

Ex Nihilo

The Undergraduate
Philosophy Journal of the
University of Texas at Austin

The Undergraduate Philosophy Association
Volume III, 1998

Ex Nihilo

The Undergraduate
Philosophy Journal of the University
of Texas at Austin

Editor-in-Chief

Jesse Bailey

Layout

Carisa Cortez

Selection and Editing

Esteban Caffesse

Kimberly Caprice

Jeff Casey

Antonio Castano

Nirav Desai

Bryan Register

Faculty Advisor

Jim Hankinson

Administrative Advisor

Cindy Marshall

Volume III, 1998

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 at [www.upa.utexas.edu](#) contains information concerning the organization.

Contents

Wittgenstein and Logical Truths	5
<i>Christopher Furlong</i>	
Intentional Structure of Emotions	17
<i>Bryan Register</i>	
Gettier and Plato on Knowledge	30
<i>Jesse Bailey</i>	
Heraclitus vs. Parmenides	41
<i>Jacob Mackey</i>	
The Pragmatic Priority of Democracy to Philosophy	48
<i>Maria McFarland</i>	
Reconsidering the <i>Meno</i>	59
<i>Jeff Casey</i>	

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: 'xRy implies that x belongs to the domain of R,' 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 those 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.¹

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,

'loves' into R, and 'Plato' into y. x, y and R are nothing, and they are not constituents, so it seems as though all the propositions of logic were entirely devoid of constituents. I do not think that can quite be true. But then the only other thing you can seem to say is that the *form* is a constituent, that propositions of a certain form are always true: that may be the right analysis, though I very much doubt whether it is.²

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 'xRy' 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 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 'a' is a constituent of 'B' just in case 'a' occurs in 'B'. In the case of constituents of propositions there is only one further stipulation: that 'a' must name or refer to something. So that even if 'x' occurs in 'xRy' it is not a constituent of it since it refers to nothing. The alternate sense entails 'B' being about 'a' 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 facts³, and since facts are a part of the world, so must their form be. Since, according to Russell, the logical proposition "xRy implies that x belongs to the domain of R" 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 Wittgenstein⁴ is that "everything that is a proposition of logic has got to be in some sense or other like a tautology."⁵ Russell, unlike Wittgenstein, does not develop this notion any further. He concludes his discussion of logical propositions admitting that he is not entirely clear on what sets them apart from nonlogical 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.⁶

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)-(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 5.1363, "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."⁷ 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 implies that x is in that domain of R." Translating this into formal logic yields: $(xRy \rightarrow (x \in D_R))$. 'xRy' is defined as $(x \in D_R) \wedge (y \in I_R)$ so by substitution the proposition becomes $((x \in D_R) \wedge (y \in I_R)) \rightarrow (x \in D_R)$. In propositional form this becomes $(P \wedge Q) \rightarrow P$. 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 I 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 $((P \rightarrow Q) \wedge P) \rightarrow Q$ is a logical truth we need simply construct a truth-table for it:

P	Q	$((P \rightarrow Q) \wedge P) \rightarrow Q$
T	T	T
T	F	T
F	T	T
F	F	T

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 ' $xRy \rightarrow (x \in D_R)$ ' 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. ' $xRy \rightarrow (x \in D_R)$ ' does not contain 'x', 'R', or 'y'. It contains 'xRy' and ' $x \in D_R$ ' 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 values⁸, 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"⁹ and at 6.1222 that

"logical propositions can no more be empirically confirmed than they can be empirically refuted."¹⁰ Since if 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 say that a proposition P is about the fact expressed by P because that fact is relevant to the truth of P. For a proposition $P \vee Q$, the facts expressed by both P and Q are relevant for determining its truth, therefore the $P \vee Q$ is about the facts expressed by P and by Q. It may then seem that $P \vee \sim P$ 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."¹¹ Furthermore, we are told at 2.21 that "the picture agrees with reality or not; it is right or wrong, true or false."¹² 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* reality. 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."¹³ 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

representing itself or in virtue of its form. So to return to the question of what propositions of logic are about, the answer is themselves. More accurately, since to know that a logical proposition is necessarily true we must know that all propositions of its form are tautologies; propositions of logic are about their form.

The further question is "what is the form of a logical proposition?" In his Lectures, Russell says that to determine the form of a proposition we simply replace the particular terms with variables so that the form of 'Socrates loves Plato' is 'xRy'. Performing the same operation on "Oedipus killed his father or Oedipus did not kill his father" yields 'x \vee \sim x'.¹⁴ 'x \vee \sim x' is itself not a tautology for the aforementioned reason that variables have no truth values but it is a schema of sorts for all tautologies of that form. Knowing that "Oedipus killed his father or Oedipus did not kill his father" is true requires us to know that any proposition of the form 'x \vee \sim x' is true. This, in turn requires us to know the truth-possibilities of the substitutions on 'x \vee \sim x'; that is what "Oedipus killed his father or Oedipus did not kill his father" is about.

Before mentioning some problems with Wittgenstein's view, let us first review his position. The problem we are dealing with is how we recognize propositions of logic; there are three necessary conditions: (1) Logical propositions contain only propositions and logical constants, not variables. (2) Logical propositions are not empirically verifiable or refutable because they do not mention anything in the world. (3) Logical propositions are about their form, that is, they do not represent anything, they are not pictures of facts and facts are irrelevant to determining their truth. Finally, if the proposition in question satisfies the three previous conditions we can construct a truth-table for it and if it is true on all interpretations, then it satisfies the final and sufficient condition that (4) logical proposition are tautologies.

Now let me consider a problem with Wittgenstein's view. Consider the following proposition: 'if a color patch in my field of vision is red then it is not green.' Is this proposition a logical proposition? For Wittgenstein there is only logical necessity¹⁵ so if it is necessary, which it certainly seems to be, then it must be a logical proposition. (1) It contains only genuine propositions and logical constants, (2) it does not appear to be empirically verifiable since I know it to be true without any factual observations, and (3) it is not about any possible state of affairs; it does not represent anything. All that is left to verify is whether it is false for all interpretations. Its formal translation is (Rb \rightarrow \sim Gb) where b is a patch of color in my visual field.

Substituting P for Rb and Q for Gb yields (P \rightarrow \sim Q).¹⁶ The truth-table is:

P	Q	(P \rightarrow \sim Q)
T	T	F
T	F	T
F	T	T
F	F	T

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.¹⁷ 6.375-6.3751 read:

6.375 As there is only *logical* necessity, so there is only *logical* impossibility

6.3751 For two colors, e.g. to be at one place in the visual field, is impossible, logically impossible, for it is excluded by the logical structure of color. Let us consider how this contradiction presents 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 can neither be 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.)¹⁸

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 analyzable. 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

tried he would, no doubt, have been unsuccessful. The two ways which one could show colors not to be simple would be to define them so that they exclude other colors (red =def. \sim green \wedge \sim yellow \wedge \sim blue \wedge ...), or to reveal their structure in terms of simple shades. The first case is obviously circular since it defines every color in terms of every other color. In the second case the difficulty would just reappear in terms of the simple shades. Neither case would do to show that 'if this is red the it is not green' is a tautology.

