosophy fuzzy or obscure. They do not problematise their assumptions. They probably think they are happy enough.

It can be tough when you get the idea that you need to develop your own opinion in an area or on a particular issue. With a wonder larger than despair, you have to work frantically to reach your own opinion. I had to do this concerning the cluster text. I felt despair for 2-3 years when I tried to develop the cluster text theory and become more certain about it. Certainty is tricky.

When philosophers make progress, different things can be clearer, while at the same time, it may lead to a plethora of new questions. In that sense, philosophy is a bit fashionable. In the beginning, you have a great hope that much can be solved with the new fashion of doing philosophy. Over time, despair might rise again. You did not come as far as you wanted. A good example is the development of logic. Aristotle established his logic about 2400 years ago. In more than 2000 years, logic was the Aristotelian logic. Then Frege and Russell founded modern logic, and many believed that most problems could be solved or resolved. Great progress was made, but limitations were also discovered. Much got clearer, but they also detected problems in the philosophy of logic and in the use of logic. A little despair rose again. But with a wonder larger than despair, you can still take an interest in philosophy.

The difficult philosophy

For a beginner, the love of wisdom can be either frustrating or overwhelming. The question is whether one will ever be anything but a beginner in philosophy. In relation to other practices, in which there is such that can be interpreted as

major progress, the progress in philosophy is more modest. The odd character of the subject means that there is no easy start, no easy answers, and few certain conclusions. In each area, it quickly becomes difficult. Philosophers must reach perceptions in many areas and prepare arguments for their beliefs. There are a variety of answers, several objections, and it constantly becomes more and more difficult. We must probably accept an initial confusion and a feeling that you almost never know anything for certain. One must probably also accept that this feeling never disappears. In successful cases, there may be moments when you think you have understood something. Perhaps it is then you can feel the disinterested love of wisdom. In other cases, philosophy can become very difficult. Some probably believe that we are now living in a complete crisis of meaning. We cannot express clear meaning, and we will never be able to reach such a point. The major goals of philosophy are hopeless. In such cases, advocates of such an approach must be prepared to present what we should do in such a situation.

Philosophy as the art of giving answers

Despite difficulties and despair, philosophers reach answers to some of the questions. It would not make any sense if an art of posing questions did not lead to any answers. It is difficult to assess the consistency of the answers. We need to form our judgement. Our questions and answers will hopefully help us with that. I am trying to develop our judgement in this book. I am giving you a question to answer, and I am showing my way of answering it. You can think about it, develop your judgement, and try to give a proper answer.

The quest for clarity

When some claim there is a crisis of meaning, there are others striving for clarity. One could argue that philosophy is

an attempt to think clearer about an issue, i.e. about some aspect related to our lives or our world. It is often some fundamental or important issue. If we experience greater clarity concerning such an issue, many smaller issues may also get an answer.

9.1.3 Philosophy and other activities

It is possible to separate philosophy from other areas such as religion, art, science, and the history of ideas. Sometimes they are intertwined, but there could also be reason to see them as separated. By understanding what religion, art, and science are, we can perhaps also understand what philosophy is. We can relate them to each other, and then we can try to figure out what philosophy is.

Philosophy and religion

Philosophy differs from religion especially by its lack of beliefs that one must profess. There are no rituals, no church, no buildings, no gods, no parish, no clans, and no clergy. The verification method often used in religion is revelation. They are recorded in religious writings. Those who practice religious lives often use revelations and scriptures as their verification methods. Those two methods, commonly accepted in religion, are not accepted within philosophy.

In the philosophy of religion, and in theology, one can study issues relating religion and philosophy. Many philosophers have been religious. To some extent, philosophy and religion have *beliefs* in common, but the ways you use reason to rationalise and practice them differ.

With religion, we approach mysticism, sects, and some other human practices that can be considered pseudo-intellectual by some. One may wonder if they are philosophy. There are in the sense that they offer a way of life, i.e. a philosophy of life. It should be acceptable to live

as a scientologist⁶ even though it can be seen as nonsense from another viewpoint. It is in any case a way of life that some people want to live. This also applies to religious convictions. Such ways of living could be accepted – at least as long as they do not harm others.

