

June 24

I made some real progress tonight; In my **dreaming** project, I mean. I slept much better, although, again, I had a multitude of dreams. I woke up around three at night, with a new variety of dreams still vivid in my head. Only this time I was fully aware of the **attention** they deserve. So I didn't just turn on my other side and make an effort to fall back asleep. Instead, I got up, drank a glass of water, and sat in bed, reflecting on the dreams; trying to reconstruct them, understand them. It was interesting. The dreams were interesting. After doing this for some ten or fifteen minutes, I involuntarily and effortlessly glided back into sleep. And woke up again this morning, feeling I've had a **good** night's sleep. I also remember the best part of the dreams. It seems that the original dream experience is not the **story** of the dream, but a variety of **feelings**, which got 'translated' into 'story format' upon awakening. Let me give an example: As I woke up at night, I tried to remember **who** my last dream was about. The person in question was someone close to me, in the context of work; my office. It was either Rivka, or one of two assistants I had years ago. I know it was someone I liked and depended on, but could not determine which it was. I only remembered my **attitude** towards this person, not the person herself. And then, sitting there in the dark, I realized that it **wasn't** one of those. It was **just** my attitude; no **person**. The 'attachment' of the person, the superimposition of categories like (identities of) people and (locations of) places, is not a part of the dream itself. It is something we do afterwards. We try to determine the **identity**⁶⁴ of **the** person, but there was none: The dream is pure attitudes, **feelings**. Almost as if we 'accumulate' a variety of feelings in our waking life, based on waking experiences, and then, at night, we just play with the feelings, without the **things** the feelings are 'supposed' to be **about**. Another bulletin tomorrow.

I got up relatively early, so I went on a short pre-breakfast walk alone. Today is Saturday (*Zaterdag*), and it is *Musikdaag* ('music day') in Edam. A kind of festival, or fair. People were putting up platforms and stands with a variety of goods for sale, especially artworks. It was a busy pre-market atmosphere - no customers yet. I walked between the stands, watching them work. I stopped by one of the displays that was all ready, with an elderly couple behind it, sitting and having a sandwich. It was a display of clay sculptures, mostly people and animals. It was not completely realistic, more 'artistic', impressionist style. I found the sculptures very beautiful. I was observing them at length, thinking about Gaya's explanations, when I suddenly realized that the clay figures **were all sad**. There were many variations, but most of the figures manifested some sort of agony, or grief, or just sadness. At any rate, none of the figures seemed **happy**. When I realized this, I felt a bit

⁶⁴ **Identity**: What do we mean by 'They are identical', or 'A is identical to B'? Leibniz¹⁰³ maintained that identity between two things is their sharing **all** (their) properties: If every predicate that applies to A also applies to B, and vice versa, (including 'negative attributes, e.g. 'not red'). The problem that arises from this conception is: How, then, can they be **distinguished** for the purpose of making the **statement** regarding their identity? For identity to be **claimed**, the two terms must be distinguishable, thus already differing in **some** respect. Leibniz realized this, of course. He used this 'definition' of identity to make a different point altogether: To substantiate his claim that there is **no** identity! That the basic 'units' of being are completely isolated, and therefore **cannot** be compared.

repelled by the display. I told the couple behind the stand: “They are all very beautiful, but none of them is **happy**! They are all sad!” The couple was very surprised. They wanted to automatically deny it; They must have never thought of it like this. Before they said anything I continued: “Look! Show me one that is happy!”. They were confused, maybe a bit annoyed at my criticism. The woman finally pointed to a huge (sad) elephant, with a tiny, hardly visible Indian kid sitting on it, playing an even tinier flute: “Here. **He** is happy.” I looked closely at the skinny Indian sitting on the elephant. I did not see signs of happiness, but I cannot say he looked very sad either. I said: “Yes. He is happy.” and left the stand.