The second attempt involves modifying the syntax of the Tractatus to treat such propositions as 'this is red and green' as contradictions. In "Some Remarks on Logical Form" he writes:

It is, of course, a deficiency of our notation that it does not prevent the formation of such nonsensical constructions, ['this is red and green'] and a perfect notation will have to exclude such structures by definite rules of syntax. Such rules, however, cannot be laid down until we have actually reached the ultimate analysis of the phenomena in question. This as we all know has not yet been achieved.¹⁹

What the rules are, he does not say other than that they disallow sentences like 'this is red and green,' or more precisely that they will treat such propositions as contradictions rather than just falsehoods. The truth-table for our example in the new syntax would simply leave out the first line:

P	Q	$(P \rightarrow \sim Q)$
T	F	T
F	T	T
F	F	T

Wittgenstein leaves out the first line where P and Q ('this is red' and 'this is green') are both true because, as he puts it, "it represents an impossible combination." Our analysis of the phenomenon of color reveals this impossibility and we then build it into the syntax. With this modified syntax, a proposition such as 'this is red and green' appears to be a contradiction from the symbol alone. That is, if we know the rules of the language then we know that 'this is red and green' is a contradiction by simply contemplating the proposition. This may seem odd. After all, we are claiming that some substitution instances of $(P \rightarrow \sim Q)$ are tautologies or contradictions while others are not. While this may seem odd or just false in standard first-order logic, in the modified syntax of an ideal Tractarian language, 'if this is red then it is not green' really is a tautology. It is important to note that what the modified rules are depends upon the analysis of the phe-

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 analytic *a priori* truths and the problem is therefore not solved.²⁰ Propositions about color such as that in question are certainly analytic 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 analytic 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 analytic²¹ because they are tautologous and necessary; no empirical evidence could ever contradict them. They are *a posteriori*²² because they are determined empirically.

Consider again the example 'if this is red then it is not green' ($P \rightarrow \sim Q$). It is obvious that we can not 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. If 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: $((P \rightarrow Q) \wedge P) \rightarrow Q$. This proposition is known to be true from the symbol alone. All possible truth combinations 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 *a 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

proposition then P is analytic *a priori* and it is a logical proposition. If at least one line is false, then we must perform an empirical investigation into what P is about. As a result of this empirical investigation, we delete the lines of the truth table that represent impossible truth-combinations. If the remaining lines are all true then P is analytic *a posteriori* and it is a logical proposition; else the proposition is not logical. It is important to note that Once our syntax has been fully modified and all impossible truth-combinations have been excluded, empirical investigations are no longer required. It will be a rule of our language that 'this is red' and 'this is green' cannot both be true. Once this is the case it would seem that *a priori* and *a posteriori* propositions are recognized in the same way. This, however, is not the case.

I would like to try to make the asymmetry between the recognition of analytic *a priori* versus analytic *a posteriori* judgments a bit clearer. Both are distinguished from nonlogical statements in so far as they are tautologies; they are true on all lines of the truth table. The asymmetry arises, not in how the calculation is done, but in how the rules governing the calculation are established. The pre-theoretical intuition I would have, with nothing but the preceding pages as background, would be that the rules governing the construction of truth tables, in either case, are established empirically. In the *a posteriori* case, they would be the result of an analysis of the empirical phenomenon in question. In the *a priori* case, they would be the result of an analysis of the way in which we use words like 'and,' 'or,' 'not,' and 'if...then.' This intuition is, as I have shown, correct for the *a posteriori* case. For the *a priori* case, however, it is not.

Consider an arbitrary connective '*.' Let $(P * Q)$ be true whenever P is true or Q is false and false otherwise. Now consider the proposition $((P * Q) * P)$. With no empirical investigation into the state of affairs or into natural languages we can verify that the proposition is a tautology:

P	Q	$(P * Q)$	$(P * Q) * P$
T	T	T	T
T	F	T	T
F	T	F	F
F	F	T	T

The same verification process is used in the case of the standard connectives of logic. The reason that we use the connectives that we do and not connectives like '*' is simply that '→', '∧', '∨' and '¬' capture the meanings of words in natural language. But the fact remains

that their truth-functionality is stipulatory 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 phenomenon 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

²*Ibid.*, p. 106

³*Ibid.*, 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.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 107

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 108

⁷Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. trans., C.K. Ogden. (Routledge 1995) p. 109

⁸Assigning truth values to variables is a simple, but common, category error; only propositions are true or false

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 155

¹⁰Ibid., p. 163

¹¹Ibid., p. 67

¹²Ibid., p. 43

¹³Ibid., p. 157 (proposition 6.113)

¹⁴Here 'x' is a propositional variable. Note that instead of replacing 'Oedipus' and 'killed' and 'father' by propositional variables, I replaced the entire proposition. This is because 'Oedipus' is not a constituent of the proposition on "Oedipus killed his father or Oedipus did not kill his father". "Oedipus killed his father" and "Oedipus did not kill his father" are the only constituents of the conjunction.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 181 (proposition 6.37)

¹⁶This last move might seem suspect, but it is perfectly valid since Rb and Gb are, or seem to be, elementary and therefore autonomous propositions. For Wittgenstein, it turns out, they are not elementary and I shall discuss that later.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 89

¹⁸Ibid., p. 181-182

¹⁹Ludwig Wittgenstein, "Some Remarks on Logical Form," reprinted in Copi and Beard, ed., *Essays on Wittgenstein's Tractatus*. (Thoemmes Press 1993) p. 37

²⁰The problem is to establish a criteria for recognizing analytic a priori truths.

²¹The analytic-synthetic distinction is an ontological one. Analytic statements are tautologies or contradictions while synthetic statements are neither.

²²The a priori-a posteriori distinction is an epistemic one. We know that a priori statements are true independent of experience and that a posteriori statements are true from experience.

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. (I use '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 intendings 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 spur 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 realization 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 subsumption 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'm 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. Moods such as despair and *angst* can only take the world as a whole as their scope. Pride or remorse take particular actions of one's as objects. Self-esteem or guilt

take oneself as a whole. Scope is reducible for the same reason as direction: it is simply a generic specification of possible objects of the emotion. (Solomon, 199-200)

This also holds true for responsibility. Responsibility is a specifier for many of our emotions toward self and others. We have contempt for someone if he has crashed through his own design, but we pity him if he is a victim of circumstances. Thus responsibility is another feature of possible objects of an emotion in that it is in virtue of his responsibility that one becomes an object of the emotion. What responsibility the object has for various actions which lead to emotions is a factual question which must be answered before an emotional evaluation can be made. (Solomon, 213-214)

I suggest therefore that direction, scope, and responsibility are all features of the object. When specifying possible objects of an emotion, we specify whether the object is self or other, how much of the world is the object, and what responsibility the object has for some action. Object is thus the larger and irreducible category, and it almost certainly has more elements than the three mentioned here.

