Ex Nihilo: The Undergraduate Philosophy Journal of the University of Texas at Austin, Volume III, 1998

The opinions expressed in *Ex Nihilo* are those of the respective authors. They are not necessarily those of the University of Texas, Board of Regents, The Department of Philosophy, or the Undergraduate Philosophy Association.

*Ex Nihilo* was produced by the Undergraduate Philosophy Association of the University of Texas at Austin. The UPA website contains information concerning the organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wittgenstein and Logical Truths</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Christopher Parlong</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentional Structure of Emotions</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bryan Register</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gettier and Plato on Knowledge</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Jesse Bailey</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heraclitus vs. Parmenides</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Jacob Mackey</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pragmatic Priority of Democracy to Philosophy</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Maria McFarland</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconsidering the <em>Memo</em></td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Jeff Casey</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wittgenstein and Logical Truths: Toward a Proper Understanding of Analytic Propositions

Christopher Furlong

(Winner: Matchette Essay Contest)

The problem of distinguishing between logical and nonlogical propositions is a major concern of the Tractatus. In this paper I would like to examine Wittgenstein’s proposed solution, the Russellian influence under which he was working, and some problems with the solution. I would then like to glean from Wittgenstein’s failed solution a rudimentary solution based on a broadened notion of analytic propositions.

Let me begin by discussing Russell’s account of logical propositions. In his Lectures on the Philosophy of Logical Atomism, (hereafter: Lectures) he is not entirely clear on what one is to understand by a logical proposition, but he does make four important suggestions regarding them. He initially claims that the propositions of logic consist only of variables:

Suppose I say: "$y$ implies that $x$ belongs to the domain of $y$, that would be a proposition of logic and one that contains only variables. You might think it contains such words as 'belong' and 'domain,' but that is an error. It is only the habit of using ordinary language that makes these words appear. That is a proposition of pure logic. It does not mention any particular thing at all. All statements of logic are of that sort."

From the claim that logical propositions contain only variables, Russell concludes that they do not mention any particular thing. But he is not sure about this:

It is not a very easy thing to see what are the constituents of a logical proposition. When one takes 'Socrates loves Plato,' 'Socrates' is a constituent, 'loves' is a constituent, and 'Plato' is a constituent. Then you turn 'Socrates into x,'
Russell does not claim to have the right analysis of logical propositions, but he makes two suggestions: that propositions of logic have no constituents and that they have their form as their only constituents. These two claims seem to be contradictory but they are not. To understand this we need to ask what it means for something to be a constituent of a proposition.

The answer is that it means more than one thing. The more common and explicit sense in which Russell uses the term 'constituent' is the sense where the constituents of a proposition are the terms of the proposition which name or refer to particulars or relations in the world. This is the sense of 'constituent' which he employs when he says that 'Socrates', rather than Socrates himself, is a constituent of 'Socrates loves Plato'. This would seem to suggest that since 'x', 'y' and 'R' do not name or refer to anything in the world, propositions of the sort 'x R y' have no constituents and this is presumably why he says that logical propositions have no constituents; because they do not mention anything in the world.

I suspect that his discomfort with this analysis is a result of a simple equivocation on the meaning of 'constituent' and a failure to observe the use/mention distinction. The sense previously discussed is the more ordinary sense where 'x' is a constituent of 'R' just in case 'x' occurs in 'R'. In the case of constituents of propositions there is only one further stipulation, that 'x' must name or refer to something. So that even if 'x' occurs in 'R' it is not a constituent of it since it refers to nothing. The alternate sense entails 'R' being about 'x' where Socrates is a constituent of 'Socrates loves Plato' because the proposition is about Socrates in some sense. So when Russell says that logical propositions have no constituents and that their form is their constituent, this is not a contradiction. All he is really saying is that logical propositions have no constituents in the sense that their terms mention nothing, and that their form is their constituent in the sense that logical propositions are about their form.

This equivocation along with his metaphysical realism is the likely cause for Russell's hesitation. For Russell, logic is concerned with the form of facts, and since facts are a part of the world, so must their form be. Since, according to Russell, the logical proposition 'x R y' implies that x belongs to the domain of R, it is about its form, and since, again according to Russell, its form is in the world, he understandably uncomfortable saying that the proposition has no constituents.

One last suggestion Russell makes about logical propositions which he likely got from Wittgenstein is that 'everything that is at a proposition of logic has got to be in some sense or other like a tautology.' Russell, unlike Wittgenstein, does not develop this notion any further. He concludes his discussion of logical propositions with the statement that he is not entirely clear on what sets them apart from non-logical propositions:

propositions of logic have a certain peculiar quality which marks them out from other propositions and enables us to know them a priori, but what exactly that characteristic is, I am not able to tell you. I always make this apology but the world is really rather puzzling and I cannot help it.

Russell's tentative suggestions regarding propositions of logic are the following: (1) Logical propositions contain only variables, (2) logical propositions do not mention anything in the world, (3) logical propositions are about the forms of propositions and (4) logical propositions are tautologies. These suggestions, as they stand, are not, nor does Russell pretend them to be, sufficient for knowing what is a logical proposition and what is not. The most obvious problem is that though (4) seems to be the essential characteristic of a logical proposition, we lack any sort of formal notion of a tautology. What is required then, is to know precisely what a tautology is and how to verify that a proposition is or is not a tautology. Once this is done, we need to reformulate (1) to (3) to accord with (4).

I shall now discuss Wittgenstein's notion of logical propositions using Russell's suggestions as guides. Wittgenstein agreed with (4), but unlike Russell did not rely on self-evidence to secure the truth of tautologies. As he noted at 5.1.563, 'If from the fact that a proposition is obvious to us it does not follow that it is true, then obviousness is no justification for our belief in its truth.' Rather, we need some sort of calculation for recognizing validity. Wittgenstein introduces the notion of a truth-table to count as such a calculation. This then becomes the criterion for recognizing logical truths: they are true for all interpretations, for all the possible values of its component.
propositions; for all lines of a truth-table. Consider for example 'xRy' involves that x is in that domain of k.' Translating this into formal logic yields: (xRy → (x ∈ Dk)). 'xRy' is defined as (x ∈ Dk) ∧ (y ∈ Ip) so by substitution the proposition becomes ((x ∈ Dk) ∧ (y ∈ Ip)) → (x ∈ Dk).

In propositional form this becomes (C ∧ Q) → F. Since the proposition is trivially true on all lines of the truth-table, it is a tautology and therefore a logical truth. The fact that it had to appeal to the definition of the terms involved make this a rather unhelpful example. The status of definitions are often misunderstood to present serious problems for the view that logical and analytic propositions are the same. However, what we need to understand is that we are not speaking of natural languages but of formal ones. In this case, any problems of arising from interchangeability and the origins of synonymy disappear. In formal languages definitions are stipulative. Let us, nevertheless, consider another example. Let us then consider another example. To determine whether (C → (Q → P)) → Q is a tautical truth we need simply construct a truth-table for it:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P</th>
<th>Q</th>
<th>(P → Q)</th>
<th>(P → Q) → Q</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the proposition is true for all interpretations, it is a tautology and hence a logical truth. Note that we have made no appeal to obviousness or self-evidence. To determine this the calculation is sufficient and necessary; it is in fact, the only sufficient or necessary method.

Now that we know exactly what a tautology is, we need to reformulate (1)-(3) in light of this. Wittgenstein disagreed with (1). It is an error to consider '(xRy → (x ∈ Dk))' and conclude that it contains only variables and logical constants. While 'xRy' contains only variables, 'xRy' is itself not a variable; it is a proposition. 'xRy → (x ∈ Dk)' does not contain x', R', or y'. It contains 'xRy' and 'x ∈ Dk' which are both propositions. This, then, is a general rule about logical propositions: they contain only propositions and logical constants, not variables. To make this clearer consider that the truth value of any proposition is a function of the truth values of its constituents. Since variables have no truth value, a proposition containing only variables cannot have a truth value.

Though he rejects (1), he accepts (2). At 6.11 he claims that 'the propositions of logic therefore say nothing' and at 6.1222 that

Christopher Furlong

"logical propositions can no more be empirically confirmed than they can be empirically refuted." Since k a proposition mentions something in the world it can be empirically confirmed or refuted at least in principle, then if it cannot be empirically confirmed or refuted it does not mention anything in the world.

Wittgenstein does accept (3), but understands by it something slightly different from Russell. Recall that Russell's suggestion was that a logical proposition was about its form, and its form is in the world. Wittgenstein agrees that logical propositions are, in some sense, about their form, but their form is not a constituent of the world.

To clarify this, let us inquire into what is meant by "being about its form." We ask that a proposition P is about the fact expressed by P because that fact is relevant to the truth of P. For a proposition P ∨ Q, the facts expressed by both P and Q are relevant for determining its truth, therefore the P ∨ Q is about the facts expressed by P and by Q. It may then seem that P ∨ Q is about the fact expressed by P, but in fact it isn't. The proposition 'Either Oedipus killed his father or he didn't' is not about Oedipus. One need not have read Sophocles to know that the proposition is true. In fact, there does not seem to be any fact, any state of affairs that would be relevant to determining the truth of a logical proposition and this is likely the reason that Wittgenstein did not think that logical propositions were about anything in the world.

But then what are they about? At 4.021, we are told that 'the proposition is a picture of reality." Furthermore, we are told at 2.21 that "the picture agrees with reality or not; it is right or wrong, true or false." From these two propositions we can conclude that a proposition's truth is determined by its agreement with reality. In other words, it is true if what it represents is real. Therefore the only thing that is relevant to the truth of a proposition is what is represented and what is the case. If they coincide, the proposition is true.

The case of a logical proposition is more difficult. Wittgenstein tells us that the truth of a logical proposition 'is recognizable from the symbol alone." If this is the case, then either a logical proposition represents itself, or it does not represent at all. If the former, then it is trivially the case that the truth of a logical proposition is determined from itself. If the latter, then nothing is relevant or the proposition by itself is relevant. It would be absurd to suppose that nothing is relevant since in that case we could never know whether a truth of logic was true. So in either case the logical proposition itself is the only thing that is relevant to determining its truth. Either in virtue of it
Christopher Furing

Substituting P for \( R \) and Q for \( G_b \) yields \((P \rightarrow \neg Q)\). The truth-table is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P</th>
<th>Q</th>
<th>((P \rightarrow \neg Q))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the first line of the truth-table the proposition is false. Either the proposition is not a logical proposition, or Wittgenstein's criteria is too strong.

Wittgenstein is not unaware of this problem. Between the Tractatus, and his 1929 paper "Some Remarks on Logical Form," he attempts two solutions. One attempt, I will argue, simply recasts the problem but does not solve it. The second attempt, while it fails, makes important headway towards a real solution.

The first attempt is to claim that 'this is red' and 'this is green' are not elementary propositions. Elementary propositions are the counterparts of atomic facts and are unanalyzable. It is an important feature of elementary propositions that they do not contradict each other. 6.575-6.5751 reads:

\[ \neg \neg \text{true} \]

As this is only logical necessity, so there is only logical impossibility. 6.5751 For two colors, e.g., to be at one place in the visual field, it is impossible, logically impossible, for it to be excluded by the logical structure of color. Let us consider how this contradiction persists itself in physics. Somewhat as follows: that a particle cannot at the same time have two velocities, i.e., that at the same time it cannot be in two places, i.e., that particles in different places at the same time cannot be identical.

It is clear that the logical product of two elementary propositions is neither a tautology nor a contradiction. The assertion that a point in a visual field has two different colors at the same time is a contradiction.\(^{26} \)

I think it is clear from this passage that Wittgenstein thought that propositions about color are not elementary. They have a 'logical structure' and are therefore unanalyzable. All that is required to solve the problem now is a definition of specific colors that excludes other colors. That way, since definitions are analytic, 'this is red and green' is a contradiction and its negation a tautology, problem solved.

Unfortunately Wittgenstein does not carry out this project of defining colors in the Tractatus or in his later 1929 paper. Had he...
Christopher Farlong

nomenon in question which, since color is an empirical phenomenon, is itself an empirical process.