I had a problem with Gaya’s notion of **beautiful**. Some of those sculptures were real beautiful works of art, by any standard. Still, the emotions they ‘contained’ cannot be considered **good**; One of them is particularly vivid in my mind: A grouping of faces (of people), all clutched together into a kind of bundle, all bearing an expression of complete horror, eyes and mouths open with absolute fear. Very strong image. It reminded me immediately of holocaust pictures. Still, it was beautiful; very **artistic**. Is **this** a (lingual) expression of the **good**? It is an expression all right; I even agree that it is the expression of the feeling the artist wanted to **communicate** with his creation. But not of the **good**! I wanted to go back and find out whether the couple was **Jewish**; I bet they are. But I didn’t. I told Gaya the story over breakfast. She asked whether I’ll take her there after breakfast. I agreed, but added: “Works of art express **other** emotions besides *magic moments* or the artists feeling of elation. I would say the most part of art does precisely the opposite: It describes painful, sometimes **horrible** feelings!” Gaya replied: “I don’t have to spell everything out for you explicitly. I am too explicit as at is. Part of the chewing you have to do yourself. You were writing about the **good**, and you were asking about the **beautiful**. Between **good** and **bad** there is a whole range of shades of gray, with a variety of undertones. Artists who want to communicate the very **good** that they know, create a beautiful piece that succeeds in conveying this feeling. But an artist who is in pain, and wants to communicate **it**, creates a piece like the one you saw this morning. If he is talented (is a very **competent** speaker), he will create something that (deliberately) invokes a **bad** feeling, an unpleasant emotion. People call these creations **beautiful** because they are **successful**: they succeed in conveying the negative feeling. But in my dictionary, it is not **beautiful**. It is **expressive**, saturated with emotion, displays talent, but not beautiful. Let me give you an extreme example: Think of a picture or sculpture of a big man whipping a small helpless child with a whip. The man has the most realistic evil expression; the child the most realistic and touching expression of horror. The artist was

° I propose to understand **identity** as a property of (pairs of) *wffs*, not of what they denote. A *wff* is (itself) nothing but a property, but not every property is a *wff* (most are not). *Wffs* are a subset of (the totality of) a speaker’s properties, and may be compared with each other. Example: Say A is a *wff*, denoting an object. (We may **think** about the object without using A, but we cannot **speak** about it without using the name A). If B also denotes the same property, then A is identical to B. We may, of course, also say they are **synonymous**, but than we would explicitly be making a statement about **language**, not the **world**. When we say that A is **identical** to B, we don’t want to be understood as making a statement about language. We want to be understood as making a statement about the world. Especially for **objectivist** speakers, there is a **world** of a difference between the two.

no doubt extremely talented. It is perfect craftsmanship, and the emotions seem to jump out of it and grab you. I think that a display of **bad** can never be considered beautiful. Although it is definitely **art**: Part of language.”

It was a wonderful day again. It was still cool and cloudy before breakfast, but when I went again, with Gaya, the clouds were gone, and a real carnival atmosphere was already in the air. The musical events started with a ‘bell concert’: The bell tower of the smaller, older church in the center of Edam was playing tunes, that were on the border between classic and contemporary music. There were tourists everywhere. All the restaurants and cafes had all their chairs and tables outside, and we were walking amongst the crowd, feeling like the **hosts**. Funny feeling. I’ve been here almost two weeks, and felt completely at home; Not to speak about Gaya, who was at home everywhere. I was observing the infinitely diverse displays, enjoying all the things that I didn’t really **need**. At another time, I would probably have bought some. At least some little things, particularly pretty ones, for my home, or for Esti, for the kids, for friends. But now there seemed no point. Buying things didn’t really appeal to me. They were most pretty, and proper, where they were: On display, on the stands. I thought to myself: Good thing that most are **normal**, not like me; Otherwise all the peddlers here would have gone out of business.