The next major category which I will preserve is *evaluation*. Evaluation is the judgment made about the object; it is the cognitive center of the emotion. Several other categories seem reducible to evaluation.

Personal status seems to be a *comparative* feature of evaluation. In indignation, for instance, we judge that another is inferior to us. In indifference, the object is judged not to have any status at all; she does not exist in relation to us. In worship, the other is thought of as vastly superior to oneself; so much so, perhaps, as to make us tremble in fear. But all of these are features of judgments of the object. The judgment of status is part of the overall evaluative judgment; it is that part of the evaluation which is comparative. (Solomon, 206-209)

Intersubjectivity and distance are features of desire, the third category to be preserved. Desire must be distinguished from intention and commitment with which Solomon groups it. I need not intend to do something I desire to do, nor need I commit myself to it. This will become important when I turn to my Searlian model.

Intersubjectivity is the way the subject of the emotion desires to relate to others. On Solomon's slightly cynical view of the emotional sense of innocence, for instance, the subject is defensive toward others so as to avoid having the pretension shattered. Friendship wants to trust its object. Since these are plans the emotion lays out, they are desires one has in accordance with the emotion. (Solomon, 214-217)

Likewise for distance. When the emotion's object is a person,

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 representative 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 I 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 fact 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 realists have accepted what Kelley calls the 'diaphanous' 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, 37-43) Searle implicitly rejects 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 noumenal. 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 subsumptive 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.

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 particulars 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 recognitional 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 characteristically non-linguistic. 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, illusion, hallucination and so forth: "I 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 Kelley, "...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 hand, 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, propositions 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 'heard' 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.¹ 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 emotion 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, 57-65) 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, deprivation, orientation, and exploration. Since this is a complete list of the kinds of things an organisms can do, it is a complete list of the kinds of things an organisms 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 of 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

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-soliciting, allemomimetic, and shelter-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 whatsoever 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 to desire its presence or

absence. The distinction between evaluation and desire is made only analytically. But desire can exist without intention. To form an intention, we must not only desire to do something, we must also believe that we can. (Searle, 34) We can of course have contradictory desires. In such a case the subject chooses which power to exert and thus which desire to intend to fulfill. The desire to remain passive is one such possibly contradictory desire.

Thus an additional component of emotional intentions is power, another of Solomon's categories. Power is here the sense of capacity to act in accordance with desire. When an emotion gives rise to a desire, and we also feel that we have the power to carry out that desire and choose to exert that power, then we intend to carry out the desire. The intention contains the internal structure which Searle ascribes to intentions generally: conditions of satisfaction under the mode of intending.

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

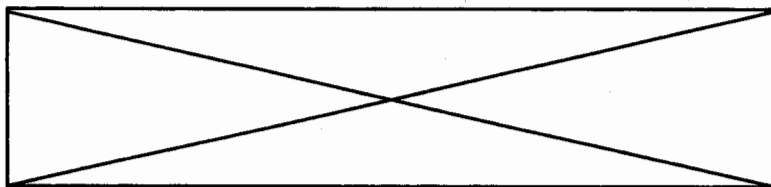


Figure 1

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 emotionality in general, not features of any one specific emotion. For Solomon, one's emotional mythology "define[s] 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 miserly." (Solomon, 219) Mythology sets the goals of one's emotional life.² 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

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 insist to herself, with her emotional judgments, that any particular intimacy into which she enters is a bad situation from which she must escape.

Mythology is the goal-defining part of emotional life, but strategy is the goal-seeking part of emotional life. Solomon notes that "Every emotion is a subjective strategy for the maximization of personal dignity and self-esteem. ...both the subjective structures of the emotion and its attempted expressions in action must be understood, in each particular case, as devices and tactics to maximize one's sense of self-worth..." (Solomon, 222) What tools have we for effecting a strategy in our emotional lives? There are two: criteria for evaluation and power to achieve desire. What we decide will count as good for us or bad is a feature of emotional strategy. Which desires we feel we can carry out is another strategic decision. I may possess a mythology of heroism and thus play a strategy of strength: that which interferes with my plans is bad and I have the power to remove any obstruction. Or, with a mythology of victimhood I may play a strategy of weakness: I am the victim of the world and the retention of my purity involves accepting that status and my powerlessness. This may be the root of the master-slave duality as found in Nietzsche.

It is when we move from the object-evaluation-desire-intention line of the model, through the criterion-power line, and down to the mythology and strategy of emotional life that broader features of emotionality open themselves to analysis. Consider what would happen to someone were his emotional strategy to fail. One popular subject of film, for instance, is the person with a fear of commitment whose reticence is overcome by the true love of another (e.g., *Breakfast at Tiffany's*). In such films, the fearful person has a mythology which forbids intimacy, such as the free spirit, the lonely victim, or the casanova. The true lover, however, through his determination and sincerity, forces the fearful one to realize the falsity of the factual judgment which informs her mythology. He refuses to do what the fearful one's mythology says that he will do. Thus, he forces her emotional strategy to fail and forces a reconsideration of the emotional mythology.

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 effects particular criteria and powers. For sundry 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 'error' (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 thinking is irrational or arational. But I have suggested that emotions are evaluative and recommendatory judgments. They subsume objects under criteria and thence recommend action; their evaluations are experienced viscerally and directly. It is because emotion is associated with the body and because its internal structure is subconscious 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 to have shown in this paper, the rejection of this paralyzing deception 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 our reason with greater power.

Notes

¹ Thanks to Jesse Bailey for noting this problem.

² Thanks to Maria McFarland for noting an extreme error in this section of a draft of this paper.

Thanks also to Esteban Caffesse for a number of stylistic suggestions,

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

- Kelley, David. *The Evidence of the Senses*. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1986.
- Plutchik, Robert. *The Emotions: Facts, Theories, and a New Model*. New York: Random House, 1963.
- Searle, John. *Intentionality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Searle, John. *Speech Acts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969.
- Solomon, Robert. *The Passions*. Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993.

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 "sleight 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 try and spell out what that error is, and to let Plato's work on knowledge in the *Meno*, *Theaetetus*, and the *Sophist* 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 misstep.

In his paper, Gettier analyzes 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 times 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 subjecting 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'.

So, the brunt of Gettier's objection to the possible definition lies in the fact it does not accord with how we ordinarily use the term. At first we may want to say that perhaps the definition is going to have to be more flexible, such that it may allow or exclude some instances which natural usage would not. After all, this definition is trying to account for an extremely fluid usage of the term in everyday speech, and thus some outlandish examples which would probably never occur should not cause us to be of such faint heart that we let our beautiful theory slip away entirely.