What does this mean? This means that modifying the syntax of our language to accord with empirical results will not yield analytical a priori truths and the problem is therefore not solved. Propositions about color such as that in question are certainly analytical in the sense that they are tautologies. But they are not tautologies a priori since empirical investigation is required for the construction of a proper truth-table. What Wittgenstein's failure suggests is that we should conceive of analytic propositions as being of two kinds: a priori and a posteriori, and that we should reformulate the problem as trying to establish a criteria for recognizing analytical truths be they a priori or a posteriori. Propositions such as "this is red" and "this is green" is a contradiction are analytic a posteriori. They are analytic because they are tautologous and necessary; no empirical evidence could ever contradict them. They are a posteriori because they are determined empirically.

Consider again the example 'if this is red then it is not green' (P → ¬Q). It is obvious that we cannot say that that proposition is true from the symbol alone. The construction is a truth-table is not sufficient. We must construct the truth-table and then by examining the phenomenon involved we delete one of the lines of the truth-table.

It the remaining lines are all true, the proposition is a tautology.

This suffices, I think, to show two important things about logical propositions. Some, such as that just discussed, are unquestionably analytic a posteriori. But the same discussion makes it obvious that not all logical propositions are analytic a posteriori, some are analytic a priori. Consider the earlier example: (P → Q) ∨ P → Q. This proposition is known to be true from the symbol alone. All possible truth constructions of P and Q will yield a true proposition. There are no substitution instances which would render the proposition false; not even an example involving color such as 'if this is red then it is not green' and 'this is red' then it is not green.' The first line of the truth table for this proposition would represent an impossible combination but that is irrelevant because even on the first line the proposition is true and therefore no empirical investigation is necessary to determine that is true or that it is a tautology.

This, I suggest, is a step toward the proper solution to the problem of logical truths. They are of two kinds: analytic a priori and analytic posteriori. Given the task of classifying an arbitrary molecular proposition P as logical or nonlogical we would first construct a truth-table for it. If all the lines are on the table represent a true
Christopher Farlong

that their truth-functionality is stipulatary and therefore analytic. To sum up this clarification, logical propositions are analytic in so far as they are tautologies, i.e., in virtue of their form. The form of analytic a posteriori propositions is first discovered by investigating into the phenomena in question. Once our syntax is complete, they are discovered from the definitions of the logical constants and the meanings of the component propositions. The form of analytic a priori propositions is discovered from the definitions of the logical constants alone. The meanings of the component propositions is irrelevant. Recognizing this subdivision of analytic propositions is a step towards solving the problem of recognizing logical truths.

I say that this is a step towards a solution rather than an actual solution for the following reason: our criteria for recognizing analytic a priori propositions is developed fairly precisely, but our criteria for recognizing analytic a posteriori propositions rests on the notion of empirical analysis which is itself left undefined, unspecified, and not discussed. The project of establishing a precise method for conducting the empirical analysis of phenomena such as color, and for knowing what constitutes an impossible combination of truth values is vital to the problem of distinguishing between logical and nonlogical truths.

Notes
1Bertrand Russell, The Philosophy of Logical Atomism. (Open Court 1985) p. 105-106
2Ibid., p. 106
3Ibid., p. 80
4It is likely that Wittgenstein influenced Russell on this point rather than the reverse. In the preface to his Lectures, Russell credits Wittgenstein with many of the ideas discussed in the said lectures. Furthermore, Russell lost touch with Wittgenstein in 1914 while the Lectures were not delivered until 1918.
5Ibid., p. 107
6Ibid., p. 108
8Assigning truth values to variables is a simple, but common, category error; only propositions are true or false
9Ibid., p. 155
Intentional Structure of Emotions

Bryan Register

(Winner: Matchette Essay Contest)

The task of this paper is to show how the logic of emotion reflects and is derived from the Intentional, cognitive, and motivational structure of emotion. I will borrow categories of emotion from Solomon and the structure of Intentionality from Searle. The original contribution of the paper is to show the efficacy of Searle's model in analyzing phenomena which it was not designed to explain, and to provide a justification for several of Solomon's logical categories. First, I will try to reduce Solomon's categories. Several of the categories seem to be modifications of and hence reducible to others. These categories are in no way invalid, they are simply dispensable at a certain level of abstraction. Then I will show how the remaining categories are elements in a version of Searle's models of perceptual and intentional Intentionality. If we 'intention' with a lower-case 'i' to mean what one intends to do, and 'Intentional' with an upper-case 'I' to mean states which are about or directed toward something other than themselves, I borrow this usage from Searle to maintain the difference between those Intentional states which are intentions to do something and the broader class.

I will assume a crude model of emotions going in. An emotion is a judgment about objects in the world. As a judgment, it is of the simplest kind; it subsumes one or more particular objects under a general concept. It is usually non-linguistic; I do not have to enunciate 'I am afraid' to be afraid. But this is much like the judgments of intellect; I do not have to think 'This is blue' to know that something is blue.

Moreover, an emotion is set off from the normal run of judgments by a conjunct of four features: it is evaluative, it intends some action (possibly passivity), it stems from the subconscious, and it is (at least potentially) visceral. An emotion is always the judgment that its object is good or bad for me, in some way and to some degree. I cannot have an emotional judgment to the effect that New York is the largest city, but I could have an emotional judgment to the effect that New York, in virtue of its size, is impressive or great. Moreover, an
emotion always intends some action. When we judge something as good for us or bad, that judgment is an automatic prior to action; the good is the recommendable. To feel that something is good is to desire (not necessarily to intend) to achieve it. (This is, it seems to me, the reason why there is a concept of ultimate evaluatory power: emotional judgments are a direct association with the good and these judgments have not usually been analyzed. Thus the inner structure of the good has not been understood and the attempt to analyze it is rejected as the "naturalistic fallacy"). Further, emotional judgments cannot be the conclusion of a chain of argument, though they can stem from a piece of knowledge that does and they may coincide with non-emotional judgments which have identical content. I can perform an act of practical reasoning concluding with the judgment that I have been betrayed. This conclusion is not the emotional reaction of anger or indignation. It will probably trigger that reaction, though, and that reaction will be immediate on the evaluation and may build as I deduce the realization. This is how we "work ourselves into a fury". I can thus both think and feel that something is good for me or bad. But an emotional judgment stems from the subconscious: it is a subconscious and immediate subsequence of some particular thing under a concept which is not within my conscious awareness. Such concepts usually do not have words more specific than 'good' or 'bad' and are hence usually very vague. (This may be why we are so often unable to explain why we feel what we feel, or even exactly what it is that we're feeling.) Finally, an emotion must at least have the potential to have a physical component. I cannot explain this feature fully until later in the paper, but the idea in brief is that just as we have pain experiences which we experience as taking place in the injured part of the body, likewise we have emotional experiences which are judgments which are experienced as taking place in the body. Fear is a judgment, but it is experienced as sudden cold, a tightening in the stomach, and so forth. This physiological reaction is how I experience this kind of judgment, just as the words "This is not a very good argument" playing in my head is how I experience a conscious reflective judgment to the effect that my argument has just collapsed.

My initial model of emotion is, then, as an evaluation of an object which intends action. The evaluation stems from the subconscious and can be visceral. It is because emotions stem from the subconscious and are visceral that we confuse them with medical symptoms and refuse to analyze them on a cognitive and intentional level. It is because our initial awareness of the good is emotional that so many philosophers have been led to believe that the good is non-cognitive.

With my basic model and vocabulary in place I can now turn to Solomon's categories for analyzing emotions. Several of Solomon's categories seem to be different features of the object, or different kinds of objects, of the emotion. This includes his category of the object of the emotion, but it also includes direction, scope and focus, and responsibility.

Direction deals with whether self or other is the object. Anxiety, for instance, is always directed at something outside the person. I can be anxious about my behind-schedule thesis, but I cannot be anxious about the state of my soul (unless I am in fact anxious about the Final Judgment). Pride is about oneself. I cannot be proud of another's accomplishments unless I believe that I am in some way reflected in them. Direction can be fairly sophisticated, as in bipolar emotions which are about other(s) in relation to self, or self-in-relation-to-other(s). In these kinds of emotion, one's relation to the other(s) is included explicitly in the emotion. In bipolar emotions one evaluates oneself specifically in relation to others. I pity another for being weaker than I, not for being weak absolutely. Were I profoundly weak, I could not pity another for being weak who was only moderately weak. I am vain because I think I am superior in relation to some other, even if I think myself superior to none but that one other. An emotion is bipolar when it includes reference to both self and other internally. All emotions refer to self because they are evaluations about whether or not something is good for one, and many emotions refer to others because they are evaluations in a social context. But only some emotions, the bipolar ones, include both references internally. The others include reference to self or others only externally, as an allowing feature for having emotion rather than being a component of this particular emotion. (Solomon, 196-198)

There are then three different possible directions but all three are really broad ways of talking about possible object choices. Remorse cannot be outer-directed, and indignation cannot be inner-directed. This means only that remorse's object must be without the self and indignation's the self. Direction of emotion is therefore reducible to object, because it is only a highly generic kind of specification of possible objects.

Likewise for the scope (focus) of emotion. Scope is the width of the part of the world that is the object. Mood's like as despair and anger can only take the world as a whole as their scope. Pride or remorse take particular action of one's as objects. Self-esteem or guilt...
one can desire closeness or absence in varying degrees. Love desires that its object be close in the extreme; friendship close but not so much so, fondness even less. Indifference excludes its object from the world of the subject, so distance, being a spatial analogy, does not apply. But since distance is something we strive for, it is a part of the desire which the emotion grounds. (Solomon, 217-219)

A number of Solomon’s categories remain. We have preserved object, evaluation, and desire. We have not examined criterion, strategy, power, or mythology. These are somewhat more complicated and cannot be dealt with until Searle’s models are on the table. I will therefore turn now to Searle.

For Searle, “...every intentional state consists of a representational content in a certain psychological mode.” (Searle, 11) His model of intentional states is similar to his model of speech acts. (Searle, Speech Acts, 22-72. All other references to Searle are to his Intentionality.) A speech act consists of a referring part, a predicating part, and an illocutionary force indicator. The referring part selects some part of the world for predication; it refers to the object of the speech act. The predicating part stipulates something about the object. For instance, in performing the speech act of uttering “The glass is half empty,” I refer to the glass and predicate half-emptiness of it. But note that the following utterances all have the same referent and predication: “Would that the glass were half empty,” “Glass, be half empty,” “is the glass half empty?” The difference between them is in their illocutionary force indicator; the way the utterance is supposed to be taken by the hearer. The illocutionary force indicator is in the grammar, punctuation, word order, tone, and so forth. Thus on this analysis of speech acts, a speech act represents some facts under some illocutionary force: inquiry about the fact, assertion of the fact, ordering that the fact be produced, expressing dismay at the fact, and so forth.

Likewise for intentional states. An intentional state is representational content under a psychological mode. The representational content corresponds to the referring and predicating part of the speech act, and psychological mode (belief, regret, intention) corresponds to the illocutionary force. Thus I can hope that the bill will not pass, fear that the bill will not pass, believe that the bill will not pass, and so forth.

The two psychological modes which concern us are perception and intention. I will present the emotions as complex intentional states which include a perception-like part and an intention-like part. Searle draws models for both perceptual and inten-
tional Intentionality.

Searle's model of perception is a version of direct (naïve) realism. Traditionally, direct realism has accepted what Kelley calls the 
'dispersalist' model of awareness, in which the subject's possession of a distinct nature or identity would imply that it constituted the object of its own awareness. (Kelley, 47-48) Searle implicitly objects to this model and includes perceptual experience itself as a constituent of awareness, but not as an object itself. The mind does not, for Searle, produce internal mental representations of objects which are themselves nonmental. Rather, the experience is directly of the object and I have the experience, rather than observe it. Perception is a three-term phenomenon: there is the perceiver, the perceiver's direct perceptual experience of the object, and the object.

The cognitive (as opposed to intentional) element of emotion matches Searle's model in important ways. Like perception, emotion involves a subject and an object and the subject's experience of the object. It is also a direct experience which is non-linguistic in nature. But two features of emotion make it unlike perception. The first is its propositional structure; the second is its potential to be visceral. To explain these I must turn to Kelley's account of perception which is very similar to Searle's in that though it is a kind of direct realism, it maintains the subject's experience and identity in the concept of perceptual form.

