

Philosophical Matrix as a System of Categories of Pure Mind

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The article is a study devoted to the development of the concept of the philosophical matrix as a system of categories of pure reason. The author proposes a new approach to understanding the philosophical system of categories by putting forward unambiguous comparative concepts that serve as the basis for natural sciences. While the foundations of specific sciences are the concepts of “practical reason”, the author finds the categories of “pure reason” to be the foundations of philosophy, understood as “knowledge of the universal”. The article shows that relying on the senses and the concepts of “practical reason” allows for the verification of knowledge, while their generalization, removed from knowledge obtained empirically, gives categories of “pure reason”, which are accepted as the building material of the matrix. In this way, the author proposes a new system of philosophical categories that describes the fundamental aspects of human reasoning and its interaction with the world. At the same time, the categories of the philosophical matrix are not related to such ambiguous classificatory concepts as space, time, being, existence, consciousness, and others. The article draws attention to the fact that the matrix can be used not only to analyze philosophical theories but also to develop new concrete scientific approaches, for example, for the intellectual development of children. In addition, the article suggests the possibility of applying the philosophical matrix in other areas of the humanities, including psychology, linguistics, and sociology. As a result of the conducted research, the human intellect is divided into three ascending stages, designated by me in the following words—reason, mind, and wisdom, with the subsequent use of these concepts in philosophy and other fields of knowledge.

Keywords: reason, mind, wisdom, contradictory, correlated, opposite, philosophical matrix, practical mind, pure mind

Conceptual Thinking and Types of Language Tools

Conceptual thinking is the ability to think abstractly through concepts and categories. It is a key element of higher cognitive activity in humans, such as scientific research and solving complex problems, and it underlies any creative process.

An important feature of conceptual thinking is the ability to abstract from concrete objects and phenomena and to identify common features that connect them. Conceptual thinking allows people to classify and organize information in memory, which helps them process large volumes of information more quickly and effectively. Overall, conceptual thinking is an important element of consciousness that includes the ability to generalize information and classify it for solving various tasks.

Despite the fact that conceptual thinking is a complex thinking process in which reason, mind, and wisdom are fused together in different proportions, I proceed from the fact that it requires division into groups depending

on the language types of concepts that we use to communicate and make sense of reality. The underdevelopment of basic conceptual tools has been the cause of stagnation, which has led to the fact that to this day there are no strictly scientific humanities disciplines, no philosophy as a rigorous science, and no understanding of what constitutes intelligent artificial intelligence. This means that evaluating knowledge according to the patterns of conventional thinking is incorrect—a new approach is needed.

I take as the starting point the approach of the famous Austrian-American philosopher and logician Rudolf Carnap (1891-1970), one of the representatives of logical empiricism—a philosophical trend based on the idea that knowledge can only be obtained through experience and observation.

In his book *Philosophical Foundations of Physics*, R. Carnap gathers not only the concepts of science, but also the concepts of everyday life into three main groups: classification, comparison, and quantitative concepts. At the same time, “comparative concepts” are considered by the philosopher to be more effective for expressing information. They occupy an intermediate position between classification and quantitative concepts...

I, writes R. Carnap further, consider it desirable to draw attention to them, because even among scientists the significance and effectiveness of such concepts are often underestimated...

It often happens that before quantitative concepts can be introduced into the field of science, they are preceded by comparative concepts, which are a much more effective tool for describing, predicting, and explaining than coarser classification concepts...

We should never underestimate the usefulness of comparative concepts, especially in those areas where the scientific method and quantitative concepts have not yet been developed. (Carnap, 1971, pp. 97-99)

Philosophy, like most other social and humanitarian sciences, does not use quantitative concepts today. It mainly operates with classification concepts. However, there are areas where the use of comparative concepts is possible. The rift between humanitarian and natural science knowledge is precisely determined by the difference in the use of conceptual tools. Representatives of humanitarian knowledge use classification concepts, while the foundation of natural sciences explicitly consists of a set of specific scientific comparative concepts of different kinds, which ultimately not only divided knowledge into subjects, but also divided culture into two parts: natural-science and humanitarian. Moreover, in addition to comparative concepts, specific sciences began to use numbers and other mathematical abstractions.

Many philosophers of the past tried to compensate for the fragmentation of science by subjects and to create philosophy as “knowledge of the general”. They were themselves physicists, astronomers, mathematicians—Thales, Heraclitus, Pythagoras, Aristotle, and others. These thinkers sought not only concrete scientific knowledge, but also concrete universal, philosophical knowledge by means of comprehending the world with the help of maximally general intellectual tools—concrete universal comparative concepts. There are few such concepts. They were introduced into science in order to reflect not some subject area of reality, but being as a whole (Rotenfeld, 2023).

Classification concepts are concepts that name something. For example: tree, stone, humidity, state, courage... They are ambiguous, but there are no difficulties in understanding them. However, with regard to comparative concepts, not everything is as simple as Rudolf Carnap thought.

