Signaling under uncertainty

Brochhagen, T.S.

Link to publication

Citation for published version (APA):


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Download date: 26 Dec 2018
In his *The Analytical Language of John Wilkins* Jorge Luis Borges criticizes attempts to make universal classifications. He exemplifies the arbitrariness and conjectural nature of such classifications by conjuration of a Chinese encyclopedia that purports to give a universal animal taxonomy. In it, animals are divided into categories such as *belonging to the Emperor, fabulous, stray dogs, included in this categorization, et cetera, or those that look like flies when seen from afar.\textsuperscript{1}*

Acknowledging, with the right words and in the right place, all those that have contributed, directly or otherwise, to shaping the content of this investigation, and me along the way, feels a little like writing entries in Borges’ fictional encyclopedia myself. The good news is that I’m not, as Wilkins and others, trying to come up with a universal scheme. I will therefore take the liberty to let my subjective views seep through these initial pages, while accepting that a couple of paragraphs will not be able to capture all I would want to convey on these matters. I hope the reader will indulge me; it’s not often that I write a book.

First, I wish to thank my supervisor Robert van Rooij. Throughout these years, Robert has given me the opportunity to prod and poke in many directions. Some of these efforts led to the material found in this thesis. As may be expected, others turned out to be less fruitful, or their outcomes were too remote to be included here. Irrespective of the result, I wish to thank Robert for the trust placed in me throughout this journey, as well as for guidance along it. Thanks for giving me time to explore and err, but also for (much needed) pragmatism when it came down to finishing projects.

Although, and particularly in light of the fact that, my research progressed in directions away from his and that we were neither at the same institution nor in the same country, I wish to thank Ewan Klein for his open ear and critical mind. I have good memories of coffee sessions in Edinburgh revolving around language identification in the limit, Popper and falsification, and noun-noun compounds (not necessarily all in one sitting). Thanks for sharing your constructive and critical views with me.
I also wish to extend my gratitude to the remaining, non-supervisory, members of my doctoral committee: Martin Stokhof, Frank Veltman, Rens Bod, Jelle Zuidema, Gerhard Jäger, and Brian Skyrms. I’m happy that you all accepted to be on board and really appreciate you devoting your time to my work.

I consider myself lucky to have met a number of people who have influenced me for the better in these past years. Among them, Liz Coppock stands out as the most formative person in my early academic life. Back when I was a master’s student in Düsseldorf, she not only took me serious when I was but a fledgling but also actively encouraged me to do research with her. While I ended up working on very different topics in Amsterdam, Liz was the one who showed me the ropes, taught me how to write articles, and motivated me to move forward. Thank you for being a great mentor, colleague, and friend!

Another person that deserves a huge thank you in the category of big serendipitous influences (and nameless others) is Michael Franke. The impact Michael has had on my research is directly reflected in this thesis. Much of this material sprung either directly from our joint work or at least shows traces of discussions we had. Beyond your obvious academic footprint, I wholeheartedly thank you for inspiration, for your readiness to offer support, and for exemplary – always highly appreciated, I must add – meticulousness.

To the rows of students who have listened to what I had to say and questioned the questionable: thanks for your trust, kindness, and for keeping me on my toes. Fije van Overeem and Heidi Metzler, who embarked on longer individual research projects with me, deserve special mention: thanks for a great time and for the many lessons.

While it is often said that no man is an island, Amsterdam’s relentless rain could at times suggest that I may become one; or that I may even drown in the process. I thank friends and colleagues from Amsterdam, Edinburgh, Trento, Paris, and Barcelona for keeping me afloat with discussion and distraction. Thanks, in particular, to great office mates and friends from the ILLC, who livened up the daily routine with sour coffee, food, football, bouldering, movies, and an occasional, I still believe misguided, optimism about the weather. A big shout-out to Paolo for debating choice under uncertainty with me when I needed it the most; to Arnold for his kind comments on parts of this thesis; to Nadine for the enduring distillery of my thoughts throughout these years and all the fun away from the office; and to Bastiaan for crafting and refining the Dutch summary of this thesis, as well as for much mischief. Gracias, gràcies e grazie to the Tordera household for providing me with a warm refuge to retreat to. I also would like to emphatically thank the ILLC office, in particular Jenny Batson, for years of support. I’m sure you have saved me from more than one headache.

Those across the ocean, from past and present, I thank for unrelenting support and care. I’m sorry for my intermittent radio silence and for having visited less than I would like. Thanks for always having my back. The same is true of my family. Un abrazo y gracias a la distancia a mis hermanos, Nicolás y Michael, a
Valentina, a mi madre Ana, und an meinen Vater Dieter.

Finally, it is impossible for a few words to do justice to what it means to me to have had Paula walk this journey with me. And not only did she walk it but she actively partook in it. Thank you for unwaivering support; for being there even when far away; for engaging with and commenting on my work throughout all its stages, from manuscripts to papers and from talks up to this entire thesis; for smiling with me; for making the writing of this paragraph very difficult in the most joyous way. A por muchas más sonrisas, perros, y revoluciones!

T.S. Brochhagen

Amsterdam, January 2018