Kelley says that "Perception is... the awareness of entities as such, and the discrimination of objects requires a great deal of integration on the part of our sensory apparatus." (Kelley, 47) Perception is a relatively simple form of awareness in comparison with the propositional mode of awareness. In propositions there is an internal grammatical structure, while in perception the object is simple and there are no relations within the awareness whatsoever. Moreover, perception is immediate and does not depend on our conceptual faculty. (Recall that immediacy - being rooted in the subconscious - was one distinctive trait of emotions as opposed to consciously reasoned propositions.) Emotions share the immediacy of perceptions, but the structure of propositions. Since an emotion is an evaluation, it must take the form: "x is y to me" where x is the object and y the value of the object (good, bad). It is therefore subsumed and conceptual in nature. The subject perceives an object and several recognitional capacities - concepts - are employed in knowing more about it. Some of these are subconscious and evaluative concepts, and the judgment made when the object is subsumed into the reference of the concept in question is an emotion.

Bryan Register

A judgment of this nature requires a particular thing to function as subject in the judgment; this is the emotion's object. It also requires a concept to lie in the predicate place of the judgment; a concept under which to subsume the particular. This is the criterion of the emotion. (Criterion was one of Solomon's categories which I had left for later. Solomon is somewhat vague about criteria, preferring to point out kinds of criteria rather than suggesting what the particular criteria are for particular emotions.) Classically, concepts or ideas of things have been thought of as criteria which particular must match to be subsumed as a member of the extension of the concept. Evaluative concepts are variants on 'good' and 'bad' and specify narrower kinds of goodness and badness. And since the concepts are recognition capacities, they include internally the capacity to generate, in combination with the awareness of a particular, a judgment about the goodness or badness of that particular.

But this kind of judgment is characterized non-linguistically. It cannot therefore be experienced as a play of 'sounds' in the subject's mind as in conscious thinking. Understanding the experience of an object as good or bad depends on understanding perceptual form, so I will turn to that.

Kelley provides the concept of perceptual form to explain how we can be directly aware of external reality in light of phenomena such as perceptual relativity, illusory, hallucination and so forth: 'It will introduce the concept of perceptual form to isolate those aspects of appearance that result from the way our sensory systems respond to stimulation. But this form is not an inner object of awareness, it is not an object, but the way in which we perceive external objects.' (Kelley, 41-42) Likewise, emotion is not an object but the way in which we experience objects as good or bad, the way we identify their goodness or badness.

The paradigmatic example of perceptual form is color. Traditionally, color has been regarded as a 'secondary quality' which is a subjective inner content of awareness. But for Kellog, "...colors are not separate objects of awareness, or qualities of inner objects, but aspects of the way external objects appear to us in respect of their reflectance properties. They are thus aspects of the means by which we are directly aware of those properties." (Kelley, 111) Just as we directly pick up a glass by means of our hands, we directly see reflectance properties by means of color. Color just is the way we see reflectance properties.

I want to expand the notion of perceptual form to a broader concept, 'cognitive form.' This means the various means of awareness.
employed in knowing anything in the world. Vision employs as its cognitive form color, concepts words, propositional grammatically arranged words. Emotion employs visceral reaction. When I subconsciously judge that something is good for me or bad, I experience that judgment not as a 'head' proposition in the head, but as a physical reaction. This postulate is intended to explain how emotions, despite their cognitive function, seem so physical. The physical reaction is driven by the cognitive function of emotion and prepares the intentional function.

I must extend this point to explain the phenomena of physiologically indistinguishable emotions. Some emotional reactions cannot be distinguished from each other physiologically, though the subject of the emotion knows what she is feeling. On the one hand, since this point stands against materialist eliminations of emotion, it is to be embraced. On the other hand, since there is no obvious correlation between particular emotions and particular physiological states, one feels pushed into dualism to explain the lack of correspondence between the mental and the physical.

I want to make the following suggestion intended to solve the problem. This solution is hypothetical and empirical, and so open to falsification in an obvious way. Since emotions function not only to judge but also to prepare us for action, and since the cognitive form of the emotions simultaneously prepares the body for action in accordance with the evaluation, the physiological reaction can be expected to stem from the kind of action this emotion characteristically intends. But there are relatively few very distinct kinds of actions for the body to perform. Robert Plutchik (Plutchik, 57-63) catalogues what he terms the 'basic types of adaptive behavior'. Plutchik argues that all organisms show exactly eight different kinds of behavior: incorporation, rejection, destruction, protection, reproduction, depression, orientation, and exploration. Since this is a complete list of the kinds of things an organism can do, it is a complete list of the kinds of things an organism can prepare to do. There should be, then, no more than eight different kinds of emotional reactions because emotions prepare for action and these are all the available actions. Thus there are relatively few physiological reactions available to function as cognitive forms. But because this, different emotions would be expected to have similar or indistinguishable physiological manifestations, because there are many emotions and few physical reactions. The emotions over-use the body, as it were. This is why it is possible to be confused about what one feels; one might not know which of the emotions

Bryan Register

which one experiences in the form of some physiological reaction is generating that reaction now.

It seems implausible that there are only eight kinds of emotion, so let me broaden this claim slightly to allow for greater variety. Plutchik rejects several possible basic kinds of action (the care-giving, care-seeking, altruistic, and desire-seeking actions). He rejects these on rather obscure methodological grounds: since these behaviors are shown only in quite complex organisms, and anything must be expressed by all organisms to count as an emotion, these behaviors cannot ground emotions. But there is no reason whatever that human beings cannot have a richer emotional repertoire than amoebae. When these four kinds of behavior are added to Plutchik's eight, we have twelve different kinds of emotion. There are probably many slightly different behaviors within these different kinds of behavior, allowing for more than twelve physiologically distinguishable emotions. And the reactions can probably happen with different levels of intensity, allowing for distinctions along lines of strength of judgment; just how good or bad the emotion's object is judged to be. Thus the limited number of physiological reactions does not reduce our emotional life too drastically.

But the emotions are not only perception-like, they also lead to action. Searle's model of the intentionality of intentions turns on the notion of conditions of satisfaction. Conditions of satisfaction exist for all intentional states. In perception, the condition of satisfaction is 'that there be objects, states of affairs, etc., having certain features and certain causal relations to the visual experience'. (Searle, table pg. 91) My seeing a car is satisfied if there is a car there and if that car caused the seeing. Conditions of satisfaction for intentions are 'that there be certain bodily movements, states, etc., of the agent, and that these have certain causal relation to the experience of acting'. (Searle, table pg. 91) Perception works if it matches the world; intentions work if they bring the world to match them. Perception represents a state of affairs which it passively notes; intention represents a state of affairs which it brings about.

Emotions form intentions in a complex way. There is a close connection between emotions and desires; we even often think of emotions and desires as synonymous. This is an error which stems from what Solomon refers to as the 'Myth of the Passions'; the idea that the passions lack cognitive value and are purely physical. Desire is one component of emotional intention, but not all.

Emotional evaluations compel action. To emotionally evaluate something as good for me or bad is just as to desire its presence or
fundamentally a victim living in a world of victimizers who seek intimacy only to betray and brutalize. This emotional mythology defines its subject as victim. Each emotional subject tries to confirm her mythology - her judgments about herself - through her criteria of what is good or bad and thus through her typical emotional reactions. The perennial victim judges intimacy to be threatening and bad, and thus tries to insulate herself, with her emotional judgments, that any particular intimacy into which she enters is a bad situation from which she must escape.

My Searleian model of the emotions can be shown in the following diagram.

This diagram also shows the links between the central set of features of emotion and the two remaining categories from Solomon, strategy and mythology. Before I conclude I want to suggest some hypotheses about these.

Strategy and mythology are features of one's emotional life in general, not features of any one specific emotion. For Solomon, one's emotional mythology defines our conceptions of ourselves, as heroes or martyrs, as 'goodhearted but misunderstood' or as talented but unappreciated, as lovable but unloved, as gallant or as cowardly, as generous or as greedy. Solomon, 219) Mythology sets the goals of one's emotional life. What one judges to be good or bad depends on what kind of a person one is, because the goodness or badness is goodness or badness to oneself, or for one's own specific identity. This sense of personal identity is in part defined by emotional mythology.

One's emotional mythology is a set of factual judgments about what kind of person one is. Thus one can, for example, judge herself to be
It seems plausible to suggest that the left-to-right line of the top of figure 1 is only one direction of a feedback loop. Mythology defines strategy, and strategy affects particular criteria and powers. For surly reasons, these criteria may prove to be painfully or delightfully wrong; we may find that we lack certain powers we had tried to employ and possess some which we had not been aware of. This revision of strategy may force a revision of mythology. The fearful person from the last example, after abandoning her strategy of avoiding intimacy, will probably re-mythologize her life to better accord with the new person she has made herself into.

Let me conclude with a few comments on the rationality of emotions. In our conscious reasoning, we constantly make judgments. We subsume the planets under the concept 'body' or Kant's epistemology under the concept 'empirical world' (or 'truth', if you prefer). Rarely do we reason to these conclusions. Much of our rational life is carried on behind-the-scenes and we experience at a conscious level only the product of this process known as 'thinking'. This does not in the least tempt us to suggest that this thinking is irrational or sectional. But I have suggested that emotions are evaluative and recommendatory judgments. They subsume objects under criteria and thereby recommend action; these evaluations are experienced vicariously and directly. It is because emotion is associated with the body and because its internal structure is unconscious that emotion has been thought of as non-cognitive, crude, instinctual, primitive, and so forth. But in fact, they are among our most cognitively powerful and motivationally necessary engagements with the world. We have not seen this because we have not examined the cognitive structure of emotion, but we have not examined this structure because we have believed that it was not there. But as I hope I have shown in this paper, the rejection of this paralyzing doctrine reveals to us the fantastically sophisticated structure of our inner lives in a way that allows us to understand ourselves better and hence to better guide our lives. So far from encouraging us to revel in irrationality, the study of the emotions provides us with reason with greater power.

Notes

1 Thanks to Jesse Ballez for noting this problem.
2 Thanks to Maria McFarland for noting an extreme error in this section of a draft of this paper.
3 Thanks also to Ethel Coface for a number of stylistic suggestions.

Bryan Register

and to Robert Solomon for holding his seminar on 'Emotions, Rationality, and Existentialism', for which this paper was written. Finally, thanks to Sarah French (Sarah Register) by the time this is printed for creating figure 1 and for listening to me babble this stuff over and over again.

Works Cited


Gettier and Plato on Knowledge

Jesse Bailey

In 1963, Edmund Gettier published his paper entitled "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" and many have said that it is the most important and influential work in epistemology of the twentieth century. However, when one reads it, one is struck not only by its brevity, but also by a sense that philosophical "stalemate of hand" is taking place. It seems that something is wrong with Gettier's argument or the way in which he deals with the problem, but just when you think you have got a handle on what Gettier is doing wrong, it slips away from you. However, the interest of the paper lies for me in the very fact that it is so difficult to put your finger on exactly what is giving the article the feel that it is missing the mark. Several papers have since been written which try and answer the problem posed by Gettier. Unfortunately, they seem to miss the point as well, and end up repeating Gettier's error. The purpose of this paper is to try and spell out what that error is, and to let Plato's work on knowledge in the Meta, Theaetetus, and the Apology speak to this error in a way which might give us a more plausible alternative, as well as bring into focus the specifics of Gettier's mistake.

In this paper, Gettier analyses a definition of the term 'knowledge' that has had considerable attention paid to it in the history of philosophy. Specifically, he is questioning whether or not this particular definition captures exactly what we mean when we use 'knowledge' in natural language. "This definition has many formulations, but basically states that 'justified true belief' is a necessary and sufficient condition for knowledge. The heart of his paper is the demonstration that this definition in fact does not accord with our use of the term. He levies two rather outlandish examples of cases when the definition in question would allow that a certain belief constitutes knowledge, when we would ordinarily not consider the instance of belief in question to be knowledge. Since the definition - 'justified true belief' - allows for instances of knowledge which common sense tells us are in fact merely cases of belief, not real knowledge, Gettier rejects the possible definition. He is thus substituting the definition of 'knowledge' to the strict criterion that it allow only instances of knowledge that our common usage of the term seems to allow into what we call 'knowledge'."
strictly.

One possible answer is that by coming to a strict definition of ‘knowledge’, we hope to be able to achieve some insight into what knowledge really is. We hope, therefore, to get closer to discovering what things can and cannot be known, and what the proper way of achieving knowledge is. In short, we feel that there is a need to understand what knowledge is before we consider any other epistemological issues.