But upon further analysis, this does not seem to be the problem. There are two ways in which the definition could fail to accord exactly with the usage of the term. On the one hand, it could exclude certain instances of belief which are normally included in the definition. Or, it could include instances which common sense tells us are not knowledge, as the definition in question seems to. In the former case, we may be inclined to overlook an outlandish example of such a disagreement. In fact, it may be a virtue of our definition that it be more strict than our ordinary use. However, the later case poses a serious problem for our possible definition. If we want this definition to accord with how we use the term, it seems that it had better not be so loosely defined as to classify beliefs as knowledge, when it seems obvious to us that they are not. If what we are trying to do is to find the essence of the term *as used*, then we are in effect trying to find a central point around which the use of the term seems to revolve. Thus, it is not disastrous if our definition excludes some normally included instances, since we are, in effect, searching for a kind of a middle ground, if you will. However, if the defining characteristic of knowledge allows for instances which are not in fact knowledge, we have misstepped somewhere, and have certainly missed the essence of the term.

In analyzing Gettier's paper this closely, we cannot help but ask ourselves the question: Why is Gettier subjecting the definition of 'knowledge' to such stringent parameters? The responding papers to Gettier, the ones explicitly trying to solve the problem that his paper presents for epistemology, also make the move of attempting to reach a definition of the term which accords satisfactorily with our common use, and deals with the kinds of unusual instances that Gettier presents us with. In hopes of finding an answer to Gettier in the papers written in response to his, we are left wanting, with the feeling that these attempted answers are making the same mistake as Gettier, and approaching the problem of knowledge from the wrong angle. We must ask ourselves what we hope to gain by defining 'knowledge' this

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 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 is going to help us discover what kinds of things can be known. In fact, we will 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 Gettier examples, he lays out an account of a belief that we would not ordinarily allow to be knowledge, yet a belief that the definition 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 state that the only 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 asking 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 come down 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 justification of a belief while an empiricist is going to have sensory evidence be virtually 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 to find, specifically, what we think the proper ways of achieving knowledge

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 what we already think about knowledge and knowing'. The error that Gettier and his followers are making is simply approaching the issue with the wrong intentions. 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 *Theaetetus*, and has Socrates state 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." (210a) 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 fall 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 formally model how we ordinarily conceive of knowledge. Thus he may be attempting to engage in a sort of phe-

¹ For the record, I do not wish to imply that this kind of an uncovering is not valuable. Quite the contrary, being able to determine what parameters of concepts like knowledge we are already bringing with us into the world and into philosophy would be a most rewarding ability. However, it seems that Gettier is hunting out an objective definition of the term, rather than an account of our subjective conception of the term. In either case, I deal with this possibility later in the paper.

nomenological 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- thus what we *think* we know and do not know- 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 *Theaetetus* 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 demon-

stration of dialectic- for Plato, the proper way of coming to belief. That is, instead of a theory of what knowledge is, we find an account of how beliefs should be formed, i.e., of how we should come to knowledge.

In the last part of the *Theaetetus*, Socrates and Theaetetus are examining different possible meanings of 'account', to examine the validity of 'true belief plus an account' as a definition. It must be noted that in a few other dialogues, notably in the *Meno*, Socrates operates with 'true belief plus an account' as his definition for knowledge. In fact, the last part of the *Meno* seems to be concerned with making this very distinction: that between true belief plus an account as 'knowledge', and merely true belief without an account, in order to get a firm grasp on what teaching amounts to. In the journey to Larissa example, Socrates explicitly points to this distinction. At the end of the *Theaetetus*, though, we find Socrates abandoning the very definition he seemed to embrace in the *Meno*.

Some theorists might be inclined to chalk this up to a progression in Plato's work, attempting to whisk away this incongruity with talk of Plato changing his mind over time. However, I think there is something deeper at issue here. In the *Meno*, Plato shows us what he might mean by 'an account' in Socrates' famous interaction with the slave-boy, as well as in the route to Larissa example. The description we get, however, is not a propositional account of what an account entails. Rather, we get the feeling that it is the process of reasoning to the true belief which leads one to establish an account.

Socrates makes the distinction between true belief and knowledge in an interesting and illuminating manner. He states that a person who knows how to get to Larissa, but has never been there, has true belief of the way to Larissa, and thus could be relied on to lead us there. However, this person does not yet have knowledge of the way to Larissa, *only* true belief. What is lacking is an 'account', in the sense that he has never actually been to Larissa. He did not acquire his belief in the fashion proper to knowledge- he did not walk the steps himself to form his belief. The question at hand is what Plato means, exactly, by this sense of adding an account to true belief.

Socrates gives us a clue to an answer when he says to Meno, ". . . so that they (beliefs) are not worth much until one ties them down by (giving) an account of the reason why. And that, Meno my friend, is recollection, as we previously agreed."(98) So, Plato tells us that the key to the meaning of 'giving an account' is to be found in the concept of 'recollection', as discussed earlier in the dialogue in reference to the slave-boy example.

When we look at the way in which the slave-boy 'learns', or as Socrates claims, 'remembers' the truth 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 answer? Thus, if the slave-boy knew that the square based on the diagonal was its double, and knew 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 had 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 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 propositional definition.

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 'angler', 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 propositional definitions to a demonstration of the method by which to search (i.e. a discussion of how to

give "an account of the reason why") should not come as a surprise. At the end of the *Theaetetus*, Socrates abandons the definition of knowledge as true belief plus an account based on three possible meanings of an 'account'- three different *propositional* meanings. Socrates thus does not address the particular "definition" of 'account' revealed in the *Meno*, because it cannot be dealt with propositionally, the way the other definitions of 'account' could be. When we come to the *Sophist*, then, we come to it almost expecting to find another definition of 'account'- and that is just what we get. As would a phenomenological description of knowledge, this "definition" places central emphasis on how any given belief is formed in determining whether or not it counts as knowledge. Thus, Plato's account is more in keeping with our own subjective conception of knowledge. Instead of characterizing knowing in artificially static and formal terms, we find in Plato an account that allows for the difficulty of definition of the human experience of knowledge.

One may notice that in this admittedly cursory attempt to show how Plato viewed knowledge, the concept of 'truth', which we had worked to extricate our definition from, has slipped back in. It seems that the concepts 'truth' and 'justification' are intricately linked in Plato's philosophy. What we begin to see is that only in achieving proper justification for knowledge, i.e. in engaging in the proper kind of questioning, can we come to the truth. The method with which to question- dialectic- is intricately linked to the truth itself. When we try and define knowledge, we come to the conclusion that we must deal with how the belief was formed. One might think that the truth or falsity of a belief has nothing to do with how the belief was acquired- that one can believe a true statement, and have achieved truth with this simple equation, regardless of how the belief was reached. In Plato's philosophy, however, it seems that this is not the case.