° Speaking of Leibniz, a few more remarks are in order. He is considered the other great 17th century **rationalist**, besides Spinoza. (The two have in fact met once, not far from **here**, in Amsterdam, and had four days of philosophical discussions). Consider the following passage from the *Monadology*¹⁰⁴: “*Now this connection or adaptation of all created things with each, and of each with all the rest, means that each simple substance has relations which express all the others, and that consequently it is a perpetual living mirror of the universe*”. Each of Leibniz’s monades **mirrors** the universe from a **its own point of view**. I understand Leibniz as describing a community of **speakers**, each speaker (being) a monade. Each speaker (monade) has a **picture** of the universe, of reality, from the point of view which the speaker **is**. The monades cannot communicate with each other; They are opaque, impenetrable. Each speaker is ‘locked’ within his own conceptual scheme. When two speakers (monades) converse, Everything that ‘happens’, happens **within** each speaker: Each has his own ‘picture’ of the conversation, his own interpretation, understanding, perception of it.

The question is, whether all monades perceive and describe **‘the’** same thing, or not. Leibniz thought they did. He believed they **all** described **the** ‘universe’, the world which God created. This creation of God, he maintained, was the **best** of all **possible** worlds. Apparently, they **do** all describe the same world. But Leibniz’s **reality** was not **material**. Hence, the joint, objective (best) world all the monades perceive (from different points of view), was an immaterial, objective and good reference. A small step to saying that all monades (speakers) describe the same moral reference: **The Good**.

Besides Leibniz’s *Law of identity* discussed above, Leibniz also phrased the *Law of contradiction*, which is, of course, of special interest here. This law basically maintains that contradictions are **impossible**, and their negations **necessary**. Besides necessary truths (and their impossible negations) Leibniz recognized a second species of truths: **contingent** truths. This species was exclusively for **human** ‘use’, whereas for **God**, all truths are necessary truths. For God nothing is contingent, coincidental. Only the human limited epistemic structure has contingent truths (and their negations, **possibilities**, or ‘unnecessary falsehoods’). I believe that Leibniz’s contingent truths are beliefs that concern **objects**, properties that are members in the (human) objective subdomain, e.g., ‘the earth revolves around the sun’, while his necessary truths are those pertaining to predicates: ‘red is a color’. (And compare Plato’s two ‘modes’ of existence!)

I was particularly interested in two musical events that were scheduled for today: An afternoon appearance of a band called *Kweekbak*, I guess a Dutch version of ‘quick buck’, and an evening show of a group titled ‘The bullshit blues band’. Blues is my favorite kind of music. I said to Gaya: “Maybe I **should** get something small for my daughters.” She said: “Why not? otherwise you’ll be deliberating about it the whole day.” I decided not to buy anything, and **not** to deliberate about it the whole day. I don’t need to necessarily **buy** them something, something they don’t need, to show my affection. Buying presents is often the product of conditioning, sometimes of guilt. I thought of a question: “Tell me, what is the difference between **to love**, and between **to be loved**?” Gaya smiled. “Nice association. That’s an easy one. **To love** you know, right?” “Tell me anyway” I replied. “**To love** is simply to **realize**, or **feel**, that what (or who) is loved is, **in fact**, a **part** of you. You know what I mean. You cannot conceive of a **conflict of interests** between you and your daughters. Can you?” “No,” I replied. “Ok. And **to be loved**?” “That one is more difficult. I believe that the (passive) concept of ‘being loved’ is the product of western, objectivist perception. If you separate between what is **you** and what is **not**, than it is possible for what is **not**, to love **you**. I think that the feeling of ‘being loved’ is a kind of therapy, compensation for the (artificial) separation within oneself.”⁶⁵

We sat by a table at one of the cafes. Gaya continued: “The feeling of being loved is not really a feeling. It is something you **think about**, not an emotion. You **know** that you are loved. You don’t **feel** it.” I claimed the contrary: “Sometimes I do! I can often **feel** the love of my daughters. Or of my wife.” “No.” She flatly disagreed. “What you then feel is **your** love for them, not theirs for you. Give me an example of **feeling** the love of someone whom you **do not** love (back). Don’t even try. It’s impossible. ‘Being loved’ is an ego thing; A kind of compensation for the cruelty of the objective outside; An island of care and compassion in a sea of hostility. I predict you will gradually grow out of the need to ‘feel loved’. What you **will** feel, is a growing love **on your part**, as more and more external things will become internal, ‘your own’. Being loved is nothing but a disguised version of narcissism. Look: Every love is ‘self love’: **Loving** someone, someone **else**, is also, in a way, loving oneself. The ‘else’ being part of you. But by **loving**, the **whole** loves the part. In ‘being loved’, the part supposedly loves the whole. It makes no sense. The sovereign should love its subject. The requirement from the subject to love the King is twisted, wrong. Besides, **loving** gives you a great feeling. It exposes