While establishing a solid concept of what knowledge really is may have these benefits, it is not clear that strictly defining the term to accord with our use in natural language is going to help us discover what kinds of things can be known. In fact, we would find that any definition we come to that accords with our use of the term in natural language is going to rest upon the very notions of knowability that we had hoped to discover.

In the Ceteris examples, he lays out an account of a belief that we would not ordinarily allow to be knowledge, yet a belief that the Gettier case is in question includes. The way that we would begin to attack Gettier’s argument (especially in Case II of his article) is to state that the belief in question does not satisfy the definition of knowledge as justified true belief, because Smith did not in fact have sufficient justification for believing that Jones owned a Ford. We could, however, claim that the very way that Smith could be justified in his claim that Jones owned a Ford would be via some more direct form of awareness, such as knowing Jones if he had a Ford. Therefore, we could claim that the belief in question does not satisfy the constraint that it be sufficiently justified. Regardless of what Gettier says to defend against this attack, the argument is going to descend to an argument over exactly what entails ‘sufficient justification’. That is to say, the crux of Gettier’s argument turns out to be dependent on what we mean by ‘justification’.

However, what we think is ‘sufficient justification’ for a belief is going to rest, at least in part, on what we presuppose is the proper method of coming to knowledge. A skeptic is going to doubt a sensory evidence of the only valid form of epistemic justification. A mystic is going to allow mystical experience to justify their beliefs, while a naturalist will question the veracity of any such belief. What we begin to see is, contrary to the hypothesis that a definition strictly in accord with our common usage of ‘knowledge’ will help us decide what are the proper ways of achieving knowledge, any such definition is going to rest on our previously formed notions of what it means to know, notions which themselves rest on what we had hoped so first, specifically, what we think the proper ways of achieving knowledge...

Jose Bailey

are. Thus, we cannot hope to achieve any insight into what knowing is by analyzing the term itself, or what we seem to mean when we utter it. All any such analysis is going to do is uncover who we already think about knowledge and knowing. The error that Gettier and his followers are making is simply approaching the issue with the wrong intensions. In hoping to find out something about what ‘knowledge’ really means, they have only succeeded in uncovering what they already think about knowing.

Plato recognized this problem in the Thetætæ and his Socrates states the very problem we have stumbled upon in Gettier. After dealing at length with the same definition that Gettier’s paper addresses, Socrates concludes that the definition rests on an antecedent notion of what knowledge is. He states, ‘And it is surely just silly to tell us, when we are trying to discover what knowledge is, that it is correct judgment accompanied by knowledge, whether of difference or of anything else’. (C.10a) As we have seen in our analysis of Gettier, Plato saw in his own engagement of ‘knowledge’, that it is a very difficult, if not impossible, notion to strictly define. In attempting to fix the exact meaning of the term to a definition with rigorously established parameters, he found that we end up, even in our most earnest attempts, to rely on this preceding notion of what knowledge is to define how we use the term. Any attempt which incorporates the notion of ‘justification’, as it seems that any attempt must, is going to fail prey to the objection that it presupposes a theory of knowing in its attempt to define ‘knowledge’.

So it seems that we must abandon the idea that this definition based upon our use of the term in natural language is going to give us some new insight into what knowing really is. We are thus left the burden of understanding what the purpose of a Gettier-like endeavor could be.

Perhaps, since the study of our use of ‘knowledge’ cannot tell us anything about knowing in reality, perhaps the value of Gettier’s project lies in establishing a clear notion, not of how knowing really works, rather, of how knowing seems to us to work. That is, to give an account of the underlying human conception of knowing, and to create a definition to formatively model how we ordinarily conceive of knowledge. Thus he may be attempting to engage in a sort of phe...
nomological endeavor to discover how we see knowing and knowledge, and not necessarily to define what the essence of knowledge really is.

However, if this is the case, it becomes clear why Gettier's work seems to miss the mark, and strikes us as somehow misguided. People generally do not see knowledge as a set of propositions that either fit into a category of knowledge or not knowledge, strictly and without gray areas. We perceive knowledge as a more fluid notion that does not lend itself so easily to definition. Our beliefs are constantly in flux, and which beliefs we are willing to call knowledge depends more on context and the passion with which we hold the belief than any sort of external criterion such as justification or the truth of the belief. While notions such as truth and justification must play some role in what we think knowledge is, they should not be thought to be the central roles.

In fact, while it seems that the way in which we come to the belief, i.e., the justification, cannot be removed from our definition, it is not at all clear that truth should be a factor in our phenomenological definition of the term. This seems counter-intuitive, but if truth were to be a criterion for knowledge, it follows that I may not in fact know what I think I know. In other words, if we make truth a criterion in our definition of knowledge, as from one perspective it seems that we must, then the transparency of knowledge must fail. At first glance this may seem perfectly reasonable, but only if we understand our definition to be one of actual knowledge, and not of the human perception of knowledge. It makes no sense to say that, phenomenologically, knowledge is not transparent, for that would amount to saying we can think we know something which we do not in fact think we know. If we are no longer talking about what we actually do and do not know, and considering only the human perception of knowledge, then the transparency of knowledge follows trivially and absolutely.

When we turn our eyes to the criterion of justification, we find that it seems to play a more critical role in what we tend to think of as knowledge as opposed to merely belief. Plato seemed to see this fact as well. While the Thrasylus ends without a definite answer given to what the definition of 'knowledge' should be, we are left with hope for the following dialogue, the Sophist, to solve the problem. However, when we come to the reading of the Sophist looking for an answer to the nature or definition of knowledge, we are left wanting— at least explicitly. Instead of some additional attempts at defining the elusive term, we are given an account of knowing in the form of a demonstr-
When we look at the way in which the slave-boy teases, or as Socrates claims, "rememberizes" the truths of geometry which Socrates seems to reveal that the boy already knew, we get a clearer picture of Plato's sense of giving "an account of the reason why". Instead of Socrates simply telling the boy that the square with double the area would be the one based on the diagonal, Socrates leads the boy through the steps required to come to that answer himself. Had Socrates simply told the boy the answer, the boy would certainly have "known how to solve the problem"—he would have had true belief. However, in not knowing how the answer was reached, he would not have attained to knowledge. Thus, knowledge is revealed to be acquired when one has true belief plus an account of how the truth is reached.

However, this attempt at propositionally formulating the truth revealed in the Meno does not do it justice. It is unclear in that it leaves open the question: couldn't one know how a truth about geometry is reached by knowing to ask a geometer the proper question? Thus, if the slave-boy knew that the square based on the diagonal was double, and know that the way to reach that truth is to ask someone, like Socrates, who knows the answer, would he then have achieved knowledge? This is obviously not what Plato said in mind. By knowing how a belief is formed, Plato does not mean how any belief is formed by any means. Rather, his conception of giving the "reason why" has the more restricted sense of knowing how to reach the truth via a specific method. The above attempt to define knowledge thus becomes artificial, and does not do Plato's theory of justice. The artificiality of the attempt to propositionally state what an 'account' and thus what 'knowledge' are, is exactly why Plato does not give us such a propositionally defined.

When we abandon such attempts at definition, and turn from the Meno back to the Theaetetus and the Sophist, we can begin to spell out the picture Plato is drawing a little more fully. At the end of the Theaetetus, as we were saying, Socrates promises to come back and continue discussing the nature of knowledge. However, when he returns as promised, at the beginning of the Sophist, we do not get more attempts at a definition. Instead, we are given an object lesson in the method of dialectic—in the form of searches after the nature of the 'angle', the 'sophist', and a search into the being of non-beings. Dialectic is thus presented by Plato as the method by which to search into the truth of matters great and small. With what we have learned from the Meno, this switch from propositionally defined to a demonstration of the method by which to search (i.e. a discussion of how to...
to justification—until we deeply examine our beliefs, and the beliefs/consequences, we can lay claim only to belief. This may even be true belief, but we will never achieve knowledge, never achieve 

\text{knowledge}, without searching via the proper method, and thus never achieve truth in Plato’s sense.

It may at this point be of value to spell out a little more clearly what I intend to show with this talk of Plato, and with this attempt to draw a non-Gettier-like account of what \text{knowledge} could mean. In thinking about how Plato might have seen the essence of knowledge, we have strayed far from anything like Gettier’s account. However, it seems that even straying as far as we have, we have run into some of the same problems that we encountered in analyzing Gettier’s paper. The concept of knowledge has been found to be tied up with the concepts of justification and truth in ways that are difficult to understand, and even more difficult, if not impossible, to formalize. Gettier’s attempt to formalize these complex relations in a simplistic, two-page paper, seems even more artificial once we examine how intertwined these concepts really are. What I suggest, then, is that we cannot hope to understand what \text{knowledge} means to us without serious phenomenological investigation into how we perceive knowledge, or, in the case of hoping to find out what knowledge really is, without some serious investigation into what reality is. The three concepts of \text{knowledge}, \text{justification}, and \text{truth} turn out to be deeply and inextricably linked, so deeply in fact, that an attempt to understand any one of these terms independently of the others is going to be tragically artificial. Even, as Gettier does, attempting to understand these terms in relation to one another does not do justice to how linked they truly are. In the end, understanding of any one term will never be achieved without understanding them all, and how they are all connected.

From this sketchy account of justification, truth, and knowledge in Plato, we put ourselves into a position to establish the thesis of this paper. As we saw in analyzing Gettier, and as Plato seemed to rec- \footnote{As a point of clarification, I would like to state that this talk of the relation between the terms \text{knowledge}, \text{truth}, and \text{justification} is deliberately left fuzzy and open-ended. What I mean to imply by stating that it is one of Gettier’s errors that he tries to understand them in “relation” to one another is certainly not that these terms are not related. Rather, to understand how they are related, we must look beyond the appearance that they are at all separate. The term “relation” implies a relationship between things which are inherently separate. What I suggest is that these three terms are not separate at all, and thus any attempt to understand them as “separate but related” will fail to grasp what they mean. We must understand first their connections, and how they are part of the same conceptual framework, then, perhaps, we can begin to try and separate them out, to focus on the relations between them.}ognize in the Theaetetus, any definition of knowledge is going to rest on a foundation of justification of whatever method the author of the definition feels is proper for achieving knowledge. From our analysis of Plato’s ideas on this matter, we see that even if we extricate ourselves from any attempt to find out something about knowledge in reality, to a purely phenomenological account of knowledge, we still end up resting our account of knowledge on the issue of justification. And, as we have seen, any theories of justification are going to hinge, in the end, on what account of \text{truth} we take to be the right one. Thus, if we were to try and come to some definition of the term, we would have to take into account the centrality of justification, and its intricate relation to truth, and not try and treat it as secondary to truth, as Gettier seems to want to. We must appreciate how intertwined the meanings of these concepts are, instead of trying to separate them, and hope to understand them as distinct from one-another.

How we form our beliefs is going to be the essential criterion for what we consider to be knowledge. The definition of \text{knowledge} is secondary to our establishing what is the proper means of forming our beliefs. It seems, then, that Gettier was putting the cart before the horse in his attempt to define \text{knowledge}. Without a concrete statement of the proper method of achieving our beliefs, any Gettier-like attempt is going to be doomed. Moreover, any such definition is going to have validity only within its own conceptual framework. That is to say, an empiricist’s definition of knowledge is only going to allow for empirically verified knowledge, and thus only have any real validity for empiricists. Thus the debate over the definition of knowledge takes on the curious position of being both central to and secondary to epistemology. Until we agree on the proper method of acquiring belief, we can never agree on what \text{knowledge} really means— but the argument over the method is essentially the argument over the meaning of knowledge.
Heraclitus vs. Parmenides

Jacob Mackey

I submit that Heraclitus's philosophy can be most richly apprehended not only by interpreting what his language appears to be saying, but most importantly by attending carefully to the way in which it says what it says. I think that the Heraclitean form, his mode of metaphor, can persuasively be described as "centripetal" language in the sense defined by Northrop Frye in the second essay of his Anatomy of Criticism (1947). That is, Heraclitus's metaphors direct the reader's attention inward, toward themselves and their construction, rather than outward, towards some signified other beyond them. A sensitivity to Heraclitus's form will render a more complete appreciation of his philosophy than will a reading which merely attempts to extract meanings from amongst his tangled words.