Today, comparative concepts are used to analyze the differences and similarities between ideas, objects, or phenomena, as well as to evaluate their qualities and characteristics, for example, to compare two cultures—their traditions and customs, etc. (Snow, 1985, pp. 195-226).

They are often identified with the ambiguous concept of “binary oppositions”, as well as with the concept of “opposites”, which is also understood ambiguously. In addition, quantitative concepts understood by Carnap as one of the three components of language also cause confusion.

Can we bring order to the question of the type of linguistic tools, as well as to the question of paired concepts? Help comes from Aristotle, who identified four types of opposition. These are the “contradictory”, “opposite”, “correlate”, and “privation and possession”, which are a philosophical generalization of the foundations of many natural sciences (Aristotle, 1975, pp. 121-168).

For Aristotle, these are unambiguous strictly scientific concepts that are not mixed with other (para-scientific) paired concepts. Thus, the concept of “contradictory” determines the appearance of classification concepts of language, non-contradictory thinking, and the logic of artificial intelligence—either 1 or 0, while the other three types of opposition, which I call “gradational comparative concepts”, reflect natural and social connections that speak about the rationality of the world.

The problem is that there is no generally accepted definition of reason today. It is often interpreted as the ability to experience emotions and exhibit emotions, as the ability to solve non-standard problems with non-standard methods. There are other definitions as well. Therefore, I suggest considering the concepts proposed by Aristotle as the beginnings of “mind thinking”. Whereas thinking with classification and other paired concepts that do not provide a clear understanding of reality, I suggest calling “reason thinking”.

As an example of the beginnings of specific sciences, consider such comparative concepts as “long and short” (geometry), “heavy and light” (physics), “rich and poor” (economics), etc. Taking the smaller side as the unit of measurement, we often can understand the larger side in numbers. I call these concepts gradational comparative concepts, while for other paired concepts that are not related to strict sciences, I use the term “binary oppositions”.

It should be noted that quantitative concepts (numbers) are not the third type of linguistic tools, as Rudolf Carnap thought, because any two numbers (greater and smaller) are nothing more than specific scientific (arithmetic) gradational comparative concepts. Therefore, they allow us to describe any natural and social relationships.

As a result, we come to the understanding that one of Aristotle’s types of opposition—“contradictory”—needs to be divided into two relatively independent comparative concepts: “identical” $A = A$ and “different” A and non- A , while the other three types of opposition: “correlate”, “privation and possession”, and “opposite”, on the contrary, require combining into one type, which we denote by the general term “gradational”. The advantage of this specific universal concept is that it identifies the main thing in the most different properties of reality: the increase or decrease in the intensity of properties (Rotenfeld, 2023, p. 17).

Identical—Gradational—...—Different

Figure 1. The prototype of the philosophical matrix.

Taking an ordinary school ruler as a measuring tool, we see that the two types of opposition: “correlated” and “privation and possession” represent two different manifestations of the same relationship. In the case of “correlated”, this is the relationship of “less” and “more”, while in the case of “privation and possession”,

“privation” expresses the degenerated in zero “less” as its extreme value. But this confirms the fact that the concept of “privation and possession” is a special case of “correlated”.

The same applies to the concept of “opposite”, which is not an independent relationship, because it differs from “correlated” in nothing but the choice of a middle point of view on reality, denoted by me as “gradational”.

It is important to note that the concept of “gradational” reflects the energy of the universe—the essence of the environment that creates the world and can be observed from the perspective of three objective points of view.

Thus, looking at the ruler (gradation) from the point of view of “less” (in a particular case, from the position of zero), we see its other end as “more”. If we look at the gradation from the perspective of “more”, we see its other pole as “less” (or privation). But if we look at the gradation from the middle position, we get “excess” and “deficiency” relative to the intermediate, that is, “opposite”.

Since “privation and possession” is a special case of “correlated”, we will consider not three, but two manifestations of gradational: in one case as “correlated”, in the other as “opposite”, differing from each other only in the choice of an objective point of view on the considered reality.

Therefore, of the four Aristotelian types of opposition, we accept three types: “contradictory”, “correlated”, and “opposite”, where the concept of “contradictory”, as mentioned above, is divided into two parts: “identical” and “different”, which we place on different sides of the natural series of comparative concepts that we are creating. As a result, we obtain Aristotle-Rotenfeld’s philosophical matrix (Rotenfeld, 2014, p. 38).

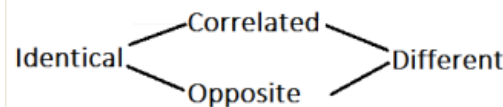


Figure 2. The Aristotle-Rotenfeld philosophical matrix.

Special attention should be paid to the difference between Aristotle’s concepts of “correlated” and “opposite”. Essentially, they express the relationship between the same sides, for example, between hot and cold, heavy and light, etc. However, if the concept of “correlated” expresses the connection of one side with the other side, then the opposition of these sides is determined as “excess” and “deficiency” in relation to the intermediate position—the “golden mean”, as Aristotle called this point of reference. Gradation does not exist in other contexts. Otherwise, mind thinking turns into reason thinking, and knowledge turns into opinion.