⁶⁵ Plato addresses this issue in the *Symposium*¹⁰⁵. **Socrates** is the last speaker in a series of speeches of praise to *Eros*, god of love. Socrates brings up the problem of the distinction between the (action, or state of mind) of **loving**, and the thing **loved**. There is a kind of contradiction in the concept of *Eros*. Does it symbolize **love** or the **thing** loved? The **lover** or the **loved**? These two stand **across** from each other, and as long as they are, they cannot be described as **one**. Socrates’ point is, that it is the **love** that counts, that is important. Love is the purest *conatus*, pure intentionality: The **longing**: not for anything in particular: It starts with longing to beautiful things, but later the love becomes a love of the ‘abstract’ (and for Plato, the **real**) *beauty*. Here Plato’s vagueness regarding the relation between **good** and **beauty** is particularly evident. If beauty is taken to **denote** the good, Socrates’ *Platonic love* becomes simply **love of (the) good**. Socrates (or Plato, but I think Socrates) understands love as **loving**, a verb, a state, not a noun, and, like Gaya, turns the focus of attention from the **object** to the attitude, or state of mind.

you to **good**.⁶⁶ It identifies you with good. Being loved gives you nothing. If it does anything, is make you feel guilty for not loving back. If you're half decent, that is."

We went to listen to the *Kweekbak* band. It was a twenty (!) piece amateur jazz band, with every conceivable instrument. They were standing on a special platform that was especially arranged on top of two large flat boats, on the main canal, in the center of Edam. As it turned out, it had nothing to do with 'quick buck'. They pronounced it like 'quake-duck'. It was the most pluralist musical orchestra I have ever seen. There was a fifteen year old drummer, extremely talented, beside middle aged men and women, two or three gays, and a black young woman. They were having a great time, playing and dancing on the platform, that was really small for them all. I had as much fun watching them enjoy themselves as I had from the music. We sat very close, and I could look into their eyes. After it was over, we went to my favorite cafe and I asked Gaya: "What is the difference between **writing** music and **playing** music? Both are **art**, are they not?" "Of course" she said. "That is the beauty of it. Look: Suppose a painter sees a sculpture he considers very beautiful. He is impressed. He paints a painting, which is later (maybe centuries later) seen by a composer. He translates his experience into musical notes. Than someone plays the music - his own interpretation of it. These are all different **forms** of art, but still art. Communication. The painter can do a much better job than the sculpture, from **your** point of view, or the composer may compose a wonderful piece that is 'destroyed' by a musician. But also the reverse can happen: A talented musician can turn

⁶⁶ It is now time to examine another use (and a distinct meaning) of the word 'good': As in the sentence: "It is **good for him**". In **this** sense of 'good', it is meant as a predicate that is distinct and different from 'G'. Before elaborating on this new predicate, I'd like to draw your attention to a particular part of my (personal) conceptual scheme. A significant part of it is devoted to **other speakers**. 'Another speaker' is, naturally, not more than a **property** in my system, but it has many important and interesting relations with other properties. Consider, for example, the property of (being) Esti (my wife). I also have many other properties, E1, E2, E3 etc., that are not **my** beliefs, but Esti's beliefs; or, rather, they are **my** beliefs regarding **her** beliefs. E.g.: 'Esti believes that **liver** is tasty'. This is **not** the belief 'liver is tasty', a belief that I do **not** hold. I have many beliefs of the form 'Esti believes that Y', although I may not hold Y (or I may). My conceptual scheme may be conceived as consisting of 'clusters' of **my** beliefs regarding the beliefs of people I know (people who in themselves are nothing but my beliefs).