A primary theme of Heraclitus's philosophy involves his assertion of the unity of opposites; e.g. "we are and we are not" (fr. 42b Freeman 28), or "the way up and down is one and the same" (fr. 60 Freeman 29). Equally central is his understanding of the Logos, which appears to be his term for that which is most real, and for the law which governs the universe (fr. 1 A & 2 Freeman 24). The dynamic of the Logos—an term translatable variously (but not exclusively) as "discourse" or "argument"—is precisely what his language instantiates in its structure of metaphor. For example, and in many other cases, there is a "discourse" between the "words" (another possible translation of Logos) in fragment 59's assertion that the "straight and crooked is one and the same" (Freeman 28). One could say that there is a dissonance between the terms in fragment 59 ("straight" and "crooked" being polar opposites), and that this dissonance is exemplary of or paradigmatic of the tension that exists in what is real; the Logos. The nature of the Logos is reflected in the architecture of the Heraclitean phrase.

Is it significant that these oppositions occur within the framework of a single metaphorical phrase? As frag. 51 states, "that which differs with itself is in agreement" (Freeman 28). And frag. 67 says that God himself is "day-night, winter-summer, etc" (Freeman 29). Taken in at a cursory reading, these statements appear to be counter-intuitive, nonsensical, opaque to reason, at best, obscure. But it is within
The single frame of the Logos that all opposites sustain this discourse.* The Logos, in Heraclitus’s view, a harmonious union that is, nevertheless and necessarily, in a state of opposed tension, or “argument,” with itself. In Heraclitus’s metaphors we are given a glimpse, in microcosm, of the paradoxic heterodoxy that is the Logos.

To clarify further: metaphor’s very nature consists in asserting of some thing, “A,” some predicate, “not A.” At a fundamental level, language itself asserts a sign, which is not identical with the thing signified, of the thing signified, which itself in no way inspired the sign. In this respect, words and the things they represent are in conflict together and language is in tension with itself. But “that which is in opposition is in concert” (fr. 8 Freeman 25b), and the signs and signifiers do produce a kind of harmony amongst themselves. For if they did not, we could have no apprehension of reality to signify. We cannot comprehend reality without signifiers, and conversely (indulge me here), signifiers are empty sounds without reality. Words and the things they represent depend on one another for cognitive harmony with a kind of perfect reciprocitv. It is precisely this fact of language—this identity/identity dynamic—which Heraclitus’s writings suggest to be the truth of the Logos, or at least the truth of any understanding of the Logos.

Heraclitus is not primarily concerned that we puzzle-out some way in which the straight can be the crooked, except insofar as doing so will grant us insight into the argument-agreement that is the Logos. What he truly seeks to achieve is a perfect tension of language; he wishes to stretch the strings of metaphor as tightly as possible, and strumming them, to produce the harmony of the Logos.

Let us now examine fragment 50, a particularly fertile Heraclean fragment, which states: “When you have listened, not to me but to the Logos, it is wise to agree that all things are one” (Freeman 28; italics mine). Taken at face-value (or what appears to be), this sentence looks as if it says that attention to the Logos will reveal the unity that is reality. A second look, however, reveals some curious inner conflicts.

For one, Heraclitus is exhorting us to ignore him but to heed the Logos. This is problematic, for if we take seriously his first prescription to listen not to him we will, of necessity, have to ignore his second prescription to listen to the Logos. We would have to turn a deaf ear to both. More strangely, if we follow his first advice (and whether we listen to the Logos or not) we will be doing what he told us not to do, namely: obeying his command not to obey him. And we will again violate the questionable logic of the sentence if we ignore...
the second half of the sentence and the first half; i.e., is it Heraclitus telling us that all is one? Or maybe if we listen to the Logos we will come to agree with Heraclitus that the many are in unity? Will we, indeed, even make it as far as the second half of the sentence?

What has, I hope, been illustrated by the preceding cacophony is my theme: that Heraclitus's philosophy cannot be comprehended in any reductionist paraphrase of it. His philosophy consists in unrepeatable metaphors, the form of which not only supports the tenor, but to a large degree, is the tenor of his argument. Heraclitus's Logos is a many-splendored thing. It is a whole composed of opposing tensions, and it is a reality in which the laws of reciprocity are absolute. Not never gains dominance over cold, nor vice versa. All is hot-cold and cold-hot, which is not the same as to say lukewarm. There is instead a glorious 'concert' (fr. 8 Freeman) of many voices that can be heard accompanying and sublimating Heraclitus's apparent dissonances.

Heraclitus himself, I think, is like the oracle of the God of prophecy, poetry, music and purification: Apollo, whose oracle 'at Delphi neither speaks nor conceals, but indicates' (fr. 93 Freeman 31). Heraclitus neither makes a simple philosophy explicit, by 'speaking' it, nor does he entirely hide, obscure, or 'conceal' some otherwise acute truth. What he does do, and I think this is what he is getting at when he says that 'the hidden harmony is stronger than the visible' (fr. 54 Freeman 258), is to 'indicate' the magnitude and profundity of a Logos which can never be perfectly grasped by a finite mind. The best reading of Heraclitus is the most fluid, changeable, and mutable reading. It is a superrhuman reading that is always arriving at, but never reaches, a conclusion, and it is simultaneously an apprehension of the Logos. Only the ideal reader with the ideal case of insomnia could possibly essay it, and still be unsuccessful at that. As Heraclitus makes clear, 'you could not in your going find the end of the soul, though you travelled the whole way: so deep is its Logos' (fr. 45 Freeman 27).

If Heraclitus speaks paradoxically because he wishes his language to draw our attention more powerfully to itself, then Parmenides often sounds inarticulate to reason because he wishes to put us in contact with something beyond the experiences we ordinarily have with language. I would characterize Parmenidean language as 'cryptic, gal' in Frye's sense of the word (10477). That is, it attempts to direct the reader's attention away from itself toward the object of its significations, in this case, Being. As he says in fragment 7,8, "nothing else either is or shall be except Being" (Freeman 44). His words attempt to com-
Hesiod's theology was almost a practical reality and Homer's poems were taught as the poetical representation of fact? Parmenides chose to write a poem, not only because he knew certain obvious inconsistencies could go unremarked in that medium, but also because he wanted to assist the reader to overcome the dualities inherent to the "Way of Opinion," and to achieve, through mystical poetry, an almost spiritual apprehension of the "One." "One should both say and think that Being Is, for To be is possible, and Nothingness is not possible" (fr. 6 Freeman 45).

Parmenides' poem, therefore, is a tool. He did not want his poem, in its "poemness," to interest the reader. Unlike Heraclitus' sayings, his poem is not designed to exploit the innate tensions in metaphor, but is instead meant to catapult one beyond significations into the presence of the "Dyng-an-stick" by the sheer force of poetical assertion. "Being Is," dammit!

If, as mentioned above, Heraclitus relishes the troubled reciprocity of sign and thing signified, then Parmenides only grudgingly exploits this relationship because he must. Ultimately, he believes that being "is not lacing" (fr.7.8 Freeman 44) and depends on no characterizations of it for its reality. In fact, Being is the only possible object of speech or cognition for Parmenides, "for you will not find thinking without Being" (fr.7.8 Freeman 44). Ideally, only being can be thought or uttered.

It is here I would say that Parmenides' language partakes, against his wishes, of the Heraclitean style. Striving so mightily to translate the reader out of the seeming realm of duality and into the direct presence, his language does battle with itself. There is an ongoing tug-of-war between what he is saying and not only how he's saying it, but also the very fact that he is saying it. If Being is the only thing that can be uttered then it can't meaningfully be uttered. The sign has to differ from the thing signified. Heraclitus would have been proud to have said "it is neither explicable nor thinkable that What-Is-Not Is" (fr.7.8 Freeman 45). What could be more self-contradictory?

Parmenides' "centripetal" metaphors are only possible because of their "centripetal" nature; i.e. they are meaningful because of the resonances and reverberations which they set up inside themselves. An entirely centripetal metaphor, one that refers only beyond itself, and is itself invisible, is categorically impossible. It would no longer be a metaphor. It would be the thing itself.

As for Heraclitus, he, with his talk of the ultimacy of 'concert' over 'opposition,' sounds suspiciously like a monist. Any "centripetal"

---

Works Cited


The Pragmatic Priority of Democracy to Philosophy

Maria McFarland

I. Introduction

A central feature of American pragmatism is its argument in favor of democracy, which finds probably its most forceful articulation in the work of John Dewey. It is the purpose of this essay to examine Dewey’s argument for democracy as presented in his Reconstruction in Philosophy, and to contrast it with a more recent pragmatic argument for democracy that presented by Richard Rorty in “The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy.” In the first section, I shall present Dewey’s argument for democracy. In the second section, Rorty’s position will be discussed. I shall make the argument that Rorty falls in his defense of democracy because he descends into cultural relativism and ignores the importance of philosophy in grounding political theory. I shall conclude that Dewey’s argument, while open to some criticism, is far preferable to Rorty’s and more consistent with pragmatist philosophy.

II. Dewey’s argument for democracy

Dewey constructs his argument for democracy based upon his views of the relation between the individual and society. These views, in turn, stem from Dewey’s naturalistic form of metaphysics. Consequently, in discussing Dewey’s argument for democracy, it will be necessary to briefly examine certain aspects of Dewey’s metaphysics, specifically, his ideas on experience and morality.

Before proceeding I would like to make clear what I mean by “naturalistic metaphysics.” Metaphysics can be loosely defined as the branch of philosophy that deals with the primary causes of all things (existences, events, or circumstances). Dewey’s metaphysics are naturalistic because Dewey thinks the first principles of all things can be found in nature. As noted by E.W. Steeper, “Dewey thought that we should give up on the whole idea of fixed essences and eternal forms that are out there in a transcendent reality.” We have no experience of such a reality, so it makes no sense to speak about it. Thus Dewey’s metaphysics are grounded, not in a transcendent reality, but in the world of our experiences, which is the natural world.

Dewey conceives of experiences as the interaction of organisms (not necessarily human) with one another and with their environment. Organisms have experiences by acting and undergoing the consequences of their actions. Thus:

Experience becomes an affair primarily of doing... The organism acts in accordance with its own structure, simple or complex, upon its surroundings. As a consequence the changes produced in the environment react upon the organism and its activities. The living creature undergoes, suffers, the consequences of its own behavior.

In other words, experience is a process by which an organism tests its changing environment. An important implication of this view of experience is that knowledge is understood as one element in the continuum of experience. Knowledge is not fixed or eternal. Instead, while it is characterized by some measure of constancy and stability, its dependence on experience makes it mutable, always subject to revision. Even systems of logic, mathematics, and ethics are products of experience according to Dewey. Indeed, Dewey describes the construction of such systems as a process of long historic growth, in which all kinds of experiments have been tried, in which some men have struck out in this direction and some in that, and in which some exercises and operations have resulted in confusion and others in triumphant clarifications and fruitful growths; a history in which matter and methods have been constantly selected and worked over on the basis of empirical success and failure.

Dewey conceives of the human individual as a being that creates itself from its experiences. The individual, as a living organism, has experiences by interacting with his environment. Since individuals’ experiences depend largely upon their environments, the individual is not separate from his environment or complete within himself. Rather, different environments foster the development of different kinds of individuals. If individuals are able to communicate, this is due to the similarity or contiguity of their experiences, and not because they are all essentially the same nor because they are all aware of the same reality.

Dewey uses the word “individuality” in two senses. The first, which we have already discussed, is that of a person in process of constructing himself from experience. But Dewey gives a stronger sense to “individuality” in the following passage:
Individuality in a social and moral sense is something to be wrought out. It means initiative, inventiveness, varied resourcefulness, assumption of responsibility in choice of belief and conduct. These are not gifts, but achievements. At achievements, they are not absolute but relative to the use that is to be made of them. And this use varies with the environment.

Here individuality is not something that belongs to a human being per se. Instead, it is something towards which a human being advances. Success in the achievements of individuality depends heavily upon the individual's experiences and, consequently, his environment. Environments in which initiative, inventiveness, and responsibility are not useful will not foster the achievement of individuality, while environments where these features are useful will create humans who achieve individuality. Thus, Dewey holds that social arrangements are primarily "means of creating individuals". Hence, they should be evaluated in terms of the types of individuals they create.

