

Contradiction as a Form of Life

Widerspruch als Lebensform

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Is morality a question of logic...

In order to give us **orientation** in the world **modern moral philosophy** tries to solve the problem of moral justification: Why should I be moral at all? What is the binding force of moral demands?

The **predominant answer** is that **reasonable self-reflection** already holds the key to these questions. If and only if we can think moral demands **without contradiction**, they are valid.



... or a matter of perspective?

The reflexive response wants to be understood as **moral progress** in comparison to moral justification **by tradition**. However, even today a number of authors hold on to the view that moral concepts gain their validity and intelligibility only **on the basis of the tradition they are rooted in**. For what is considered reasonable and free of contradiction is indeed **not universal and ahistorical**. But is this perspective **relativism** an alternative?

Language and Society

A contradiction is a **contradiction by virtue of an established rule** and as such it is characterized by the **practice** that follows it. This practice can only be understood as **social and historical**. It is therefore the other way round: practice defines the contradiction. This relationship is contained in the **concept of the form of life**. It differs radically from traditional moral reasoning in the sense that it is not relative to perspective.



Resonance and Ritual

This **thesis of philosophy of language** has consequences for moral philosophy: the question of justification itself turns out to be the expression of a certain form of life. Thus it can be interpreted as a **quasi-ritual practice**. However, this means that the claim of modern moral philosophy contradicts itself, which is why it **cannot form a sphere of resonance**. This can be seen in **the exclusion of central social problems from moral philosophy** (e.g. the NS).

Theories in Constellation

The project brings **Ludwig Wittgenstein's** philosophy of language in dialogue with the social philosophy of **Theodor W. Adorno**. It develops both into a **critical theory of morality**. In this way it builds bridges across the analytical-continental divide.

The project profits from the profound historical knowledge provided by the other members of the research group, esp. my tandem partner.



Current Status / Next Steps

The project is **in its second year** and is in the process of preparing a **preliminary comprehensive version**. Parts of the project have been successfully presented at **international conferences**.

At the moment, the methodological presentation of the argument is being worked on. Also, I work on the first draft of the final chapter.

Images

All images are public domain. The imagery refers to the central metaphors my chapters are modeled around. My photograph was taken by Cornelia Domino.

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