

REVIEW

# In Between the Lines of Communication and Philosophy<sup>1</sup>

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‘There is nothing more serious or more tragic than the game of language.’

*Tomas Kačerauskas*

Privileged to be invited as a courtside metacommentator of a dialectical head-to-head match between two elite Masters, I sat on the edge of my ‘outside-the-box’ seat for two hundred and seventy eight pages, vicariously reveling in the linguistic lobs, analytical aces and metaphysical top spins served and volleyed across an ontological net. The top-seeded challengers, who jostled across the globe in the semiotic stadium, are Dr. Tomas Kačerauskas and Dr. Algis Mickūnas.<sup>2</sup>

My play-by-play of this dialogical doubles match will highlight the distinctive differences in their theoretical groundstrokes and phenomenological overhead grand slams served *in between the lines* of communication theories. Although both seasoned professors attacked postulates and counter postulates with absolute conviction, in this highly charged ideological tournament there can be only one champion vindicating the current crisis in Humanities.

Dr. Kačerauskas served his first mutually inclusive questions strategically down the center with a praxis curve ball that Dr. Mickūnas categorically diffused from right court. Algis often followed through with dichotomous backhands that matched toe-to-toe with Tomas’ long shot identifiers of all things communicative. Strategically placing return shots with archaic yet sardonic references such as Friedrich Nietzsche’s proclamation that ‘God is dead’, Algis’ linguistic interpretations of the various subdivisions of polar opposites appear to have been a ploy to let down Tomas’ guard. Unremorsefully, Algis refused to toe the line by lashing out on the malfeasance perpetrated by the current state of grass roots social media. As a radical shift to the discursive signals that demanded training in performative information, Dr. Mickūnas took the time to pace himself for the future of the cybernetic endurance game. Although clearly disheartened by tradition’s decline from Cosmopolitan distribution, Algis regained field advantage by accentuating his polylogical points reminiscent of his Lithuanian language, culture and cuisine, slicing up homogenized urbanization with a delectable side dish of Roputės.

Dr. Kačerauskas quickly took advantage of his opponent’s hermeneutical defensive by serving lowballs from news media’s fluke, i.e. fake news controversial arena, which provoked Dr. Mickūnas to fire off acrimonious warning shots that ricocheted heated discourses of

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<sup>1</sup> Kačerauskas, Mickūnas 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Kačerauskas 2020; Kačerauskas 2019a; Kačerauskas 2019b; Kačerauskas 2012; Mickunas 2019; Mickūnas, Kačerauskas 2020; Mickūnas, Pilotta 2012.

global warming. From midcourt, Algis unleashed his quick responses on the philosophical plateau of over expansive social networks, media and entertainment, tainted by false friends, *sexploit*ive cinema and irreverent technology, which aroused his confrontational 'McDonaldized' vendetta.

Far out of right field, Dr. Mickūnas' vituperative viewpoints were increasingly unleashed, striking at progressive ideologies that have diluted the messenger and the message. When proselytizing about the current state of signs and signifiers that adulterate communication with manipulative agendas, Algis' myopic disregard for Tomas' heavily footnoted forehand shots revealed his stoic yet laser focused perception of contemporary communication's lack of ethical standards and morality. With raised ire, Algis made it clear that he has no love lost for the cold unreality of VR: 'The trouble is that the image is not your friend and thus it must cease to be just an internal state and signify – point to the friend. The pointing is not my friend.'

Reposed, Dr. Kačerauskas paused for a communicative sound of silence, which ironically stoked Dr. Mickūnas' impassioned rhetoric, loudly condemning our noise-filled environment. Vacillating logic between his verbal and nonverbal directives, Tomas finally attempted to throw an existential mortal blow. However, Algis merely deflected from Sorge's limitations bordering our immortality. With a drop shot from the deuce box, Dr. Kačerauskas diffused his co-present dialogical partner. Pivoting, Dr. Mickūnas' 'other' framed an anecdotal yet paternal posture with remarks on the demise of emancipatory education. His rejuvenation of youth critique appeared to gestate deep within Algis' Platonic womb.

Luddite leaning, Dr. Mickūnas' didactic reflections bifurcated to how 'we are in the midst of the greatest migration of humans in history, an exodus from rural to urban spaces' which was clearly a departure from his often hyperbolic analogous insights. Introspective of immoral thought's eternal punishments and historical memories, Algis offered self-projected fatherly advice: 'Do not select what confirms your views or what only interests you, but explore other views, which might reveal your limitations, and thereby offer other ways to think and live.'