Dewey defines society as "the process of associating in such ways that experiences, ideas, emotions, values are transmitted and made common". Dewey calls it a process because it is not static but constantly changing along with the experiences of the individuals within it. Society is the collection of voluntary associations of individuals for the realization and sharing of some form of experience. Dewey holds that it is only in associations that goods are realized, for goods are created in sharing and communication. Outside of association the individual "remains dumb, merely sentient, a brute animal". Goods are the interests and aims that individuals have developed over the course of their experience in association. They depend upon each particular situation, and the individuals involved in it. There is an infinite variety of goods, corresponding to an infinity of particular situations. The good of the particular situation is to be discovered through the application of intelligence, through inquiry into the consequences of possible courses of actions.

These ideas on morality and on the importance of associations for the realization of goods lead Dewey to conclude that societies should not be organized so as to maximize one good. Such forms of organization are insensitive to the concrete problems of social groups; they minimize the importance of particular conflicts, causing society to become stagnant. Instead, Dewey thinks that society's institutions should be organized so as to apply the best possible method of inquiry for determining and realizing the goods of particular situations.
spread, and human individuality must be maximally developed. For such a society to exist, at least two conditions must be met. First, individuals must be given a margin of liberty to experiment. Once individuals are allowed to use their initiative, they begin to develop their capacities. Second, individuals must be educated, not only with regard to specialized issues, but with regard to the aims of their social groups. If these conditions are met, the individual gains a greater control over his environment, which permits a maximal development of his individuality. But neither condition is fully met unless the individual takes part in directing the course of his group. Insofar as the individual is blotted out of social decisions, he is prevented from developing his individuality to the fullest extent. When each person has a share in shaping the aims of the social group, this group becomes a creative force. It becomes sensitive to the particular problems that arise within it, and it is willing to experiment, to find increasingly better solutions to its problems. Such a system is what Dewey terms “creative democracy.”

Dewey’s “creative democracy” is not simply a political democracy. Instead, it is a culture of democracy. It requires the creation of strong links within the public, which foster widespread communication. Its main focus is in the promotion of self-creation and communal participation, through an emphasis on education and discussion at all levels of society. To achieve this end, Dewey thought it necessary to give greater decision-making power to states, and more importantly, to communities. Indeed, in Freedom and Culture, Dewey quotes an earlier statement of his: “Democracy must begin at home, and its home is the neighborhood community.” This is not to say that all social contact is to become local. But the strength of the local community is necessary for the development of the strong ties that permit social dialogue on a large scale.

Change in Dewey’s creative democracy is to be effected gradually, through education and communication. Conflicts among parties with different goods are to be resolved through the achievement of a compromise that damages the smallest amount of interests. This view on the resolution of conflicts of interest is reflected in William James’ statement that “That act must be the best act, ... which makes for the best whole in the sense of awakening the least sum of dissatisfaction.” The only way to determine which act is best is through dialogue. This position has led Cornel West, among others, to accuse Dewey of being "maigwampie" when it comes to effecting social change. They argue that his gradualism blinded him to the need for active ideological movements to effect change. But Dewey has a good reason for being a gradualist: he believes that "... democracy can be served only by the slow day by day adoption and contagious diffusion in every phase of our common life of methods that are identical with the ends to be reached and that recourse to monistic, wholesale, absolutist procedures is a betrayal of human freedom so matter in what guise it presents itself [italics mine]."

Dewey’s argument for democracy presupposes the possibility of progress. His argument is that we should support democracy because it is the best system available to us. Democracy does not guarantee progress, but it is the system that offers the greatest possibilities for progress. What sort of progress are we speaking of? Normally progress is understood as advancement to some better situation. But Dewey’s moral philosophy gives us no single standard by which to measure whether democracy leads to progress or not. It could be argued that Dewey is speaking of technological progress. But then we would need a standard by which to judge whether technological progress is desirable. We must then return to the question of whether in a world of multiple gods we can speak of progress. I think that Dewey’s philosophy allows us to do so.

While in Dewey’s view there is no fixed eternal good, a plurality of goods is created in association. The system that fosters association for the creation of goods and arbitrates in conflicts of goods so as to find the solution that is most agreeable to all will achieve a kind of progress. This progress will not move towards one fixed good. Rather, it is progress towards ever greater variety of goods and to society’s increasing ability to solve problems in the achievement of these goods.

In short, we can now argue that Dewey’s support for a creative democracy requires grounds on which we can say that democracy is the best system for us. The argument Dewey offers us is that creative democracy spreads critical intelligence and develops human individuality, thus permitting us to achieve more and varied goods. But the only reason critical intelligence is all important is that it permits us to find solutions to our problems and to control our environment better. The application of critical intelligence yields results because it gives us a route of access to the world underlying our experience. We have now traced Dewey’s argument for democracy back to a metaphysical claim: the “real world” lying at the root of all experience and culture is the natural world, and we can learn about it through inquiry. Without further delay, I move on to Richard Rorty’s defense of democracy.
what principles should regulate political institutions by simply draw-
ing on the intuitions that prevail in our society. The first question to ask here is: why focus on the intuitions that prevail in a society instead of the intuitions of each individual? Rorty recognizes in his view an ethnocentrism that, he argues, is "a middle ground between relativism and a theory of the moral sub-
ject". Rorty seems to think that he can avoid relativism and the pos-
sibility of anarchy by focusing on an entire society, with its "settled social habits... irrespective of the particular desires and needs of its present members". This centering on social traditions instead of individual interests is what Rorty means by ethnocentrism. His ethno-
centrism assumes that the similarities among us that stem from our common culture are not outweighed by the individual differences that stem from our personal histories.

By taking an ethnocentric stance, Rorty avoids the charge of relativism on an individual level, but not on a cultural level. If our intuitions about liberty and equality are cultural products, then a radically different culture can produce individuals with entirely different intuitions. Thus, while Rorty may be able to use Rawls’ theory to jus-
tify democracy to our society, he may not be able to do so in a differ-
ent society, where different intuitions prevail. Indeed, people in a dif-
ferent society may be able to justify a system entirely different from democracy on the basis of that system’s compatibility with their intu-
itions. Furthermore, if our intuitions are "democratic", this is almost certainly due to the fact that our culture is democratic. Conse-
quently, the argument for democracy becomes: 'we come from a democratic culture so we should have a democracy'. The same would hold for totalitarianism: the most adequate system for people who come from a totalitarian culture is a totalitarian system. Thus, Rorty’s argument serves to perpetuate the systems that already exist in a society. This situation runs counter to the spirit of reform and improvement that characterized Dewey’s philosophy.

Dewey’s argument for democracy is more forceful than Rorty’s because it serves to justify democracy not only to those who have certain intuitions but to all people. This is possible because Dewey can argue that all political systems, democracy produces the best consequences for any society. The standard by which Dewey judges these consequences is that of progress towards creation of a plurality of goods and solution of problems through critical intelli-
gence. Here we have an argument that can stand in opposition to arguments for other forms of government, not only where democracy is already in place, but everywhere. The argument does, however, rest...
upon metaphysical presuppositions. It is because Dewey believes that the natural world is the real world that he can say that goods and socially created instead of belonging to a transcendent reality. It is because culture is ultimately rooted in the natural world and because inquiry gives us access to that world that the application of critical intelligence solves problems. In the face of Dewey's argument, supporters of systems of government other than democracy have to show that such systems serve a given society better in solving problems, creating goods, and developing individuals. Alternatively, arguments could attack Dewey's philosophical presuppositions by claiming, for example, that there is a transcendent reality. Rorty's belief that it makes no sense to talk about metaphysics or human nature leaves him in a situation where he has no standard by which to judge the consequences of a political system. He must leave it up to the members of each society to judge the consequences by their own standards. Thus, he cannot produce an argument for democracy that is forceful enough to justify democracy not only where it already exists but also where the political system is entirely different.

Finally, Rorty's desire to ground political theory without appealing to philosophy is, already, based upon a philosophical position. His position may be characterized as antiphilosophy because it rejects any talk of metaphysics, but in a sense it is philosophical. It takes culture as the determinant factor in human development and assumes that it is impossible to access the world underlying our cultures. In this situation, no philosophical position need be taken as the one true philosophy. All sorts of philosophical and religious beliefs will be acceptable if someone thinks they are right. This is why Rorty wants to do away with philosophy as grounding for political theory. But Rorty's position can be countered by people who hold that there is one universally true philosophy, or that we do have access to the 'real world' underlying cultures. Rorty might then argue that his position escapes this sort of attack because it is not philosophical but metaphilosophical: it tells us that we can take any philosophical position we like, but that others are equally entitled to take a position that is incompatible with ours. The only way to tell which one is better is from within one of the positions.

Nevertheless, this sort of escape from attack is awkward. If we take the standpoint of Rorty's 'metaphilosophy', then we would have to say that even this metaphilosophy has to be included among the many philosophical positions each of which could also be right. If we assume that Rorty's 'metaphilosophy' is wrong, then we can say it is a misguided philosophical position and that some other position is right. Either way, Rorty's meta-philosophy is also a philosophical position.

Rorty recognizes the paradox involved in trying to do away with philosophical presuppositions because of philosophical presuppositions. However, the only defense he offers for this move is, again, philosophical: 'such philosophical superficiality and light-mindedness helps along the disenchantedment of the world. It helps make the world's inhabitants more pragmatic, more tolerant, more liberal, more receptive to the appeal of instrumental rationality'\textsuperscript{15}. In other words, we should avoid philosophical presuppositions so that the spirit of pragmatism, tolerance, and liberalism (which Rorty believes it) can spread. It makes no sense to say that we should ignore philosophy because of philosophy. Rorty's statement only shifts the attack on his philosophical presuppositions one level back. Thus, while attacks on Dewey's argument for democracy could aim at the metaphysical presuppositions underlying it, attacks on Rorty's argument would be directed to the philosophical reasons behind doing away with philosophy as a basis for political theory.

IV. Conclusion

I conclude that Rorty's argument for democracy serves to justify democracy to a democratic society, but, unlike Dewey's argument, it cannot convince other societies that democracy is the best system available. Also, while Rorty's argument for democracy is probably the only argument that is compatible with his philosophy, it is not immune from attack because Rorty's philosophy can be attacked.

A more forceful argument would require Rorty to ground political theory on the "notion of the human self as a centred web of historically conditioned beliefs and desires\textsuperscript{16}, of which Rorty speaks. By so doing, Rorty could then follow Dewey's steps and make an argument for democracy based upon the desirability of its consequences for all people. This is not to say that he should promote the forceful imposition of democracy. Instead, again following Dewey's path, he should focus on opening channels of communication and improving the quality of education, through peaceful and gradual means. Thus, while we can, to some degree, speak of the priority of democracy to philosophy, we must not lose sight of the fact that this priority is itself grounded in a philosophy called pragmatism.
Reconsidering the Meno

Jeff Casey

What good is a book that does not carry us beyond all books?
-Nietzsche, The Gay Science, 248

Plato's Meno is one of the most often read texts in philosophy. However, while we recognize that the Meno, along with much of Plato's work, is vastly different from the tradition that has followed it, we seldom listen to what is really unique about this work and its idiosyncratic style. While Plato and his predecessors (Heraclitus and Parmenides, for example) were considerably more poetic in their expression of philosophical ideas (more inclined to paradox and elusive writing), philosophy after Plato became dramatically more scientific in its methodology and in the structure of its writing. The Meno is not as concerned with the direct, linear approach to philosophy as that which has become the standard in the Western tradition. While all of these facts are obvious, many philosophers pass over their implications and, as a result, do not grasp the text in its fullness.

It is my aim to deal with Plato as both a philosopher and as a kind of storyteller or poet, because there is more to the Meno than what is simply written in the text. In other words, the text, like a poem, speaks about something without explicitly saying it. It is alluding, for lack of a better word, to the subject. Key to my interpretation is that we read the text anew, which enables us to make the journey through the text and experience it for the first time. For this reason, the following essay may seem to "hunt" in a way that is uncomfortable to many philosophers but it is necessary for us to experience the text anew. I beg the reader's perseverance. In a sense, I am trying to recreate the experience of reading the text and the puzzling that I have had about it. Plato is speaking to us, and, if we wish to hear him, we must go to his meaning through the text, which means following the text beyond the text to learning. What I claim is that the Meno has little to do with the ostensibly question of virtue but is essentially concerned with learning and teaching. Additionally, I am claiming that the text is intended as an object lesson in learning. Thus, I ask the reader to make the journey through the text with me, in the hope that we can arrive at the same place. I am, in a small way, not just redefining the way we read, but how we learn and write. If we examine the Meno in this way,
I contend, we will come to a richer understanding of it. So let's get under way.

