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Editor's Note: Issue 3

It is once again a fabulous pleasure to bring online another edition of *Acta Cogitata*. While I have now come to expect such outstanding work from philosophy's top majors from around the nation, that expectation in no way diminishes just how impressive the work is.

This year I have been reflecting on the environments from which this work emerges. The schools, programs, and educators that lead students to this level of work are to be commended. Each of this year's authors displays tremendous personal effort and ability. These talented authors have been supported in their endeavors, surrounded by bright colleagues, guided by fabulous mentors, and enabled by thriving intellectual communities. In addition to commending our wonderful authors, I would also like to commend those programs that serve to nurture these great new philosophic talents. I am very pleased that we have such vibrant communities, and that they are not uncommon across the country.

The journal continues to evolve, and I am very pleased to announce and to thank my student editor, Katie Coulter. She is also this year's copy editor. Her keen philosophic ability and her precision as a writer has been a great boon to this year's edition. The journal continues to support a peer review process, and we are looking forward to expanding our submissions this year.

I know you will enjoy these articles. Each brings considerable philosophic acumen to difficult puzzles. I could not be more pleased to be a part of this ongoing project.

Dr. W. John Koolage

Mission and Purpose Statement

Acta Cogitata is dedicated to providing a venue for undergraduate authors of original philosophical papers to have their work reviewed and, possibly, published. Publication acknowledges the work of outstanding undergraduate authors, rewards their efforts, and provides a home for some thought- provoking projects. In line with this purpose, Acta Cogitata's authors retain their copyright so that they may continue to develop these projects. The journal, however, does not publish work that has previously been published elsewhere.

The journal accepts philosophical papers from all areas of philosophy and seeks to promote philosophical discourse in any area where such discourse may be illuminating.

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On Sense Perception and Theory of Recollection in *Phaedo*

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Abstract

This paper addresses two challenges to the Theory of Recollection in *Phaedo*. First, it raises the concern of *comparative perception*, which claims that a newborn infant must possess the ability to comparatively perceive the object in order for the process of recollection to work, and proposes a limited solution for the concern. Second, it examines the compatibility between the two seemingly contradictory claims concerning the role of sense perception in acquiring true knowledge in *Phaedo*, in which Socrates claims both that we can never acquire true knowledge by relying on our physical senses, and that the only way for us to retrieve Forms is through our sense-perception. How can we make sense of this argument? I further propose two possible solutions to the second challenge, based on my interpretation of *Timaeus* and *Republic V*.

On Sense Perception and Theory of Recollection in *Phaedo*

I. Introduction

Illustrating how all philosophers, all lovers of wisdom, should be willing and ready to die, Socrates claims in *Phaedo* that a person can reach a pure form of reality only by using pure thought apart from sensory experiences. As long as the soul is associated with the body and relies on the physical senses, it can never acquire or get close to the truth. The body and its constant craving for pleasures confuse the soul and deceive it into spending time nurturing the body, instead of studying philosophy in search of wisdom. It is only when the soul has escaped from the body and freed itself from the enslavement of pleasures that it can pursue and acquire true knowledge, and this separation can be attained only through death. Hence, a philosopher, seeking for truth his whole life, should appreciate and celebrate his death as a chance to release his soul from the body and purify his reason from the deceptive physical senses.

Not all souls can reach the realm of the divine and acquire true knowledge through death. The souls that were heavily obsessed with pleasures during life and relied only on physical senses as a way of apprehending the world are not permitted to enter the realm of the divine. Those souls are "dragged back to the visible region in fear

of the unseen and of Hades" and wander around the earthly world. Only the souls that diligently practiced philosophy and sought for a true form of reality can be purified through death and enter a region of the noble and invisible. The art of philosophy hence "persuades the soul to withdraw from the senses insofar as it is not compelled to use them" and to "trust only itself and whatever reality, existing by itself, the soul by itself understands, and not to consider as true whatever it examines by other means."[i]

On the other hand, in his Theory of Recollection, Socrates emphasizes that sense perception is the only way to retrieve Forms: "this conception [of Forms] of ours derives from seeing or touching or some other sense perception, and cannot come into our mind in any other way."[ii] It is through physical senses that we perceive the particulars and realize that they strive to be, yet are deficient in, being like Forms. Now, there is some confusion about the role of sense perception in helping us acquire true knowledge and prepare our souls for death. Should we "refrain as much as possible from association with the body" to purify our souls until their destined release from physical parts?[iii] Or should we utilize perception through physical senses to recollect Forms? In this paper, I examine the compatibility of these two claims. I first look into the Theory of Recollection in *Phaedo* to establish the idea of Forms and the process of recollection. Then, I draw attention to two main challenges to the theory: the problem of Comparative Perception and the role of physical senses in attaining true knowledge. Finally, I suggest possible solutions, mainly for the second challenge, and evaluate their effectiveness.