While Algis' 'Anti-Wikipedia' grip remained irrevocably tightened to a double backhand against post modern's empiricism of novelty and teleology, holistically he dug deep into his humanistic Heidegger soul, reminding the scholarly spectators (especially Lithuanians) to salvage our disintegrating heritage from the homogenization of standard images and global technology. A misanthropic manifesto: eX Marx the spot.

As the two contestants switched courts during a halftime commercial break, rumblings from the virulent bleachers echoed whether virtual classrooms, remote home offices, and open sourced synergy of Transmedia storytelling's 'cultural convergence'<sup>3</sup> were in the midst of reversing Numanities' critical trends. Perhaps the veracity of linguistic paradigms would be showing signs of exponentially shifting?

Returning from corporeal idealistic TV ad campaigns, arcane brand identities subliminally copy written by academia's senior creative directors Riefenstahl, Husserl, Gadamer and Barthes, we resumed the second half of our philosophical contest as Dr. Mickūnas fired a rousing exchange of queries between communication and metacommunication. On guard, Dr. Kačerauskas crouched immutably for their dynamic controversies of philosophy, science and control over information.

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<sup>3</sup> Jenkins 2011.

Now on the defensive, Tomas attempted to throw his able opponent off balance by illustrating that 'there are as many problems as there are questions'. However, Algis did not waiver from his dialectical baseline attack positioned for Humanities' final showdown.

Charging back, Tomas deftly delivered comprehensive doses of edifying tables and voluminous definitions on the various schools of communication, inclusive of Western, political, pedagogical and visual. For moral support, he referenced his venerated Pantheon of communication thought leaders, as well as graciously acknowledging his esteemed adversary.

Straddling giant etymological shoulders, Tomas swiftly swung with a contentious rebound: 'Without irony, (and in this I differ from you, Algis) Robert T. Craig calls metacommunication the "way we think and talk about communication"'. Quick to point out their respective approaches to phenomenology and metacommunication, Tomas proved his willingness to observe the fundamental benefit of their diametrically opposed perspectives: 'Consider this review a praxis of my critique, understanding and misunderstanding.'

Eager to sidestep Algis' incisive lunges discounting metacommunication, Tomas quickly took the highroad and again footnoted Craig (1999): 'There is no canon of general theory to which they all refer. There are no common goals that unite them, no contentious issues that divide them.' Counterintuitive, perhaps, but Tomas was by no means capitulating to his nemesis. It was apparent that Dr. Kačerauskas embraced reciprocity. He leaned more toward an open forum of progressive social platforms rejuvenated by technology: 'Moreover, in creative industries, a greater role is given to collective creations such as film, computer games, architecture and the arts of staging.' Quick to assert with his hammering rhetorical fist: 'Truth is characterized by incommensurability... communication guarantees the autonomy of these two poles, corporeity and linguistic understanding.'

Unfazed by this symbolic mediation, Dr. Mickūnas suddenly struck with his double-edged sword – two metalanguages for the price of one. In a destabilized flux, Tomas grasped for his incommensurable praxis: 'The result of (our) differences is possible only when viewed from the outside.' In critical condition, this central axiom exposed the core wound of our divergent competitor's paradox: 'Scientific analysis of language destroys poetry, yet poetry enhances scientific application.'

Point, Set, Match! As the courtside referees tallied the final semiotic score and multi-media's medics resuscitated our platonic gladiators with a 'technical rejuvenation prescription' inscribed into a body, I ruminated with bated breath on the following contextual meta-review:

This allegorical communicative dualism has been championed by its illustrious predecessors (Aristotle, Flusser, Wittgenstien, and of course, Plato) who have served as *wordly* umpires for this worldly referendum. From the pulpits of TV, social media and mass communication, our agile lecturers' examination of the various underpinnings of creative communication' have provided an academic interface between sender-message-receiver.

This battle for communications' analytic survival amidst the deluge of electronic messiahs is a message back to the future for all *information processors* sitting on the sidelines. Anyone who reads their ironic inscription will be ever more appreciative for these two dynamic communication scientists who have courageously tolled technology's siren before the internet's streaming racket has swung the final racquet.

So, who was the winner of this premeditated debate, dissecting popular culture, democracy, Marxism, mythos, and rhetoric's three disciples? At sudden-death overtime of this serious yet tragic game of language, who would be left standing as the victor against

the 'tributaries' of propaganda, influents of social media running through the bilateral conduits of ethics and entertainment? Fortunately, we all are as 'keen watchers'.

Dr. Kačerauskas' and Dr. Mickūnas' philosophical playbook offers the ultimate tiebreaker and self-reflective salvation from the civil war of channels imperative for Numanities' tekėkit amžinai (forever flow).

## References

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