Now, each such cluster has within it beliefs regarding the **preferences** of the people in question. Esti likes liver, so, **for her**, 'liver is good'. Each 'cluster', corresponding to a speaker I know (Even if it is a hypothetical speaker, like 'The western man'), has an 'internal' notion of 'good'. Note: This is by no means a statement regarding what is (objectively) **good** (G), nor does it have any value or significance **outside** of my conceptual scheme. It is just how **I** perceive the preferences of the people in question; What **I** consider them to be attracted to or repelled by. In other words, I have a whole **group** of properties, one for each person I know, g_1, g_2, g_3, \dots , and naturally, $\sim g_1, \sim g_2, \sim g_3, \dots$ which are the different '**bad**'s. (Some things are 'good for Esti' or 'bad for Esti', just as some things are 'red' and some are 'not red'). g_1, g_2, \dots are **not** a **super-predicate** like G (my **own** good) is.

I have been discussing G (the property "Good", What **I** consider good; What is good for **me**; What **I** want; The subject of **my** desire, my *conatus*) and D (the property "God", entailed by all other properties) as two separate properties. Now is the time to reveal the fact, that in my (personal) conceptual scheme, these two properties G and D are **identical**: $G \equiv D$. This super-property is very different from the multitude of **goods** g_1, g_2, g_3, \dots

a mediocre, or even poor musical creation into an enlightening performance. In **jazz** this is particularly noticeable, as it puts so much emphasis on improvisation.”

We watched the crowd. Two clowns were entertaining the kids on the street. Gaya observed them, concentrated on the scene. Then she said: “Did you ever think *what it is like to be a clown?*” “How do you mean?” I asked. “I mean from **inside**. Not what a clown **is like**, when **you**, or someone else, look at it. I mean **being** one. Were you ever?” I didn’t have to search my mind for long. “No. Just once, when I was three or four years old. I don’t remember the experience, but I have photos. It would never even **occur** to me to wear a clown’s costume. I’m afraid the connotations I have from **being** a clown are negative. It is a kind of an **insult**, being a clown; being **ridiculous**.” “I thought as much” said Gaya. “This is why I asked. But if you give it a second thought, you may discover that it may be quite a trip. First of all, no one should know who you **really** are; I mean, behind the clown costume. So you are not ridiculous; just a clown. The clown is never ridiculous; It is the **person** who **acts like** a clown that is the possible subject of ridicule. But when you see a (strange) clown, there is no one ‘behind’ the clown. Just the clown. Anyway, think about it: You are **inside**. Possibly even slightly drunk, or high, or whatever. In a good mood - good on the **funny** side. You are allowed to do the craziest things! You can bother people, you can sing, shout, dance, show your behind. You **become** laughter, as much as that is possible. Clowns are often said to be tragic people. I suspect this is true; They are not happy in their ‘normal’ appearance. That is why they are clowns. But, contrary to common opinion, **when** they are clowns, I believe they are very happy.” I watched the clowns playing with the kids on the street. They did seem to have a lot of fun. I should try that sometime. There were hundreds of people on the little street we were sitting on. I said to Gaya: It is amazing. I haven’t seen an **Israeli** for the whole period I am here. Not even today, with all this crowd. Usually they are everywhere - you find them in the most God-forsaken places.” “You miss home?” she asked. “Not really. But I wouldn’t mind exchanging a few Hebrew sentences. I tried to pick up Hebrew sounds in the crowd, but there were none.” “So make it happen!” she said. Is she doing it again? I tried, but nothing happened. “It doesn’t work” I said, thinking of Mary Poppins. “Only you can do these things.” Gaya disagreed. “Sure you can. Close your eyes.” I did. “Now, visualize an Israeli couple walking down the street. Do it yourself. There is no

° When I speak to Esti, I use the word ‘good’ in the sense of g_1 , not of G. I **never** mean G when I say ‘good’ to someone **else**. If I want to effectively communicate, I cannot use a word in a sense I know is completely private. I sometimes find myself in need to change g_1 , e.g., if Esti no more likes liver (or if I was mistaken in thinking she did, which is the same thing), but when speaking to someone, the meaning of ‘good’ should be as close as possible to her ‘actual’ preferences.