II. Theory of Recollection and Knowledge of Forms

In *Phaedo*, Socrates introduces the Theory of Recollection as his second argument for the immortality of the soul. Upon the acceptance of the theory, he argues that the soul has necessarily existed before birth, and hence that it has a life span separate from that of the body. Socrates defines the recollection in his theory as follows:

> Do we not also agree that when knowledge comes to mind in this way, it is *recollection*? What way do I mean? Like this: when a man sees or hears or in some other way perceives one thing and not only knows that thing but also thinks of another thing of which the knowledge is not the same but different, are we not right to say that he *recollects* the second thing that comes into his mind?[iv]

In this definition, recollection is a process in which the subject S perceives and knows a thing X, and thinks of another thing Y, which is different from X. In this context, X represents things that we can perceive through physical senses, such as seeing, smelling, hearing, tasting and touching, while Y represents things we cannot sense or perceive. In Socratic theory, those things represented by X are named *sensible particulars* and things represented by Y, *Forms*. In *Phaedo*, Forms are described as "the reality of all other things that which each of them essentially is," including the Equal itself, the Just, the Beautiful.

The process of recollection contains three specific conditions. *First*, Y is different from X and the knowledge of Y is different from the knowledge of X. *Second*, S must

have known Y prior to his perception of X. *Third*, the perception of X makes S think of Y. There is another crucial condition, which is not directly entailed by the definition: S has *forgotten* Y prior to his perception of X.[v] We can apply this condition to the second one: *Second*, S has known yet has forgotten Y prior to his perception of X. Given that S has lost Y prior to his perception of X and recollects Y after the perception of X, we can reasonably infer that recollecting Y necessarily involves perceiving of X. It is definitely from X that we recollect Y and Y "cannot come into our mind in any other way."[vi] From this, we can rewrite the third condition: *Third*, Y is recollected *only* through the perception of X. These conditions can then be summarized as follows:

> *S recollects Forms if, and only if, the following conditions are satisfied:*
> 1. Forms are different from sensible particulars and the knowledge of Forms is different from the knowledge of sensible particulars.
> 2. S has known and forgotten Forms prior to his perception of sensible particulars.
> 3. Forms are recollected *only* through the perception of sensible particulars.

Socrates further explains the difference between sensible particulars and Forms through his example of the equals and the Equal itself. The equals, such as equal stones and sticks, appear equal to one perceiver and unequal to another, or appear equal in some situations and unequal in others. The Equal itself, however, never appears unequal; it appears equal to all intellectors in all circumstances. From this, we can infer that the equal things are not the same as the Equal itself.

> 1. The equals sometimes, while remaining the same, appear unequal.
> 2. The Equal itself never appears unequal.
> 3. The equals and the Equal itself are *not* the same.

Another crucial difference is that we can perceive particulars through bodily senses, while we can never perceive Forms in the same way. Instead, we should approach them "with thought alone, without associating any sight with his thought, or dragging in any sense perception with his reasoning."[vii] Sensible particulars can be apprehended by our body, while Forms are unperceivable through physical senses and can only be apprehended by pure thought of the soul.

There are two types of recollection in the Theory of Recollection: recollection by things that are similar and recollection by things that are dissimilar.[viii] Socrates primarily focuses on the recollection by things that are similar and claims that we must "consider whether the similarity [of those things] to that which one recollects [Forms] is deficient in any respect or complete."[ix] Socrates argues that, in this type of recollection, sensible particulars not only resemble Forms but also are deficient in their resemblance to Forms. For instance, when we see two sticks that are equal, we simultaneously see that they are "not equal in the same sense as what is Equal itself" and that there is "some deficiency in their being such as the Equal."[x] In order to recollect the Equal itself, we must know the equals and realize their deficiency in being like the Equal itself that we

once had known. This becomes another essential step of recollection: upon perceiving equal sticks, one realizes that they strive to be like the Equal but fall short of it.

From this, Socrates infers that we must have known the Equal itself prior to our *initial* perception of the equal objects. Since we start perceiving these objects as soon as we are born, we must have acquired the knowledge of the Equal itself either *before* or *at* the moment of birth. Socrates further claims that if we have the knowledge, then we must be able to give an account of our knowledge.[xi] Since we, as newborn infants, are incapable of giving an account of such knowledge, we do not possess the knowledge at the moment of our birth. Because we do not possess the knowledge at the moment, and because it is impossible to lose and acquire the knowledge at the same time,[xii] we cannot acquire the knowledge *at* the moment of birth, which means that we must have acquired the knowledge *prior* to birth. For birth is the moment the body comes to life, the body could not have existed before birth, and it is necessarily the soul that has existed and acquired the knowledge. Again, the Theory of Recollection directs that we acquire the knowledge *before* birth, lose it *at* birth, and recollect it *after* birth through our perception of sense particulars.[xiii] It is from this process of recollection that Socrates concludes that the soul has existed prior to *any* physical incarnation, hence proving the first step of its immortality.