Philosophy announces itself especially when the expected ways of living, i.e. the tradition, do not harmonise with what you wish. There is opportunity to use arguments to invent and discover new ways of living based on alternative views. In religion, you often cling to more traditional ways of living. The life which is regarded as the most traditional can also be considered as the most orthodox and pure. This is not the case in philosophy.

Philosophy and art

Philosophy differs from art as you are analysing and arguing for and against opinions rather than trying to express them in an artistic way. The latter is done in art. The aesthetic requirement is often highest in the arts. It is usually not in philosophy. Art is often created in order to experience something, and another goal may be to artistically portray thoughts, feelings, or actions. Yet another goal may be to create a feeling, not just to portray it. Philosophy can also help artists, but the philosophical goals are not the main purpose. Philosophy is aimed at a different kind of experience that often has a chain of reasoning as its ultimate goal. In philosophy, you can talk about art, in art you make art.

You can study art without exercising it. This is tougher in philosophy. You need not be an artist, musician, or poet to study art, music, and poetry. But in philosophy, you must engage in the arguments as a philosopher does it. You have to develop some of the same capabilities as the great thinkers even if you will not reach the same level as them.

In a sense, philosophy can be understood as an art of living. In that sentence, it has much in common with all

other arts. It may require meticulous training both to live in a certain way and to become a master in an art.

Philosophy and the history of ideas

A historian of ideas could be interested in ideas, their development, and their practical significance. Philosophers can also be interested in that, but they could mainly be interested in the truth of the ideas and the way you argue about them. The history of ideas can be a gateway to philosophy.

Philosophy and science

If you previously have studied a scientific discipline with a certain educational strategy, your own expectations can make it difficult to relate to philosophy. There are no standard answers, as in other sciences, such as mathematics, physics, biology, economics, nursing, or psychology. There is no preferred body of knowledge that you are supposed to learn. In the sciences, there is often an educational body that you are expected to master, and if you do, you can often solve some problems. This difference may be the reason why some people see philosophy as too abstract, fuzzy, or obscure. They want to acquire it as a science. But it cannot be done as evidently. There are almost no clear problems with clear solutions, and if there are, you are still supposed to understand different views concerning the problem and its solution. Mathematics and experimental accuracy cannot be used in philosophy as easily as in some sciences. The closest we come is to use the tools of logic to think about some problems.

Simply put, philosophical theories are different from those found in other sciences in that they are more basic and more difficult to prove or disprove in a widely accepted manner. What may seem obvious in one area might lead to difficult consequences in some other areas. It makes the

philosophical theories more controversial. There are almost always some controversies.

Science approaches philosophy when it approaches more uncertain areas. It is possible to achieve much medical knowledge with scientific methods, but when you pose the question about what health is, it immediately becomes more difficult. An answer to that question gets practical implications for insurances.

In the beginning of philosophy, there was no division between philosophy and science. If you wanted to be wise, you had to study all the sciences. Based on some philosophy, the different sciences must cross different thresholds to be considered a science. Methods for specific applications are being developed within specific areas. One way to look at philosophy is then to see it as the activity where you study the problems and issues that cannot be dealt with by the special sciences. Sometimes, the answers to these questions form the basis of a new science or a new theory or practice within a science. Even when the sciences step over the thresholds separating them from philosophy and they become more independent, they could include a great deal of thought that can be considered philosophical. Pedagogics/education is one such example. In Sweden, it freed itself from philosophy during the early 1900s, but in many countries it is still studied in philosophy. Many disciplines separate themselves by turning away from the human dimensions. Many disciplines probably have to return because they did. The social areas of human life can be difficult to study without human dimensions, i.e. one must deal with our mind-body and its relationship to values.

One might wonder whether philosophy is just a science among all others, or how it otherwise relates to the sciences. Earlier, it was often thought of as an independent discipline. Now, many positivists and analysts see philosophy as a help or tool to the sciences. They may consider philosophy as scientific as it uses a scientific