Therefore, language consists not of three, but of two types of concepts—classification and comparative. At the same time, comparative concepts can be not only of a gradational type, but also of other, more complex types.

Types of Comparative Concepts

If reason presupposes the use of logic to arrive at conclusions and make decisions within the limits of thinking in classification concepts: either A or not-A, then mind, in turn, can be defined as such a concept that encompasses thinking in comparative concepts, including emotional and social intelligence. Therefore, it is necessary to use completely different words, independent of the context, in order to separate the concepts of “reason” and “mind” in thinking.

At the same time, I would like to emphasize that comparative concepts can be not only of a gradational type, capturing the smallest degree of relationship, but also of other differences reflecting a more distant degree of similarity: orthogonal, complementary, similar, etc. In addition, comparative concepts can be not only specific, representing the beginnings of specific sciences or their sections, i.e. concepts of practical mind, apprehended by means of the organs of sense—good and evil, beautiful and ugly, dry and wet, long and short, etc., but also general, i.e., philosophical concepts, which I call categories of pure mind—contradictory, correlated, opposite, and so on.

The concepts of “practical mind” and categories of “pure mind” are two different groups of concepts that Immanuel Kant introduced into his philosophy (Kant, 1999). In my opinion, these concepts can also be introduced into modern philosophy. Moreover, they are not related to such extremely general classification concepts as duty, morality, freedom, justice, etc., although they are aimed at comprehending various social issues.

Categories of pure mind—these are concepts that are not directly derived from experience. These forms of thinking generalize the results of sensory material—concepts of practical mind—to obtain the most general knowledge about the world. They, like Kant’s, are not related to classification concepts such as space, time, causality, substantiality, possibility, and necessity, etc. They relate to theoretical, concrete-universal philosophical, strictly scientific thinking and are associated with understanding the most general relationships of reality, including human behavior, aesthetic and ethical issues.

It is important to understand that the use of comparative concepts will be incorrect if objective points of view are not taken into account, from the standpoint of which each of them is comprehended.

The following figure shows the metaphysical (upper) and dialectical (lower) series of concrete-universal comparative concepts of gradational, orthogonal, and other types—categories of pure mind. They all, step by step, reflect increasingly distant relationships between the compared objects, their degree of similarity (Rotenfeld, 2023, p. 107).

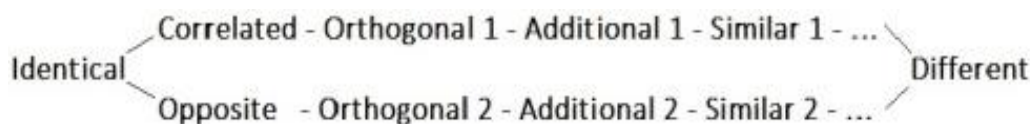


Figure 3. The cumulative system of categories of pure mind.

Although reason, mind, and wisdom are different aspects of thinking, they usually work together and interact with each other to solve problems and make decisions. It is important to note all three stages of the state in different people to different degrees, depending on the development of their intellect, individual abilities, and experience.

What Is Wisdom?

The concept of “wisdom” is usually considered a multi-valued classification concept that has had many meanings in different historical periods among different authors and in different philosophical doctrines. Today, the word “wisdom” expresses a deep knowledge and understanding of the world and life, as well as the ability to use this knowledge to make the right decisions and actions. Wisdom can be seen as the ability to integrate knowledge, experience, intuition, and ethical principles in decision-making and behavior.

Wisdom is often associated with age and experience, as over the years, a person accumulates more knowledge and experience that can help them make more informed decisions. However, wisdom can also be manifested in young people who have a deep understanding of life and the ability to use their knowledge to make the right decisions. Not limited to intellectual abilities, wisdom includes ethical and spiritual aspects that help a person make decisions based on a sense of responsibility and care for other people and the environment.

The question arises whether wisdom can be expressed as the ability to deeply understand life and the world based on knowledge, experience, and ethical principles on the basis of unambiguous comparative concepts. According to Aristotle, it is possible. Referring to four types of opposition, he wrote: “Wisdom is a science of certain causes and principles” (Aristotle, 1975, p. 67). And further: Knowledge of the general makes a man wise, because “the wise, as far as possible, knows everything, although he does not have knowledge about each subject separately” (Aristotle, 1975, p. 68).

Heraklitus also treated the concept of “wisdom” by considering that “wisdom is to know all things as one”. At the same time, Heraklitus found a comparative concept—“converging-diverging”, which revealed the content of the general process of exchange, for understanding which the philosopher used real objects—a bow and a lyre.

I agree with Heraclitus and Aristotle the wisdom is “knowledge of the general”. Therefore, by the concept of “wisdom” I mean thinking specifically by universal comparative concepts, which I designated as “categories of pure mind”. Using them within the framework of general theoretical knowledge, I justified a new direction in philosophy—the philosophy of pure mind, the essence of which I outlined in my new book *Cumulative Philosophy as a Verifiable Rigorous Science*” (Rotenfeld, 2023).

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