III. First Challenge: Comparative Perception

Socrates wins easy approval from Simmias and Cebes,[xiv] yet it is reasonable to raise questions about some of the steps in the process of recollection. For instance, a crucial step in the argument predicts that upon perceiving the equal objects, we realize that they strive to be like the Equal itself but fall short of it. One might ask why our perception necessarily involves that particular step. Why can't we just perceive two equal sticks as equal without comparing their degree of resemblance to the Equal itself, thereby recollecting it?

Michael Morgan addresses a similar concern.[xv] Socrates says that our experience of sensible objects somehow leads to recollection, yet what *kind* of experience does he refer to? Morgan claims that the perception that triggers the process of recollection is not a normal one, but a separate and specific kind that he calls Comparative Perception (CP). According to Morgan, CP includes both a "perception of an object as being F" and a "reflective awareness that the object wants to be like the F but falls short, is deficient, or is inferior with respect to it," with F representing Forms.[xvi] CP, in this regard, necessarily involves the process of recollection in which we compare the resemblance of sensible objects to Forms and recognize their deficiency in being like Forms. These conditions can be summarized as follows:

1. CP necessarily involves the process of recollection.
2. The process of recollection requires the prior knowledge of Forms.
3. (By 1 and 2) CP requires the prior knowledge of Forms.

If we assume that CP occurs from the moment of our birth, we must have acquired the necessary knowledge of Forms either *before* or *at* the moment of birth. Since we already established that we are incapable of giving an account of our knowledge, hence incapable of possessing the knowledge *at* birth, we must have acquired the knowledge *before* birth. These steps can be summarized as follows:

4. CP occurs as soon as we are born.
5. (By 3 and 4) The soul must have acquired the knowledge of Forms before birth.
6. (By 5) The soul must have existed before birth.
7. (By 1-6) The soul must have existed before any particular birth.

In this context, however, we must first accept the fourth premise that CP occurs as soon as we are born in order to reach the desired conclusion of the Theory of Recollection, that being the preexistence of the soul. The burden for Socrates then is to prove the fourth premise. It is not enough for him to claim that "we began to see and hear and otherwise perceive right after birth," because CP, being the specific kind of sense experience, involves more than a mere sense perception.[xvii] Socrates is also asked to prove that we begin to activate the reflective awareness of comparing the sensible objects to Forms and recognizing their deficiency as soon as we are born.

Nowhere in *Phaedo* can we find proof for the claim that a newborn infant not only perceives objects but also accompanies his perception with the reflective awareness that comprises CP from the moment of birth. This is potentially a major obstacle to the Theory of Recollection. If Socrates cannot assure that an infant uses CP as soon as he is born, he can no longer argue that the soul must have had the knowledge of Forms prior to birth. Even after the scenario in which an infant learns it *at* the time of birth is excluded, it is still possible that the infant acquires the necessary knowledge sometime *after* his birth yet before his initial CP. The possibility of this scenario impairs the following conclusion that the soul must have existed before birth, which is Socrates' purpose for introducing the Theory of Recollection.

One possible way to derive the fourth premise that 'CP occurs as soon as we are born' from Socrates' claim in *Phaedo* that 'we begin to perceive as soon as we are born' is to add another premise to the argument: all sense perceptions necessarily involve CP. With the addition of this premise, the argument for recollection can be written as follows:

4. All sense perceptions necessarily involve CP.
5. Sense perception occurs as soon as we are born.
6. (By 4 and 5) CP occurs as soon as we are born.
7. (By 3 and 6) The soul must have acquired the knowledge of Forms before birth.
8. (By 7) The soul must have existed before birth.
9. (By 1-8) The soul must have existed before any particular birth.

This argument works, yet now we need the proof for the replaced fourth premise. Why *must* all sense perception necessarily involve CP? Why can't there be some elementary levels of perceptions that include only a mere perception of sensible objects and nothing else?