In trying to establish the proper phenomenological account of justification, of how people form beliefs, we have stumbled upon truth. It seems that, on the hypothesis that we are actually able to reach some truth, any means of achieving this truth would be sufficient. Plato seems to want to say that this is not the case, that in fact the only way that we can achieve truth is by following the dialectical method and thereby reaching *alétheia*. So what it means to have knowledge does, after all, involve the notion of truth, but in an indirect way. As the justification for a belief can only come about in a certain way, so do we achieve knowledge only by a certain method. We cannot come to beliefs without the method of dialectic and lay claim

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 *alétheia*, 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 '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 '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 'knowledge', 'justification', and 'truth' turn out to be deeply and inexorably 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 relation² 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-

² As a point of clarification, I would like to state that this talk of the relation between the terms 'knowledge', 'truth', and '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, that 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 connectedness, 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 '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 '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 '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 'knowledge' really means- but the argument over the method is essentially the argument over the meaning of knowledge.

Works Cited

Gettier, Edmund L., *Is Justified True Belief Knowledge*, as reprinted in Contemporary Readings in Epistemology Prentice-Hall Inc. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632, 1993

Plato, *The Dialogues of Plato*, Encyclopedia Britannica "Great Books" edition, 1952

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* (1047). 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. 49a 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 & 2 Freeman 24). The dynamic of the *Logos*-- a term translatable variously (but not exclusively) as "discourse" or "argument"-- is precisely what his language instantiates in its structure of metaphor. For example, and as 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* is, in Heraclitus's view, a harmonic unison 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 paradoxical 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 25), 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 can't apprehend 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 reciprocity. It is precisely this (f)act of language-- this identity/distance 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 tight as possible, and strumming them, to produce the harmony of the *Logos*.

Let us now examine fragment 50, a particularly fertile Heraclitean 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 (ignor-

ing him...or not?) *do listen to the Logos, because in so doing we will have dismissed his implied advice* not to listen to him telling us to listen to the *Logos*.

The first half of the sentence requires at once perfect deafness and perfect attention. No matter what the reader does, s/he is drawn into a Cretan maze from which there is no escape. Even to throw the book down in frustration will not do, for in so doing one will be ignoring the *Logos*, whose sage advice is revealed in the last part of the sentence. But to continue reading is to continue listening to Heraclitus; clearly a prohibited course of action. The reader can't win for losing.

Secondly, the sentence tells us that "all things"(i.e. the many) are "one." How can this be? It is another of the Heraclitean unifications of opposites, the like of which we have seen before. But perhaps it is also the sentence telling us that the apparently irreconcilable pro/prescriptions of its first half are actually "one," that is, held in unity by the interior tensions of their apposition. Perhaps listening to Heraclitus telling us not to listen to him telling us to listen to the *Logos* is all "one." Perhaps what Heraclitus is saying and what the *Logos* is saying are "one," because what is and what is not the *Logos* are one. Perhaps whatever Heraclitus chose to utter both would and wouldn't be the utterance of the *Logos*.

We must not ignore (or should we?) the phrase "it is wise to agree." With whom is it wise to agree? Heraclitus? the *Logos*? both? neither? After all, it is Heraclitus, fashioning himself as the mouthpiece of the *Logos*, who is telling us that all things are one (on whose authority should we agree?). The sentence tells us, "all things are one"-- what Heraclitus tells us that the *Logos* would have us hear, and what the *Logos* itself would have us hear are one.

Or perhaps we are being led helplessly astray. It is possible that we should have stopped reading after the seventh word of the sentence-- after all, we were told to stop there, right after "not to me." Herein lies another of the sentence's many tensions: that what it explicitly asks of the reader, i.e., that he not read it-- and what it implicitly suggests that he do, i.e., read it-- are irreconcilably at odds, yet dependent on each other for their very existence. In other words, if Heraclitus had not said anything he could not have asked us to ignore it, yet the act of utterance itself presupposes a listener.

Frag. 50, which I have been examining, consists structurally of two opposed pairs of opposed pairs. We cannot not listen to Heraclitus (ia) and still listen to the *Logos* (ib), and we cannot agree that the many (iia) are one (iib). There is no sure relationship between

the second half of the sentence and the first half; i.e., is it Heraclitus telling us that all is one? Or, ignoring Heraclitus, is it the *Logos* 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 unrephrasable 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. Hot 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 facile 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 28), 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 superhuman 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 ends 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 inscrutable to reason because he wishes to put us in contact with something beyond the experiences we ordinarily have *with-in* language. I would characterize Parmenidean language as "centrifugal" in Frye's sense of the word (1047). That is: it attempts to direct the reader's attention away from itself toward the object of its signification, 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-

municate a direct experience of the "one that IT IS" (fr. 2 Freeman 42), and then themselves fall away. This is because, ostensibly, words predicated of being, themselves not being Being, are, like "Not-Being," "neither expressible nor thinkable" (fr.7,8 Freeman 43). Again, he further warns us against words in frag. 7,8 when he says that "all things mortals have established believing in their truth, *are just a name*" (Freeman 44; italics mine).

At heart, Parmenides is not interested in metaphor for its own sake. What he wants his language, his form, to deliver is the direct presence of the "One." His doubts about names and his readiness to characterize "Not-Being" with names notwithstanding, he tells us "that which it is possible to think is identical with that which can Be" (fr. 3 Freeman 42). By this definition, Being should be maximally intelligible, and Parmenides shouldn't even have to write his poem. But Being is not so easily grasped by the representing mind and Parmenides realizes this. He recognizes, moreover, that men must speak in terms of polar oppositions and dualities to make either extreme intelligible. It is this he describes in frag.9 when he characterizes those who follow the "Way of Opinion" as having divided everything into either "Light or Night," either category being impossible to conceive without the other (Freeman 45). And he notes the same phenomenon in frag.7,8 when he describes the "things mortals have established" with mere names: "Becoming and Perishing, Being and Not-Being, and Change of position, and alteration of bright colour" (Freeman 44).

Taking into account mortal man's need for opposed poles, he affirms the existence and intelligibility of Being and categorically denies the existence or expressibility of Not-Being. So it is, his very language differs with itself. But strictly logical dialectic is not Parmenides intention. If it were, he would never have chosen to communicate his greatest insight in the form of a poem. He knows that perfectly rigorous logic and internal dialectical consistency are not expected in poetry. Poetry allows language many liberties with itself. Where else but in a poem could predicates be asserted of Not-Being with impunity?

The importance of the poetic medium goes further. It is no accident (and allowable only in poetry) that Parmenides begins with a parable describing his journey to and contact with the divine goddess who reveals to him the "motionless heart of well-rounded Truth" (fr. 1 Freeman 42). This is precisely the mystical journey that Parmenides hopes his poem will inspire in the reader. Poetry, even in our day, can have a quasi-mystical aura of communion with and communication of "higher truths." How much more so in Parmenides's time, when

Hesiod's theogony 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 43).

