

# (M)ultiple (P)erspectives?

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# *‘Seeking Perspectives’ As A Means of Inquiry*

- For understanding a complex social situation
- Need to avoid relativism
- What perspectives?



PABLO PICASSO



*Views of the Turtle Pond*  
**MIKE SMITH**

## Views of a Turtle Pond

# References

- Aristotle vs Sophists
- Churchman CW, 'Systems Thinking and Its Enemies'
- Kuhn's "Scientific Revolutions"
- Morgan's 'Images of Organizations'
- Haynes J 'Perspectival Thinking'

# Lens Perspectives

- Multiple Perspectives T.O.P.
- Metaphors
- Critical Systems thinking
- Evolution
- Dialectic
- Science
- Argumentation

# Linestone's Multiple Perspectives

## **Technical (T):**

Physical world, objects; people = molecules

## **Organisational (O):**

Group's perspectives, emergent properties, synergy, social presence effects, people as 'interacting' molecules'

## **Personal (P):**

Seeing through the eyes participants, people as experts with ethical drivers; mana

# Metaphor Perspective

- Morgan's "Images of Organisations"
- Ortony: compact, vivid, inexpressive
- Richards: topic/vehicle -- ground/tension
- Dawkins "nearly every word is a metaphor"
- Inquiry to reveal underlying metaphors
  - that machines better than people
  - science based on the 'vision' metaphor.

# Critical Systems Thinking

Thinking about a problem:

- As a verb not a noun (time)
- Its boundaries (unlike science)
- Relationships (within and without)
- Purpose (designer, participant and system)  
(a self conscious system)

# Evolution Perspective

Problems as species:

- Where did the problem come from?
- What was the selection process?
- More problems will be produced than can persist.
- Problems are small, random variations of their parent problems.
- The environment chooses which problem variations persist.

# Dialectic Perspective

- Revealing the underlying forces that have struggled to create a artifact.
- Macro = economic and political
- Micro = argument structure
- Example: Learning as ‘thinking + doing’ in a recursive loop.

# Science Perspective

- Problems as 'out there' objects
- One truth
- Importance of extreme precision (measurement)
- Politics of epistemology
- 'Observation – Reasoning' dialectic
- Importance of repeatability

# Argumentation Perspective

Problems as (reasoned)arguments:

- Audience
- Process
- Language
- Power
- ‘Object – Concern’ dialectic

# Conclusion

Seeking (M)ultiple (P)erspectives  
improves thinking, understanding and  
as a practical means of understanding  
problems