But supposing I want to change Esti’s mind regarding something. For example, to convince her to stop smoking. She thinks smoking is good, and if I adhere to her usage of ‘good’, how can I tell her that I think it is bad for her? I simply say “**I think that** it is not good’, or ‘It is my opinion that..’, or even ‘You should reconsider whether you want to keep ‘smoking’ as something ‘good’. The crucial point is, that I am **not** trying to change her understanding regarding the meaning of ‘good’ and ‘bad’. These are fixed forever (in **her** system!) What I am trying to do, is change the meaning of ‘**smoking!**’ To change the relation it has with Esti’s (private, super-predicate) ‘good’. I say: ‘Change **smoking** from ‘good’ to ‘bad’, **not**: ‘Change ‘good’ to exclude smoking’!

point in me talking you through this. Just **imagine** the whole experience. Have a short conversation with them. Not long; I haven't got all day. And keep your eyes closed." It was easy. I did like she said, and in two minutes sent the couple away. I opened my eyes and said: "Well?" "Well what?" Gaya asked, smiling. "I still don't see anyone". "They left, didn't they?" she wondered. I meant to say something with 'really' in it, but then decided to take a different approach. "Did **you** see them?" Gaya pointed at a cup of coffee that was suddenly on the table. It wasn't there before. "I wasn't here. When you were busy with your Israelis I stepped in and bought a cup of coffee. I must have missed them." **Very** smart of her, to exit the scene at the crucial moment. She continued: "Come on. You had no significant **purpose** in wanting to speak with a fellow countryman. You just wanted a chat, and for that you didn't even have to get out of your chair. I admit, that if you wanted something more complicated, like to send a parcel home, or something like that, it would have required a slightly more significant **effort** on your part. And still, you would have achieved it, if it were important enough for you. But this one was really simple. You got **exactly** what you wanted. The memory you have of your encounter is yours. It is there, as long as you want to remember it. What are you after, **magic**? Magic is something that cannot be done. If it can be done, it is not magic. But I know of nothing, absolutely **nothing**, that cannot be done, if **really** wished."

While walking back, I told Gaya about an R&D project I had in mind. I have already told her before that I am in the software business. I said: "I have what you might call 'a technological dream'. I plan to design a machine that will function like a human speaker."⁶⁷ Gaya wanted to hear more before she offered an opinion: "What do you mean

⁶⁷ In my system, G is a special predicate, unique in that it is defined as denoting the property that includes every other property in the system. It is the **only** predicate in my system that can **never** change via a 'belief change'. Everything else can happen in the system: objects can fall in and out of existence, predicates may 'flip-flop' into contradictions, but G (like F) never changes, due to its special method of constitution: It was **defined** as the 'universally implied', or 'universally entailed'. I already remarked, that G (I then still called it D) is the mirror image of F: 'The negation of contradiction'.

G and F are the **nucleus** of my conceptual scheme. They never change, they are eternal. the structure of the system depends on them. they are **built into the syntax**. The only thing I can safely assume regarding a fellow speaker (provided she **is** in fact a speaker, which is in principle impossible to verify, contrary to Turing's¹⁰⁶ conjecture), is that her system contains **an F** and **a G**. I **cannot** safely assume that she has an **x**, even if she utters the sound 'existence'. Heidegger uttered this sound, and definitely meant something very different than what other people I know mean by the term. If she is a Buddhist, she might not even have a term that I can recognize as her equivalent for my 'existence'.

Eastern philosophers often refer to F and G as 'Yin' and 'Yang', respectively. Together, they are everything. They are enough to produce an infinitely rich conceptual scheme (or 'world'). They are the only two **safe** concepts in communication. One can be **sure** he understands, only in two cases: When a speaker tells him that something is **good**, or when a speaker refers to a contradiction. The Zen-Buddhist way to enlightenment uses the latter: It makes repeated referrals to the contradiction, with the intention of directing the focus of attention towards F.