Parmenides's poem, therefore, is a tool. He did not want his poem, in its "poemness," to interest the reader. Unlike Heraclitus's sayings, his poem is not designed to exploit the innate tensions in metaphor, but is instead meant to catapult one beyond signification into the presence of the *Ding-an-sich* 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 lacking" (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's language partakes, against his wishes, of the Heraclitean style. Striving so mightily to translate the reader out of the seeming realm of dualism 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 expressible nor thinkable that What-Is-Not Is" (fr. 7,8 Freeman 43). What could be more self-contradictory?

Parmenides's "centrifugal" 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 centrifugal 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"

force his metaphors have exists only because of the ultimate existence of some extrinsic object; i.e. the thing named by the signs. An entirely "centripetal" metaphor is impossible. It would have no internal resonances, or "discourse," because it is the supposition of the existence of a (however distant) thing signified that fecundates metaphor and language. A completely "centripetal" language would have to be either: a) the very thing it's signifying, in which case it wouldn't be metaphor or, b) blank sound.

So Heraclitus's metaphors speak in a way which draws the attention inward toward themselves and thus, inadvertently (or not), back outward toward the *Logos*. Which *Logos* is the very thing their inner structures are modeled on and to which they turn for their poignancy. And Parmenides's metaphors direct one's attention out, away from themselves. But it is precisely in so doing that they capture the reader's curiosity and, willy-nilly, become an "alteration of bright colour" predicated of the Being to which they so wish to be transparent.

In this analysis Heraclitus and Parmenides are irreconcilably at odds and yet oddly reconcilable. And so they stay, united in a kind of undividable opposition.

Works Cited

- Freeman, Kathleen. *Ancilla to the pre-Socratic Philosophers: A Complete Translation of the Fragments in Diels, Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. 1948. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1983.
- Frye, Northrop. "Ethical Criticism: Theory of Symbols". From: *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. 1957. Princeton Univ. Press, 1985.
- Rpt. in *Critical Theory Since Plato*. Revised Edition. 1971. Ed. Hazard Adams. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1992. 1045-1072.

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 fails 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 R.W. Sleeper, "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"¹. 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's 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.²

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"³.

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 experiences. 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. As achievements, they are not absolute but relative to the use that is to be made of them. And this use varies with the environment⁴.

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 achievement 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"⁵. 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"⁶. 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"⁷. 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.

The method of inquiry that Dewey proposes be incorporated into social institutions is called critical intelligence. Critical intelligence has as its object the resolution of problems of all kinds. As Cornel West rightly points out, critical intelligence requires a scientific attitude, the willingness to identify problems and search for available solutions⁸. However, critical intelligence does not necessarily employ the scientific method of experimentation. Instead, West notes that Dewey believes there are many different forms of knowledge, each with its own procedure for determining answers to problems⁹.

Dewey's point about the existence of different forms of knowledge has been expanded upon by Nelson Goodman. Goodman argues that anything we say about the world imposes a system of description on the world, a system he calls a world-version. We have many competing world-versions, e.g., those of art, physics, biology, or religion. None of these world-versions corresponds to the "real world", for they are all systems of description that we impose on the world to reach various ends, such as simplicity, order, or style. What Goodman stresses is that "many different world-versions are of independent interest and importance, without any requirement or presumption of reducibility to a single base"¹⁰. Similarly, Dewey holds that each of our different forms of knowledge has independent interest, and each has its own procedures to solve its problems. Critical intelligence aims at using the most reliable procedure possible in the resolution of each particular problem.

Despite the apparent similarities between what Goodman and Dewey are saying, it is important here to distinguish between the two arguments. In Dewey's view, while we have different forms of knowledge, these forms of knowledge are all about one world.

We can learn about this world through the various forms of inquiry. This position is grounded in Dewey's metaphysical belief that "reality" is ultimately rooted in nature and that we have access to various aspects of it through our experiences. In Goodman's picture, all we have is world-versions. We cannot know anything about the "real world" that underlies the world-versions because anything we say about it comes from within a system of description. This system of description distorts, orders, and selects from experience to such an extent that we have no way of knowing what the world underlying the description is really like, and it makes no sense to talk about it as Dewey does.

I now return to Dewey's views on society. According to Dewey, for a society to be strong, critical intelligence must be wide-

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 blocked 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 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 neighborly community"¹¹. 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 dissatisfactions"¹². 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 "mugwumpish" 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* no matter in what guise it presents itself [italics mine]"¹³.

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 goods 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 an 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 he 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 at 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 experiences. 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.

III. Rorty's argument for democracy

In *The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy*, Richard Rorty presents what he holds to be a pragmatic defense of democracy. His argument is a response to the claim that a theory of human nature is required to ground political institutions. Rorty takes the position that "liberal democracy can get along without philosophical presuppositions"¹⁴. Rorty's reason for wanting to prove this statement is that he views humans solely as products of history and culture. His position is different from Dewey's and similar to Goodman's: it makes no sense to talk about the "real world" or, for that matter, our real, universal, human nature because all our descriptions of it are distorted. Rorty states this argument in the following passage:

"The notion of 'the world' as used in a phrase like 'different conceptual schemes carve up the world differently' must be the notion of something *completely* unspecified and unspecifiable - the thing-in-itself, in fact. As soon as we start thinking of 'the world' as atoms and the void, or sense data and awareness of them, or 'stimuli' of a certain sort brought to bear upon organs of a certain sort, we have changed the name of the game. For we are now well within some particular theory about how the world is"¹⁵.

Hence, Rorty wants to be able to argue for political systems without having to appeal to a theory of human nature. I contend that Rorty's argument fails by becoming relativistic, that any argument for democracy over another system requires some philosophical grounding, and that ultimately, Rorty's desire to ground a political system without philosophical backup is, in itself, rooted in philosophical presuppositions.

Rorty tries to show us how to do political theory without a philosophical grounding. To do so, he relies on statements by John Rawls. Rawls' theory of justice is an attempt to construct the principles that should guide our society based upon certain core intuitive ideas that are "embedded in the political institutions of a democratic society and the public traditions of their interpretation"¹⁶. The idea is that people who live in a democratic society, because of their history and traditions, all share basic intuitive ideas about liberty and equality. From these ideas we can construct the principles that regulate the major social institutions. Rorty supports Rawls' approach because it does not require any theories about human nature as a backup. All it needs is history and sociology. In other words, we could figure out