We must first look at the initial question and how it is recast by Socrates'. Meno's question -- "Socrates, can virtue be taught?" -- is met with Socrates' response: "If I do not know what something is, how can I know what qualities it possesses?" (71b). Socrates refuses to tell Meno the answer. He even claims he does not know what it is. Meno wants to be taught about the teachability of virtue, but Socrates turns the question around. He is saying "First teach me what virtue is, Meno". The dialogue then continues in much the same way as other early Socratic dialogues, but, unlike many of the early dialogues, it pursues the question in such a way as to emphasize the issue of knowledge or what it would mean to have knowledge about virtue. It is interesting to note that many (presumably) early Socratic dialogues were concerned with individual virtues, such as courage (Laches) or temperance (Charmides). While it is clear that even in these dialogues more was at stake than simple definitions of virtues, in the Meno Socrates heads straight into the question of virtue itself. We could interpret this approach as an older, more ambitious Plato's attempt to address this issue head on, but he is in fact after an even bigger fish -- learning. Engaging the issue of learning requires that we contemplate an abstract idea, such as virtue.

Socrates' refusal to answer Meno's question outright is a stock technique in the Platonic dialogue, but in the Meno the technique's purpose becomes clearer. Socrates hints at the pedagogical reasons for refusing to answer Meno's question outright by drawing a distinction between himself, a philosopher, and Gorgias, a sophist. Socrates says of Gorgias that 'he himself' was ready to answer any Greek who wished to question him, and every question was answered' (70c). A sharp distinction is drawn between Gorgias and Socrates that is stated again in the dialogue (below with the definition of color). It is this distinction -- between the sophist and philosopher, between him who teaches (teLLa) and him who "learns" (guides) the student, and"
Jeff Casey

ostensibly wants to pursue the subject term, virtue, but throughout the dialogue he is pointing at the predicate term, taught. Socrates is revealing his method to us by not telling Meno what virtue is but trying to get him to learn what it is (this is carried out by analogy with the slave boy). Meno is unmoved by Socrates’ benevolent intentions, and opts to throw a monkey wrench into the whole thing. He asks Socrates, “How will you look for it (virtue), Socrates, when you do not know what it is?” Socrates rephrases the question, which he calls a debater’s question, as “a man cannot search for what he knows or for what he does not know” (80c-d). As Louis Mackey points out, this is actually the second statement of this paradox. Socrates initially states the paradox as: “If I do not know what something is, how could I know what qualities it possesses?” This question becomes paradoxical when we consider that for Plato to know a thing such as Virtue is to know its characteristics. Thus, to know something we must know its properties, but to look for its qualities we must know what it is. How can we look for a definition of something when we need a definition to know what that thing is in the first place?

We should take special care to consider this paradox. Plato poses this paradox in the beginning of the dialogue, we may assume that he does not, therefore, think it is insignificant. Structurally the dialogue begins with the paradox, works toward defining it, and attempts to resolve it. So, on the one hand Plato seems to consider this an authentic epistemological question, but on the other hand he refers to it as a “debater’s question” (80c). Sophists were debaters, but philosophers engage in the art of discussion or mutual learning. So, in a way this debater’s question is for Meno merely a rhetorical trick used to divert our attention from learning, but Plato uses it to spell out an authentic epistemic question.

Still, we must recognize the centrality of the question in the dialogue. So, let’s be clear about what the paradox is. It seems obvious that we identify things by their properties. We have a name for a thing (virtue), of which we seem to recognize instances (courage, honesty, temperance), but do not know what property of this idea is common to all of them, i.e., we do not know the idea in itself without respect to any particular instantiation -- or rather to all instantiations. To phrase the problem more formally, if we are looking for the properties of the

---

* Of course the term “efficacious” may have more meaning significant to the Greeks, but, granted even this, the above problem -- that the definition does not state how we pick out the particular term -- still remains.

1. Louis Mackey in his lecture on the Meno in History of Ancient Philosophy, Fall 97, University of Texas at Austin.
form x, then we must recognize some set of things in the world that we call "x's". However, if we do not know the properties that will pick out the instances of x, we can not look for x. If we recognize x, then we pick it out by its properties which would seem to indicate that we somehow know, or recognize, at least some of its properties. Yet, while we seem to recognize virtues, we do not know what Virtue is. It seems that recognition picks out instances and knowledge is coming to know the Form that allows us to pick out those instances. On the one hand, we can say that because we pick out instances of Virtue, we are justified in thinking that there is some knowledge we have that allows us to recognize Virtue. On the other hand, since recognition is a different epistemic activity than knowing, we may conclude that recognition makes no guarantees of knowledge. Later, Plato states that the recognition of these instances is only opinion, which is ungrounded, and, thus, we should seek to know Virtue in order to confirm these beliefs. Therefore, we must still look for Virtue itself. We must look for something we do not know, but of which we may have opinion. The paradox is still before us.

Socrates' solution to this problem is the theory of recollection. Read mythologically the theory of recollection works from the assumption that the soul is immortal. This fact is evident given the prophecies of the oracles that the soul is immortal (there is a hint of sarcasm, I think, in this appeal to authority). It follows from the immortality of the soul that it has seen all things (or the Forms of all things) in the underworld. Thus, once the soul has been reborn into the human form the soul grasps things by recognizing or recollecting the Form that these particular objects participate in. This recollection is usually called learning. Thus, we can conclude that "nothing prevents a man, after recollecting one thing only -- a process men call learning -- discovering everything else for himself, if he is brave and does not tire of the search, for searching and learning are, as a whole, recollection" (81d-5).

The theory, if we demythologize it, points to a simple fact that responds to the paradox: we certainly are able to search for and even find out what an Idea or Form is, despite the fact that we do not know what it is to begin with. Memo seems to believe this himself because he asks whether something is teachable and even gives examples of this idea (justice, moderation and piety), when he later admits that he does not know what it is. In other words, we are able to pick out things and name them even though we may not be aware of what it is that makes a thing what it is. If it is the case that we can identify things before we know what they are, then surely we must know virtue before we learn it. Of course, the fact that we have sufficient knowledge, or opinion, to recognize instances does not mean that we have knowledge of the Form, but why isn't this limited knowledge sufficient for Socrates?

The demand that Socrates makes for the Form of virtue, Virtue itself, is based on finding what is common to all virtues because he seems to believe this is more sound, than following 'common sense'. Socrates later explains that an opinion which is not sufficiently grounded in an account will not stand up to scrutiny because we believe it for insubstantial reasons (this is discussed below with the theory of knowledge). We can be mistaken about what a virtue is. Some people may be foolish enough to posit selfishness as a virtue. They would obviously be wrong, but how would we know that if we did not know Virtue? Nonetheless, how do we know to look for virtue? Since we could be wrong about these instances of virtue, we could be altogether mistaken about Virtue. We could be mistaken about the existence of Virtue altogether, since we do not know what it is.

The explanation is that recollection happens in two ways. First, we need recollection to pick out instances of the Forms (the virtues) in the world, yet this recollection does not give us knowledge of the Form, Virtue. At the second level of recollection, we can get to knowledge of Virtue in itself, but we can't simply abstract the Forms from their instances. We could not get Virtue, the Form, from all the virtues, because we could be mistaken about those individual virtues, although they are certainly a guide and an indication that we have an idea of Virtue in itself.

It would seem that recollection first provides the means of picking out its individual instances of an Idea. That is without recollection we would not be able to grasp individual things. We would be faced with a white noise of perception because recollection orders the world as that we may perceive it, but, because we can recognize the Forms in which particulars participate, we can make sense out of this mass of particulars. Still, our recollection is only recognition of particulars which participate in the Forms and not knowledge of the Forms. Thus, while recollection is the groundwork for picking out these particulars, such recollections are not knowledge of the Idea.

Does this work? Well, Socrates is not satisfied with us just taking his word for it. He has an example, which always clears things up. Socrates calls one of Mem's slaves forward to demonstrate his theory of recollection. The first thing that strikes us about the slave boy is that
This, it seems to me, is the true meaning of the theory of recollection. It makes the claim that human mind has the power to learn the Forms. Fundamental to this power is that the Forms are always already in our mind, thus, we may come to this knowledge simply by the proper stimulation to learning, not by being told or taught. We are not required to accept the mythological of the immortality of the soul or the eternal, separate Forms in the underworld. In fact, in the Parmenides Socrates in his youth grants to Parmenides that the Forms, or Ideas, may "be thought only, and have no proper existence except in our minds" (112).

In another sense, the theory of recollection could be interpreted as a pragmatic model which we must have a sort of faith in. It seems clear that we come to know Forms, like triangle, of which we did not have knowledge of before. I will explain below how we can think of this in terms less mythic than recollection, but at this point the theory is a useful explanation of how learning allows us to defeat the paradox. Plato implies its function when he says this, which is in the paragraph where he first states the theory: "We must therefore not believe the debater's argument, for it would make us idle, and faint hearted men like to hear it, whereas my argument makes them energetic and keen on the search. I trust this is true, and I want to inquire along with you into the nature of 'know'" (81). So, we should accept the theory of recollection, if for no other reason, than because it will make us better people, but there are other reasons to believe it, which I have discussed in the previous paragraph (because it explains the evident phenomena of learning) and which I will discuss next.

Plato's theory of knowledge offers us a fuller explanation of how recollection yields knowledge. Socrates begins by making the distinction between true opinion and knowledge. The basic distinction is that a true opinion may be an adequate guide at a given time but it lacks an "account", which would "tie it down" (97-99). For example, while Socrates indicates that one of Meno's definitions might be right (76c), it is unfounded because Meno does not seem to know why he believes it, or at least not sufficiently. Thus, when Socrates assails the definition, Meno is helpless.

This distinction is meant to illuminate what we have already learned. It gets us closer to what it would mean to have knowledge of an idea -- knowledge of the type which Socrates is looking for and Meno does not have. It would also seem that the distinction illuminates recollection. The problem being that if we can pick out particulars using recollection, why do we not get knowledge of Virtue in itself from this same power? The main distinction seems to be that this second kind of knowledge, true knowledge, is not about the world but about the Forms, which do not come to us as the world comes to us but

4 Once again, I am trying to limit this paper's scope to the Alémos, but I want to admit to the reader that this simple formula, that knowledge is a true opinion plus an account, is rejected in the Theaetetus. I do not discuss this fact for two reasons: one, my study of the Theaetetus is quite limited, and, secondly, I do not know that the rejection destroys the pedagogical theory of the Alémos, which is the focus of my paper. Additionally, there is the difficulty of reconciling this apparent rejection of the account model of knowledge and the fact that Socrates says in the Alémos of his model of recollection, "if I seem to know anything else -- and I would make that claim about few things -- I would put this down as one of the things I know" (288). This though it an issue for another essay which would deal with Plato's canon as a whole.
Jeff Casey

worth much until one tries them down by (giving) an account of the reason why. (69e-70a)

There is an obvious similarity between this description of opinion and the way Euthyphro, in the dialogue of the same name, describes how Socrates makes Euthyphro's propositions "go round and not remain in the same place". Euthyphro even says to Socrates that "you are the Daedaleans" (110). Menu is a similar character to Euthyphro. So Plato is doing several things with this analogy. First, he is pointing out to Meno, and the reader, that the conclusion Socrates draws from Meno is due to the unfounded nature of his own opinion and a proper account would have saved Meno from his embarrassment. Secondly, Plato is explaining the need for an account to tie down an opinion. Lastly, he helps us to understand what an account would look like.

An account would have to be the sort that would tie down an opinion. This image gives us a very good picture to work from. Ideas, like statues, must be tied down by supporting ideas. We must start our account at the bottom with foundational ideas and work up to the top to conclusive ideas, or work down to the bottom, this seems to be the method Socrates advocates in the Phaedo (99-102). The image that we are putting together is one of an assembly of ideas or opinions that integrate into a hierarchical structure that supports the true opinion we are attempting to learn. An easy example is mathematical knowledge, which Plato always admires, before we can proceed to twice two equals four, we should start with two and two equals four because the account of multiplication (a dependent on the account of addition or can be). So, the structure of knowledge is build on fundamental and more necessary ideas, such as addition, and builds up to more complicated ideas, such as multiplication.