⁶⁷ The project in question is based on the claim which is the heart of this thesis: That **being a speaker**, or being **rational**, consists solely on the syntax of P₁, coupled with an *apriori* notion of **desirability**, or 'preference' (mostly referred to here as 'G', or 'the good'): A **moral** perception. The aim of the project

‘function’? Just **speak**?” “Just?” I asked. “Don’t you know that it is practically considered impossible? I hardly told anyone for fear of being laughed away! You know, artificial intelligence has become a complete disappointment in the last few decades. A machine that could conduct a human-type discourse, able to learn, to enhance its vocabulary, even **make up** vocabulary as we often do, is presently considered an impossibility.” Gaya smiled. “By ‘just’ I didn’t mean to imply that it is trivial or anything. But what is your **purpose**?” Frankly, although I thought of it a lot, I never asked myself for the **purpose**. “To prove a point, I guess. A point in the philosophy of language.” “To **whom** do you want to prove the point? Evidently not to yourself. You seem to me quite convinced.” I wanted to say ‘to everybody’, or ‘to my professors’, but I knew better. Instead, I tried a different approach: “It would be a major technological breakthrough. Science fiction.” Gaya was still not convinced: “Is it a **good** purpose? Will it do **you**, or anybody else, any good? Look, I don’t know that it is not, or that it won’t. All I am saying is, that I feel you have the wrong reasons. I think moral considerations should be taken into account before you have a lot invested in it. World history supplies a perfect example: The nuclear bomb. And I’m not even saying that it was a **bad** invention. Just that it has moral implications, and that the scientists working on it lost a lot of sleep over the moral issue. They had a real serious problem, because the moral questions surfaced **after** it was practically clear that it was feasible. In your case, you have the privilege to make the moral considerations before you move a finger. It is much better.”

She had a point. At least she took me seriously. **Too** seriously. I said: “Ok. Let’s talk about it. Suppose I succeed. We will have machines with a notion of **Good**, with intentionality, and with **will**, directed, of course, towards this ‘Good’. In principle, they will be completely human. In their **thinking**, I mean. They will have different sense organs than we have.” Gaya understood very quickly: “‘Helen Keller’ type entities, right?” “Even with better sense organs than her’s. I think computers can be supplied with a wider range of sense data than she had. She had next to nothing”. Gaya reflected for a moment, and then said: “I’ll have to think about it. I think that it is an important decision. If you succeed, you’ll have a new race screaming for equal rights in no time. Society will have to protect itself. There will be problems. On the other hand, I sound awfully conservative. It is not like me to say things like that. To be afraid of the future.” We were already at *De Fortuna*. She added a last sentence: “It is not **the future** that I worry about. The future will take care of itself. It is **you**. I’m just trying to foresee possible dilemmas you might find yourself faced with; dilemmas that might adversely affect your **happiness**. I want you to be **happy**.” She turned and went to her room, looking thoughtful.

I spent the rest of the day in my room, writing footnotes. I wanted to squeeze in as much writing as possible, since I was planning to go to the concert after dinner - ‘The bullshit blues band’. Sounds promising. I read some Plato, some Leibniz, and some Berkeley (the

would be to empirically substantiate this claim, by writing a piece of software that will pass the Turing test: Employ human-like lingual behavior, in a manner indistinguishable from a ‘real’ human.

Bishop)⁶⁸, switching from **language** to **language**. I find it so much easier to understand what they have all **meant**, ever since I realized that they were all describing **their** conceptual schemes, **their** notion of ‘good’, and not **the** nature (or structure, or content) of external **reality**. It is almost amusing to see how great minds from different places and different eras **seem** to agree only on one thing: on the nature of contradiction. (And even here, since they describe it using **other** terms, it sometimes appears as if they are discussing different things).