what principles should regulate political institutions by simply drawing 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 subject'"¹⁷. Rorty seems to think that he can avoid relativism and the possibility of anarchy by focusing on an entire society, with its "settled social habits... irrespective of the particular desires and needs of its present members"¹⁸. This centering on social traditions instead of individual interests is what Rorty means by ethnocentrism. His ethnocentrism 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 justify democracy to our society, he may not be able to do so in a different society, where different intuitions prevail. Indeed, people in a different society may be able to justify a system entirely different from democracy on the basis of that system's compatibility with their intuitions. Furthermore, if our intuitions are "democratic", this is almost certainly due to the fact that our culture is democratic. Consequently, 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 of 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 intelligence. 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 metaphilosophy 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 disenchantment of the world. It helps make the world's inhabitants more pragmatic, more tolerant, more liberal, more receptive to the appeal of instrumental rationality"¹⁹. In other words, we should avoid philosophical presuppositions so that the spirit of pragmatism, tolerance, and liberalism (which Rorty believes in) 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 centreless web of historically conditioned beliefs and desires"²⁰, of which Rorty speaks. By so doing, Rorty could then follow in 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.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ¹ SLEEPER, R.W. "The Pragmatics of Deconstruction and the End of Metaphysics", p. 254. In course packet.
- ² DEWEY, John Reconstruction in Philosophy, enlarged edition. Beacon Press. Boston: 1948, p. 86.
- ³ Ibid, op.cit., p 137
- ⁴ Ibid, op.cit., p. 194
- ⁵ Ibid, op.cit., p. 196
- ⁶ Ibid, op.cit., p. 207
- ⁷ Ibid, op.cit., p. 207
- ⁸ WEST, Cornel "The Coming-of-Age of American Pragmatism: John Dewey", p. 97. In course packet.
- ⁹ Ibid, op.cit., p. 98
- ¹⁰ GOODMAN, Nelson, "Words, Works, Worlds", p. 4. In course packet.
- ¹¹ DEWEY, John Freedom and Culture. G.P. Putnam's Sons. New York: 1939, p. 160
- ¹² JAMES, William, "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life", p. 205. In course packet.
- ¹³ DEWEY, John Freedom and Culture. Op.cit., pp. 175-76.
- ¹⁴ RORTY, Richard, "The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy", p. 283. In course packet.
- ¹⁵ RORTY, Richard, "The World Well Lost", p. 14. In course packet.
- ¹⁶ RORTY, Richard, "The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy", p. 284.
- ¹⁷ Ibid, op.cit., p. 287
- ¹⁸ Ibid, op.cit., p. 288
- ¹⁹ Ibid, op.cit., p. 293
- ²⁰ Ibid, op.cit., p. 291

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 decidedly 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 entails that we 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 is necessary for us to experience the text anew. I beg the readers 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 ostensible 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 possess?" (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 attempting 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 students questions 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 (tells) and him who "learns"² (guides) the student, and

¹ There is an interpretive problem in referring to what is written as either the words of Socrates or Plato. It is difficult to tell how we should think of the speaker's words. We can probably discount the possibility that this is the historical Socrates, but to what extent that we can think of Socrates' words as those of Plato or merely of the character Socrates. For the most part I will treat these as synonymous. Where the distinction is clearly necessary I have tried to be consistent.

² My weakness for rustic Texas culture demands that I borrow this vulgar term to distinguish the methods of education. "To learn someone" is synonymous with "to teach someone" in vulgar Texas speech but the difference in nuance is something I find rather amusing.

between imparting opinion and knowledge -- that will illuminate the dialogue for us later. Let this distinction between learning and teaching simply sit, and we will return to it.

Meno replies to Socrates' questions by merely making an observation about virtue: "There is a virtue for every action and every age, for every task of ours and everyone of us". Meno enumerates the different virtues particular to each person (woman, child, husband, the elderly, slaves, and freemen) (71e-2a). Socrates explains that this is not what he meant at all. Rather, he says "all of them have one and the same Form which makes them virtue", and this Form of the virtues is what he's looking for (72c). If Meno knows what virtues (plural) are, then he must know them by some common characteristic. Socrates wants to know what this common characteristic, or Form, is.

The distinction between examples of and the Form of virtue points to another distinction between a definition and an explanation, which is further developed in the discussion of shape and color. Following another failed attempt at defining virtue³, Socrates gives Meno an example of what he's looking for with the definitions of shape and color. Socrates seems to like this definition and wants us to take it seriously. So, we might want to consider this the proper definition. He states that "a shape is that which limits a solid; in a word, a shape is the limit of a solid" (76a). Meno does not take much time to digest this information before he inquires what Socrates thinks color is. Socrates states that perhaps he will be more successful with his handsome interlocutor if his answer is "after the manner of Gorgias", which it to say like a sophist. So, he offers the definition that "color is an effluvium from the shapes which fit the sight and is perceived." Meno finds this an "excellent" answer. Socrates finds this definition to be inferior to the previous one of shape and thinks that Meno likes it because it is a "theatrical answer" (76e).

What is the meaning of this little game? Socrates is critiquing this definition on the grounds that it does not perform the essential function of a definition, which is to tell us by what characteristics do we pick out color. This "theatrical", Gorgias-like definition of color, if we take it to be more than a semantic game (offering a definition), is an explanation, not a definition. We speak about color and pick it out by such speaking about. A definition would give us the knowledge of what characteristics of the idea color allow us to pick it out. The

³ The definitions which Socrates rejects are not in and of themselves important. The salient characteristic of these definitions is that they define Virtue in ways that presuppose particular virtues.

alleged definition that Meno likes does not tell us how we pick it out. It, rather, attempts to explain how color comes about, but the fact is that we do not know anything about the process of effluvation. So a definition that contains this word does not tell anything about what characteristics we use to pick out the idea color. This explanation of color simply says "If something is color, it is a result of the process of effluvation". Since we know nothing of this process except the result, we could not check our belief about a something being a color.

Likewise, this definition utilizes terms that have no meaning to us. A definition presupposes a lexicon that is familiar. Otherwise, the definition does not illuminate the word. It merely hides the meaning behind more questions. Socrates prefaces his attempts at defining color with the methodological requirement that an answer should "not only be true, but in terms that admittedly known to the questioner" (75c-d). 'Effluvium' is a term that we do not understand. Using such a term in a definition grounds that definition in insubstantial ideas'. Later, Plato seems to indicate that we should do just the opposite. Coming to know a Form requires that we understand the concepts which constitute the Form or through which we come to know the Form. In the case of a definition, it is essential that we know the meaning of all the terms, if the definition is to impart to us any real knowledge.

Consider this definition then in terms of the distinction I made earlier about teaching and learning. The Gorgias-like definition teaches, or tells, Meno what causes color, just as Meno's definition of virtue tells Socrates what virtues are, but does not even begin to learn him what Virtue is. They do not give the Form of virtue nor point out what is common to all virtues or all colors.

Socrates switches places with Meno in different ways to get him to the point of learning. Meno wants this to happen because he's trying to figure out the trick which Socrates is using in his definition to see if he can use it himself. We could take this to be a characteristic of Gorgias' style of teaching. Specifically, Gorgias would teach his students rhetorical tricks that could be easily mimicked but offer little in the way of knowledge.

In another sense, the real trick is that Plato is not looking for a definition of virtue at all. In Meno's original question the word to which we should be paying attention is not "virtue" but "taught". Plato

⁴ Of course the term 'effluvium' may have meant something significant to the Greeks, but, granted even this, the previous problem -- that the definition does not state how we pick out the particular Form -- still remains.

