ACADEMIA SUPERIOR
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How can literature help us explore the System?

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discussion

- young generations
  - young generations in "Western" liberal countries go for authoritarian movements; young generations in dictatorships fight for principles and constitutional rights
  - "How can we bring that belief in a better society back to our young people?" (ethical honor and basic democratic rights)
  - put more faith into individuals who want to make the world better
- What is the justification for fiction?
  - what you learn through fiction is very real
  - non-fiction = mirror of what is there
    fiction = magical mirror that shows the inner human beings; teaches truths, knowledge in deeper things
  - What kind of knowledge are we after? There are different languages for different kinds of knowledge.
- How can you explore the system?
  - through a story
  - addictive behavior: problem of society rather than individual
  - find new parameters of success

"This is an open-ended conversation"

Where does fiction come from? Why do we need it? How do we use it?

- deep seeded human need for communication of what cannot be said in words
  > gap in communication can be bridged through stories
- words per se do not have a physicality; fiction takes nothing (words) into the potent of something (story) and thereby creates
  > the physicality of fiction forms in the imagination of the reader
- "Fiction grounds us, it reminds us of who we are beneath all those surface levels we roam around in the superficial world - and pretend who we are."
- we need fiction in our competition driven society and facade driven society; fiction does not need our fast-paced society but we need it as a healthier soul diet
- the power of art and literature is not supernatural or exclusive, it can help you regain belief in humanity

Can fiction be dangerous?

- asking questions about the meaning of life are considered a more dangerous topic than sex or violence
  - "If we start asking those questions [about the meaning of life] that competition spiral that everyone is making money on does not make sense."
- accumulated experience comes through the media
- as a writer you have power - you must not misuse this power
  > create a code of conduct

Is surprise the essence of good storytelling?

- there is a (universal) 'breath' to art; the writer has to give something from herself/himself that the reader can feel
- access the reservoir lake of emotion
- universal lake: certain basic characteristics in human beings, basic truths, that have been the same for many thousand years
  - "The story adds up to something that is much more knowledgeable than I am as a person so that I learn much later from the story what it has to teach me"
- driving force is always to learn something; write about something you don't understand
  - surprises in literature that teach you something about the human being that you know is true
  - "Where I think surprises in literature become interesting is when you learn that you know something you did not know you knew"
- different perspectives in stories: characters act coherently in the story but their actions are surprising when viewed from the outside

What is our current story about?

- unlivable society because there is no authority to rebel against
  > it is the System not the leaders
  - young people turn their aggression inwards
- "We have created a system in today's world where competition is everything"
  - encouraging those who have average skills for what we all expect we would like to see, where real originality lies on a human level
  - talking about becoming better persons is completely out
  - everyone asking ethical questions will lose the game
  - "We have turned life into an 'expector' show"

Surprise Factors over the past years

- greater scale
  - strength of negative forces and powers that prevent change, no matter how big the will
  - "Why do we accept so many things that we know are wrong?"
- personal surprise
  - sudden success of the 10 year old book "Nothing" ("Nichts") about the meaning of life

Topics Suggestions for Action

- ✔ think of literature as nutritious food for thought
- ✔ use stories to uncover universal knowledge/truth, to access the "universal lake" of emotion
- ✔ create a system where competition is about being the best you can be, not the best "above" other people
- ✔ uncover knowledge that we did not know we had (through literature)
- ✔ change perspectives (through literature)