

Stance and Discourse

Values, limits, and a culture of dispute that keeps the control loop alive

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PART I — STANCE

1 FREEDOM OF WORD AND ART

We stand for journalistic and artistic freedom and for freedom of expression as a high good of our society and of democratic orders (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Art. 19). Tolerance and respect towards others, and nonviolent communication (Rosenberg, 2003), we understand as elementary foundations of society and democracy — and as the working basis of all joint research.

2 CLEAR LIMITS

We distance ourselves from every kind of politically or religiously motivated extremism, from sexism and from every form of discrimination. **No violence** — verbal or nonverbal, online or offline. Every person's privacy is to be respected. These limits are not negotiable; everything else is.

Openness ends where it is abused to abolish openness itself — the paradox of tolerance has been named since Popper (1945). A community that tolerates everything loses the conditions under which tolerating is possible. That is why the limits are short, clear, and the only place where there is no debate.

3 RESEARCHERS ARE RESEARCHERS

Syntagma understands itself as an **association of people** rather than a club: a joining of those who work scientifically and exploratively — whatever the discipline, with or without title, degree, institution, whatever the origin. These dividing lines shall break open: **researchers are researchers**. Level and standing make no difference in status, as long as two things hold: the minimum principles of this stance,

and working to scientific standards, to the state of the art. The comparison carries: like a driving licence and vehicle inspection, the standard examines **the work and the practice** — **never the person**. Quality checking yes, access barrier no: no paywalls, no certificate, age, CV or capital hurdles before joining the research.

4 COOPERATION INSTEAD OF COMPETITION

Together we are stronger: more knowledge, more hands, more computing power, no needless duplicated work. Competition as an organising principle makes losers of everyone, fighting each other and making the work hard; respectful cooperation develops faster, more efficiently, more consciously and more resource-sparingly. Networking happens regardless of form: private persons, institutions, business, industry, educational bodies, NGOs, individuals, networks. What counts is the direction and the reading of the minimum standards — as much as necessary, as little as possible, depending on discipline, goal and question, open about interests and participants (stakeholders are named, not hidden).

5 GLOBAL, WITHOUT BORDERS IN THE HEAD

Research is global and, in substance, borderless: a passport has no place in the subject matter, nor do origin, skin colour or nationality. And it spans generations: we think of the next generations and acknowledge duties towards the yet unborn, towards environment and nature — as a test criterion, not a label: no greenwashing, no social washing. What is inflated and dishonest is taken out so that room for the new arises — real growth instead of exploitation.

6 NEUTRALITY IS WORK

Neutral, unbiased, non-judging — that is not a state but a skill that must be trained. In every person, unconscious mechanisms run along that cannot be steered directly; cognitive research has documented these distortions broadly (Kahneman, 2011). The consequence is methodical: we do not claim neutrality, we build it — through disclosure, cross-reading, testing procedures and the readiness to treat one's own results as distortable. Whoever considers themselves unbiased has already overlooked the first bias.

PART II – THE LIVING DISCOURSE

7 ORDERED CHAOS, NO LAST WORD

Research and discovery do not run by the textbook; practice and reality mostly do not either — and whoever forces them into classic hierarchies restricts themselves at great cost. The organisational form is therefore **ordered chaos**: structure without fixed hierarchy, rules only at the edges (limits, standards,

feedback duty), free run in between. There is no last word; there is the living discourse. Dispute is no operational accident but the epistemic function itself: arguing is, evolutionarily, a social testing technique — groups that dispute respectfully beat individuals who confirm themselves (Mercier & Sperber, 2011).

8 FEEDBACK AS RESPECT

Honest feedback is a sign of respect, not an insult; whoever stays silent breaks the control loop. The feedback loop must be kept alive — it generates, animates, steers. This is approached in an engineering manner: every work receives a response, every response an answer, every open question a place. Two tested rules make criticism fruitful: first restate the other's position so that they agree "that is exactly what I mean", then name what you have learned — and only then object (Rapoport's rules, after Dennett, 2013). And where two camps contradict each other persistently, an experiment is designed together which both recognise in advance as decisive (adversarial collaboration: Mellers, Hertwig & Kahneman, 2001).

9 DISPUTE CULTURE AS FORMAT: FROM CLASH TO KNOWLEDGE BATTLE

The templates for a lively, respectful culture of dispute have long existed — outside science: poetry slam, battle rap and freestyle battle, the sound clash of sound system culture (a ritualised competition with fixed rules and audience verdict — already captured as a concept in our own monograph on free sound system culture), the sporting contest. The common core: **hard competition in the matter, strict rules, respect for the person, the audience as instance**. Science slams exist — this is about the next level: competition formats that reward not presentation but argument, examination and intelligibility. Four derived formats as a starting line-up:

THESIS BATTLE

Two positions on the same question, equal speaking time, a mandatory Rapoport round (restate first, then object). The audience judges the arguments, not the show; the verdict is justified and documented.

REPLY FREESTYLE

One person defends their thesis spontaneously against objections from the room — on the clock, without slides. The best answer to the strongest objection wins; "I don't know, I will check" counts as a valid move.

METHODS CLASH

Two teams, the same question, two paths — open comparison of approach, effort and result by criteria fixed together in advance (adversarial collaboration as a stage format).

DISCIPLINES SLAM

One topic, several disciplines, five minutes each. Scored on intelligibility for non-specialists — translation as a competitive discipline (system paper §3).

The same sentences hold for all formats: the argument is attacked, never the person. Feedback is a duty and part of the format. Everything is documented openly — the battle is data collection, not just an event. And today's verdict is tomorrow's objection: no last word.

10 TOOLS OF A NEW ERA

AI is, for this research, tool and instrument — part of a new era of working, as telescope and computer once were. As a tool it is used fully; as an authority it is not recognised: generatively produced statements count as unverified until the primary source confirms them (system paper §5). The same holds for every future instrument. The order stays the same: examination decides — honest cooperation, thought holistically, with past, present and an open future including its uncertain outcomes. No illusions, no dogmas: knowledge is no private good, and whoever declares it one ends up blocking and distorting everyone — themselves included.

→ FURTHER

The standpoints with sources: [statement of principles "Knowledge Is a Commons"](#) · the operation: [system paper](#) · the usage order: [thesis paper "The Order of Sharing"](#).

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