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" (80b-e). As Louis Mackey⁵ 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" (80e). 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

⁵ Dr. 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 virtues. On the other hand, since recognition is a different epistemic activity than knowing, we may conclude that recognition makes no guarantee of knowledge. Later, Plato states that the recognition of these instances is only opinion, which is unfounded, 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 recalling 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-e).

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. Meno 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 the individual instances of an Idea. That is without recollection we would not be able to group individual things. We would be faced with a white noise of perception because recollection orders the world so that we may perceive it, but, because we can recognize the Forms in which particulars participate, we can make sense out of this mess 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 Meno's slaves forward to demonstrate his theory of recollection. The first thing that strikes us about the slave boy is that

Socrates seems to literally give him the answers. He asks, "Is this square then, which is four times as big, its double?" "No, by Zeus", answers the slave boy. "How much bigger is it?" Socrates inquires again. The boy replies "Four times" (82b-5c). Much of the time Socrates states the answer and merely asks the boy to approve, but let's be clear. Socrates does not simply give him the answer. He leads the boy to the answer. He takes him through the steps that will get him to the answer, and demonstrates what steps do not lead to the answer. He purposely leads him down the wrong path, as he does with Meno, to show him what the fundamental error in his reasoning is and then proceeds by showing how he should have reasoned to get to the correct answer.

Plato brackets the slave boy example with two interesting comments about recollection. The fact that he brackets in this way indicates to us that he wants to emphasize this point. We should take these comments as frames which inform us on how to read the example and the theory. Both paragraphs indicate that he does not demand that we take his mythological aspect of the story seriously, though he does not explicitly say we should not take it seriously. He says that "if the truth about reality is always in our soul, the soul would be immortal so that you should always confidently try to seek out and recollect what you do not know at the present" (86b). Socrates continues:

I do not insist that my argument is right in all other respects, but I would contend at all costs both in word and deed as far as I could that we will be better men, braver and less idle, if we believe that one must search for things that one does not know rather than if we believe that one must search for the things one does not know, rather than if we believe that it is not possible to find out what we do not know and that we must not look for it. (86b-c)

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 mythology 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 thoughts only, and have no proper existence except in our minds" (132).

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 virtue" (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).⁶ For example, while Socrates indicates that one of Meno's definitions might be right (78c), 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

⁶ Once again, I am trying to limit this paper's scope to the *Meno*, 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 *Meno*, 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 *Meno* of this model of recollection, "If I claim 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" (98). This though is an issue for another essayist who would deal with Plato's cannon as a whole.

to which we must go. However, *this* 'getting to' is less obvious than getting to particulars. Getting to knowledge of Forms involves knowing why, not simply that, something is what it is.

How do we get to knowledge of Forms? Socrates points the way when he explains to Meno how the slave boy recollects:

So the man who does not know has within himself *true opinions* about these things that he does not know... These opinions have just been stirred up like a dream, but if he were repeatedly asked those same questions in various ways, you know that in the end his *knowledge* about these things would be as accurate as anyone's... And he will know it *without having been taught but only questioned*, and find the knowledge within himself? (85c-d, emphasis added)

The slave boy has these true opinions stirred up in his head, and by asking him the same questions in various ways he will go through the reasons why an answer is right or wrong. The important part of the example is not that he actually recollects, in the way that we typically mean one recollects, but that he goes through the steps - the reasoning act of 'why' -- and puts the ideas together that are already in his head. The slave has to simply put together the ideas, for example, of equality, half, double, three, plus, and/or multiplication, to get the opinion that is the correct answer, "the double figure would be that based on the diagonal." Of course, with only this putting together, he still does not have an account. He merely has a conceptual grasp of the words in the proposition. Gorgias would simply tell the slave boy "the double figure would be that based on the diagonal", but Socrates walks him through the reasons why that is the case so that he discovers why he came to this conclusion. By re-examining this mathematical truth, or by asking the same questions about it, one develops an account of why the proposition is true. As Socrates says, by being "repeatedly asked those same questions in various ways" the slave boy will come to understand the "why" of his opinion.

Plato helps us to understand what an account would look like. He offers an analogy between statues and opinions. A true opinion without an account will be like the statues of Daedalus that are not tied down and were known to move around.

To acquire an untied work of Daedalus is not worth much, like acquiring a runaway slave, for it does not remain, but it is worth much if tied down... For true opinions, as long as they remain, are a fine thing and all they do is good, but they are not willing to remain long, and they escape from a man's mind, so that they are not

worth much until one ties them down by (giving) an account of the reason why. (97e-8a)

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 Daedalus" (11d). Meno 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 confusion Socrates causes 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 is dependent on the account of addition (or can be). So, the structure of knowledge is built 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 components 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 Daedalus' 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 gleans 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 Meno: 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 not have been taught it, but will have learned it. Socrates makes the distinction himself in the above quote which followed the slave boy example: "he will know it *without having been taught* but only questioned, and find 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-96e), 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-

eficial nor harmful, but accompanied by wisdom or folly they become harmful or beneficial. This argument shows that virtue, being beneficial, 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 to act badly would be to harm themselves, if only in the long run. Thus, to act badly is foolish and results from ignorance. It is because people do not know what is virtuous that they cannot 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..." (98c-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 teachability 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 second 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 others 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 *Meno*

"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*, 366

One of the first things we learn from the *Meno* is about what it means to read. The *Meno* 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 *Meno* it is not sufficient to simply understand 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 *Meno* is like a poem. Poetry is the art of writing about something without explicitly saying it. In fact, poetry is the art of getting 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 similar footing as thinking or learning, and this is why Plato is so aloof 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, Aristotle doubted the human capacity of *nous* nousing itself, literally "mind minding itself". Though the issue is much broader, and, indeed, I am perverting Aristotle's meaning a little 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 questionable 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" (1074b35-37). 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", nousing, cannot mind itself pure and simple; one can only mind minding 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 lead 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 Larissa -- 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*, Diotima 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 carrying inside him for ages" (209c). Such people "beget 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. Its as though 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 tradition 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 notes: 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 UT at Austin, who has been an irreplaceable catalyst in the development of this paper, a friend and, above all else, a true learner.

Works Cited

- Aristotle. *Introductory Readings*. Trans. Irwin and Fine. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1996.
- Miller, Henry. *The Books in My Life*. New York: New Directions, 1969.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science*. Trans. Walter Kaufman. New York: Vintage, 1974. (cited by section)
- Plato. *Euthyphro, Meno and Phaedo*. inx *Five Dialogues*. Trans. G.M.A. Grube. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1981. (All Plato cited by Stephanes

numbers)

Parmenides. in *The Dialogues of Plato*. Trans. Benjamin Jowett. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1978.

Symposium. Trans. Nehamas and Woodruff. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989.