I didn’t think I’ll see Gaya again today, but while I was sitting outside my room in the sun reading Leibniz, she suddenly appeared. “You know,” she said “Your speaking machine reminded me of a story I once read in a magazine. You like science fiction, you said?” “I used to. Before I discovered philosophy.” “You want to hear it or am I disturbing you?” I had enough of Leibniz anyway. They say he was snobbish and arrogant. “No, no. Please tell me.” She sat beside me in the sun, putting on her sunglasses. “Three machines land on earth. The story focuses on one of the three, but the story starts with the other two. One of them lands in a rehearsal room of some musical band, maybe a jazz band, and displays amazing musical abilities. It can make any conceivable sound, of every possible instruments. It learns very quickly, by imitating the musicians. It plays with the group, improvises with them, in short - a regular musician. But it does nothing else - just plays music. The second machine finds its way to a **chess** club. Similarly, it learns the game, and quickly becomes a chess master. But, as I said, these two are only the appetizer. It is the third machine the story is about. It lands in the house of some guy, who is very depressed because his beloved wife had just died, and he is all alone in a cabin in the mountains. To make a long story short, just as the first two machines learned to play music or chess, this one learned to **speak**. The machine tells the guy that it came from another planet, and that it is not really a machine, but a living thing. The really interesting part of the story is its end: As it turns out, the machine is not a living thing, but just a machine. But it is very sophisticated, and just as the other two did a great job in imitating a musician or a chess player, so did this one imitate a human being, a **speaker**, including the claim that it is a living creature. It was just very well designed. What I liked about the story, what made me remember it, is the surprise in the last page: In the epilogue, the

⁶⁸ Just a silly, over-quoted quotation I couldn’t resist including:¹⁰⁷

There was a young man who said: “God
Must think it exceedingly odd,
If he finds that this tree
Continues to be
When there’s no one about in the Quad.”

Dear Sir: Your astonishment’s odd:
I’m always about in the Quad.
That is why the tree
Continues to **be**,
Since observed by
Yours faithfully,
God.

three machines return to wherever they came from, and are analyzed by the creatures that sent them. They were sent as probes, to find out about human civilization. They played back everything the machines went through, and failed to realize that the third machine had a **conversation**. They thought that **speech** was just like playing music or chess: A human **activity**, not something that has meaning, that is **about** something else. That's it. the whole story. Hope you liked it. Bye!"⁶⁹

She left as abruptly as she arrived. Good story. I liked it. It reminded me of another SF story I once read, also about aliens investigating humanity. Only much more **frightening**, pessimistic: It was about a scientist who was investigating the phenomenon of **humor**. He analyzed thousands of jokes and comic situations, with the aid of advanced computers. He eventually realizes, that there is no other explanation as to the source of humor, other than as an artificially implanted notion, probably by extraterrestrial. When he explains his findings to his fellow scientists, he describes humor as a kind of **virus**, that was deliberately introduced into human society for the purpose of studying human psychology. But by discovering the truth, he and his fellow scientists (followed by the whole human race) develop an **immunity** to humor, just as a body can become immune to certain viruses, or certain bacteria become immune to antibiotics. As the scientist gives the lecture explaining all this, he says: Now that you know the truth, can anyone here remember any funny joke? **anything** funny? They cannot, of course. Humor is gone forever.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Evidently, it is my claim, that what happens in human discourse is no different than other social activities such as playing music, chess, or dancing the Tango. What is particular to the social behavior called 'discourse' (which is just a 'game', as Wittgenstein has so eloquently established), is the fact that **some** speakers (mostly with a western education) believe that it **describes** something **other** than the speakers themselves; That the expressions are **about** something, rather than just expressions (such as music, or dancing, or any other rule governed social activity besides language). The hypothesis of **shared meaning** is a product of the objectivist premise of a **shared reference**.

⁷⁰ Philosophy has hardly touched the subject of **humor**. Another unsolved mystery. The reason it should be the business of philosophy, is that it is clearly related to intellectual capacities and to the concept of **understanding**, as in 'understanding the joke'. It is impossible to experience humor without understanding what is funny. Sometimes a joke is understood a long time after it was heard.

One of the very few thinkers who have addressed the issue at all was **Henry Bergson**¹⁰⁸. He was a French Jewish philosopher who operated in the late 19th and early 20th century. He was awarded the Nobel prize, in **literature**. Bergson was a metaphysician, bordering on mysticism, and rejected the materialist and mechanistic accounts of reality. He was highly regarded by William James and had a strong influence on Heidegger and French Existentialism in general. Bergson's *Laughter* dealing in **humor**, was published in 1900.