How do we support this structure of ideas? We would need to support it by integrating it into a much larger network of ideas. This seems to be the only account of opinions that would give us knowledge. To relate this back to recollection, we already have the component of this hierarchy in our mind. Whether our opinions work in serving our needs, as is the case with a true opinion ("true opinion is in no way a worse guide to correct action than knowledge" [97b]), is irrelevant because unless we have learned from the bottom up it will not stand up to future inquiry. If we have a true opinion about Virtue but have not reasoned to this concept from more basic concepts or derived it from more general ideas, which we already have in our mind, then we will not have knowledge of Virtue. The opinion would keep moving, like Daedalean statue, as it does for Meno and Euthyphro. For example,
if a student is taught his multiplication tables, which is to say memorizes them, but does not know why "twice two is four," and someone challenges the assertion that "twice two is four," then he will not be able to defend it because he does not know the supporting ideas underneath the proposition, or he may extrapolate falsely that three by three is six. Of course, he could defend his true assertion on empirical ground, but this method of defense becomes less of a possibility the higher we go on the hierarchy of knowledge, for example, up to calculus.

Socrates gives us a further understanding of how we come to knowledge with the example of getting directions to Larissa. If someone has been to Larissa he has a true opinion and an account of how to get there, thus knowledge, but someone who had simply been told how to get there, even though they have directions that would get us there, would only have an opinion. If we view the directions to Larissa as a metaphor, rather than an example, the point is not that one gains some more helpful information from a journey which is not present in secondary information. The directions to Larissa does not make sense as an example when a traveler does not seem to learn anything more than the experience of getting to a city, but viewed metaphorically, making the journey to the true opinion by going through each step on the hierarchy of knowledge is essential to having an account. An account in addition to an opinion is not knowledge unless we make the journey through the steps of the account ourselves. The slave boy is paradigmatic of this method. He proceeds through the steps and sees why they are necessary steps. Socrates says of the slave boy to Meno, "Watch him now recollecting things in order, as one must recollect" (82e, emphasis added).

Here is the most illuminating idea in the Menec knowledge is not simply knowing something that is true, nor is it even knowing what makes it true. Even if I explain to someone the theory of recollection, for example, and even describe the necessary steps to arguing it, will they have knowledge? Plato doesn't think so. If all they know is the argument, then what have they learned? They would simply be going through the motions, but, if they understand why it would be wrong to assume this or that, and if they know why we need to proceed in this way rather than that way, as the slave learns, then they will have grasped what is essential to the theory. They will have not been taught it, but will have learned it. Socrates makes this distinction himself in the above quote which followed the slave boy example: "he will know it without having been taught but only questioned, and finds the knowledge within himself" (84d, emphasis added). In other words, Virtue, if it is knowledge, cannot be taught, because it is not knowledge unless it is learned, i.e., recollected, and, as teaching is not learning, no knowledge can be taught, because knowledge by its nature must be gotten to or learned. We must make the journey ourselves, and not to simply be told about it. So what did Socrates do with the slave boy? He simply questioned him. Certainly he led him, but he did not teach him. He "learned" him, which simply means he got him to think about something and to develop an account, or at least the beginnings of an account.

Having navigated the deep waters of the Meno, we are left with another obstacle. The conclusion of the dialogue seems to directly conflict with what I have said. As the dialogue is closing, Socrates seeks to answer the question which he began the dialogue with: can virtue be taught? Socrates' conclusion is that "virtue would be neither an inborn quality nor taught, but comes to those who possess it as a gift from the gods which is not accompanied by understanding" (99e-100a). Socrates concludes this because there are no teachers of virtue (87c-91e), and if there are no teachers then it cannot be taught because "if virtue could be taught he [Thucydides] would have found the man who could make his sons good men" (94c). We should not conclude that Virtue cannot ever be taught, despite what Socrates seems to say, because the only reason is that it cannot be taught only because there are presently no teachers. (It should be noted that I am now using 'teach' in the much broader sense that I have previously used it in the paper to keep my language consistent with that of Plato. I am now using the word 'teach' in much the same sense as 'learn'.) This is because no one has knowledge of Virtue, only true opinion. "That is the reason why they cannot make others be like themselves, because it is not knowledge which makes them what they are" (99b). Now we might take what Socrates has said (that virtue is a gift) to mean that we can never come to knowledge of it. In fact in the last paragraph he indicates that he still wishes to seek our Virtue, and that this is the only way to come to know how it is that some men possess virtue as a gift. "We shall have clear knowledge of this when, before we investigate how it comes to be present in men, we first try to find out what virtue in itself is" (100b).

Also, Plato seems to have demonstrated that Virtue must be knowledge because anything that is good must be knowledge. This follows from the fact that all attributes of a person's character are only good or bad to the extent that they are exercised with wisdom. "If then virtue is something in the soul it must be beneficial, it must be knowledge, since all the qualities of the soul are in themselves neither ben-
official nor harmful, but accompanied by wisdom or folly they become harmful or beneficial. This argument shows that virtue, being benefi-
cial, must be a kind of wisdom.” (88c-d) It seems to be generally
accepted as a belief of Plato that it is knowledge that makes people
good or bad because so to act badly would be to harm themselves, if only
in the long run. Thus, to act badly is foolish and results from igno-
rance. It is because people do not know what is virtuous that they can-
not teach this knowledge. Virtuous people only have a true opinion of
what is virtuous, they do not have knowledge. “Since then it is not only
through knowledge but also through right opinion that men are good,
and beneficial to their cities when they are, and knowledge nor true
opinion come to men by nature but are acquired...” (88c-d).

So, we can draw several different possible conclusions. First,
we can suppose that Plato actually believes that Virtue is a gift and
cannot be taught or that he is at the least very sceptical of the teach-
bility of Virtue. I find this improbable because of his opinion that right
action is a product of knowledge. Still, this fact could feed into a sec-
ond conclusion that, while Virtue cannot be learned, that is we can
never have true knowledge of it, we can have right opinions of it. This
conclusion seems to be false because the last paragraph of the dialogue
indicates otherwise and because right opinions are mere shadows of
true knowledge. The last, and, I think, correct conclusion we can draw
is that, while no one has taught Virtue, if we come to knowledge of
Virtue we can teach it. This conclusion I think reveals yet another meaningful idea
from the dialogue, which is implicit in what I have already said: If no
one has ever learned Virtue, then they could not assist someone else in
learning Virtue for two obvious reasons. One, “they cannot make oth-
ers be like themselves, because it is not knowledge which makes them
what they are”. If you do not have knowledge, how can you pass it on
to someone else? Secondly, if you have not gone through the process
of learning, how will you know the right way some one else should
learn? So, all teachers (in my language), those who “learn” others, must first be learners.

A Meditation on the Memo

“Our first questions about the value
of a book, of a human being, or a
musical composition are: Can they
walk? Even more, can they dance?”
-Nietzsche, The Gay Science, 566

One of the first things we learn from the Memo is about what
it means to read. The Memo is not simply a play or piece of fiction, nor
is it simply a philosophical text. The text attempts to draw the reader
into its thought. It is working towards an idea that is never explicitly
stated. When reading the Memo it is not sufficient to simply under-
stand the arguments and the story. The arguments that are said most
explicitly are not the arguments that we should pay the most attention
to. We should be listening to the unsaid, as well as the said. In this
respect the Memo is like a poem. Poetry is the art of writing about
something without explicitly saying it. In fact, poetry is the art of get-
ing around language. Language actually is a hindrance as much as a
help to the poet. They must figure out how to speak of something
without destroying the thing in speech. For example, to say that “love
is an emotion towards someone who one cares about a great deal” is
accurate, but this fails to capture any of what is important about love.

To speak of love in this way is to misrepresent it. Any speaking of
a thing is to misrepresent it, in some degree. To say that “the book is red”
is to fail to capture the richness of the book’s particular shade of red.
The misrepresentation is much greater with more complicated ideas.
It somehow seems more appropriate to say “my love is a red, red rose”.
On its face this tells us very little, but in the context of a poem it is
more correct to speak of love in this way. I think that love is on a sim-
ilar footing as thinking or learning, and this is why Plato is so skilful
with his discussion of the learning.

Part of the problem is that learning and thinking are activities,
which do not admit as easily to being spoken about. Learning is the
activity which we are using to find learning. This problem is not an
uncommon one. It has been brought up by more recent thinkers,
such as Heidegger. Even earlier, Aria late doubted the human capacity
towards self-misleading itself, literally “mind misleading itself”. Though the issue
is much broader, and, indeed, I am reverting Aristotle’s meaning a lit-
tle here, essentially we can understand that consciousness cannot be
conscious of itself immediately because the object of consciousness
would be consciousness. In other words consciousness occurring now cannot be conscious of itself occurring now (take as its object itself) because they would be the same thing, surely this is absurd this idea is discussed by Sartre in *The Transcendence of the Ego*. Now, there is admittedly no question that I am putting ideas together in a question-able way, but there is a clear convergence here that runs from the pre-Socratics to Sartre. So, let's keep looking. Well, Aristotle has a solution. He states: *In every case, however, knowledge, perception, belief, and thought have something other than themselves as their object; each has itself as its object as a by-product* (1074b8-9). That is to say, thinking is never of itself but of itself thinking about something else. These two seem to take place simultaneously. In other words, for humans this "minding", nosing, cannot mind itself pure and simple; one can only mind and mind, something, So, Plato might be doing something similar with the *Meno*. He is attempting to draw us into learning about learning about virtue.

I think much of this explains Plato's pedagogy, at least in this dialogue. Plato's notion of teaching is not to tell, but to lead. There is a way in which the slave boy's learning is still insufficient because he has been led too much. With the *Meno* itself the reader has been drawn into learning about learning. The reader must take the necessary steps toward learning where the text leaves off. The theory of recollection as a myth, the slave boy example seeming insufficient as an example of recollection, the brief setting up of the true opinion and knowledge distinction and the example of Tars ses -- all of these ideas in the text merely set us up to learn. Their apparent faults demand that we think them through to their true meaning. Unlike so much of modern philosophy, Plato requires the active participation of the listener. Plato's dialogue is not just a dialogue between the characters, but between the reader and the text.

Indeed, Plato talks of the art of teaching metaphorically as birthing. In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates describes himself as a midwife to Theaetetus' learning. Socrates is merely a helping hand, not the main force in the process. Theaetetus and his ideas are the active parties. Similarly, in the *Symposium*, Diomus is quoted by Socrates, "All of us are pregnant, Socrates both in body and in soul, and, as soon as we come to a certain age, we naturally desire to give birth" (206c). The virtuous man "when he makes contact with someone beautiful and keeps company with him, he conceives and gives birth to what he has been coveting inside him for ages" (205c). Such people "begot beautiful ideas" in us (210a). Here the teacher is more active in that he places the seed which germinates in the other's mind. Still, this is only a planting, a stimulation of the ideas we are already always capable of. We merely need to be aroused, to be drawn to learning. So, what I want to point out is two very simple ideas. One, that true teaching is to learn someone else. It is not the didactic telling of modern philosophy. A teacher, we might say, points out to the student a void in his knowledge, just as Socrates does with *Meno*. A student must respond by seeing the void. The void is a sort of vacuum. It draws the learner into his learning. The further we get along this path, the greater the drawing, because we realize how little we know, but, when a teacher tells a student, he is not drawn in. As thought the "truth" had fallen at his feet. All he has to do is pick it up. With this false teaching the learner goes nowhere.

Now at the same time Plato is showing us how a text can be a teacher. The *Meno* is a pointing towards something without saying it. Thus, it demands that the reader follow; that the reader engage in a dialogue with the text. The *Meno* only lays out before us the beginnings of learning, but we must make the journey ourselves. It is unfortunate that we in the modern Western traditions have usually failed to grasp this about books -- that they are teachers. I would suggest that if we return to the *Meno* in this way we can get underway to learning.

Further note: First, it is not hard to see the influence of Heidegger's *What is Called Thinking*, a work which confuses, perplexes, and dramatically influences me. I could not have gotten underway without it. Secondly, I would like to thank Jesse Bailey for his advice and criticism. Lastly, I am deeply indebted to Philip Hopkins, doctoral candidate at U of Austin, who has been an irreplaceable catalyst in the development of this paper, a friend and, above all else, a true learner.

**Works Cited**