Morgan suggests the passivity of the soul as a possible solution. If our souls are passive so that CP is occurring "as a result of automatic response," instead of a conscious attempt of comparison, Socrates may be able to argue that even a newborn infant *can* use CP from the moment of birth as a natural process that accompanies a mere perception.[xviii] However, the burden is not to prove that "CP *can* occur as soon as we are born" but to prove that "CP *must* occur as soon as we are born," so that all of us must have acquired the knowledge of Forms prior to birth through the preexistence of our souls. Without proving this, this solution is limited. Yet, there is another crucial challenge to the Theory of Recollection: the role of sense perception in acquiring and retrieving the knowledge of Forms.

IV. Second Challenge: The Role of Sense Perception

This challenge draws upon the third condition of the Theory of Recollection that we established earlier: Forms are recollected only through the perception of sensible particulars. Socrates claims that Forms, the knowledge of which one had possessed before birth and lost at birth, can be recollected *only* through perceiving the sensible objects that partake in those Forms. "Then surely we also agree that this conception of ours derives from seeing or touching or some other sense perception, and *cannot come into our mind in any other way*, for all these senses, I say, are the same."[xix]

Why is it a problem that sense perception plays such an indispensable role in grasping and recollecting Forms? It is because we established in our earlier discussion that we can never grasp or apprehend the knowledge of Forms through bodily senses. According to Socrates, the body is "an obstacle when one associates with it in the search of knowledge," because the physical senses are not always accurate and incapable of capturing the unchanging realities of the world.[xx] One can never acquire true knowledge through sense perception; only by reasoning through pure thought alone, detached from all physical senses, can one approach true realities. From this, Socrates claims that one should appreciate death as a chance to release the soul from the imprisonment of the body, and that one should practice philosophy during life in order to dissociate his soul as much as possible from his body and be ready to purify his soul at the moment of death. The important question then arises: should one or should one not use the body and sense perception in his approach to true knowledge?

Socrates argues that philosophy persuades the soul to "withdraw from the senses insofar as it is not compelled to use them" to "trust only itself and whatever reality, existing by itself."[xxi] The soul is further advised "not to consider as true whatever it examines by other means, for this is different in different circumstances and is sensible and visible, whereas what the soul itself sees is intelligible and invisible."[xxii] How can we cope with this claim, while still accepting the premise that Forms are recollected *only* through the perception of sensible things?

V. Solutions

One possible solution is to broadly interpret the idea and context in which the soul is compelled to use physical senses. In this regard, we should not blindly trust our perception as true reality but should still use it to identify the difference between what is perceived and the reality it resembles. For instance, when one sees two equal sticks, one should not consider the equalness he perceives in those objects as the Equal itself. Instead, one should recognize that those objects are striving to become the Equal itself yet are deficient in it. We can consider this kind of perception, CP, as the compelled or necessary use of physical senses, through which we recollect true knowledge that we once had possessed. If, however, we excessively rely on the physical senses and regard our perception as the only truth, we are no longer considered compelled to use them. By doing so, we may fail to dissociate our soul from the body and our reason from perception, which prevents us from learning or re-learning true knowledge.

This interpretation is coherent with Socrates' view in *Timaeus* on the necessity of physical senses in the acquisition of knowledge:

> Let us rather declare that the cause and purpose of this supreme good is this: the gods invented sight and gave it to us so that we might observe the orbits of intelligence in the universe and apply them to the revolutions of our own understanding. For there is a kinship between them, even though our revolutions are disturbed, whereas the universal orbits are undisturbed. So once we have come to know them and to share in the ability to make correct calculations according to nature, we should stabilize the straying revolutions within ourselves by imitating the completely unstraying revolutions of the gods. Likewise, the same account goes for sound and hearing - these too are the gods' gifts, given for the same purpose and intended to achieve the same result.[xxiii]

In this text, Socrates explains that it is from the benefit of sight, along with other physical senses, that we started inquiring into the nature of the universe and that it is from such inquiry that we began to practice philosophy, "a gift from the gods to the mortal race whose value neither has been nor ever will be surpassed."[xxiv] According to Socrates, we are given sight and other physical senses to inquire into the nature of the universe and enhance our understanding. In this regard, we are not only allowed but also encouraged to use sense perception as a necessary means to retrieve the knowledge of Forms, the true realities of the world.

We may still wonder where to draw a line between the compelled and excessive use of physical senses, the former of which is encouraged and the latter, highly inappropriate. Socrates offers an insight in *Republic V* through his distinction of the "lovers of sights" and "true philosophers."[xxv] A lover of sights, according to Socrates, is someone who "believes in beautiful things, but doesn't believe in the beautiful itself and isn't able to follow anyone who could lead him to the knowledge of it."[xxvi] He fails to acknowledge the existence of true realities beyond the sensible things and trusts his perception as the ultimate reality. A philosopher, on the other hand, is someone who "believes in the beautiful itself, can see both it and the things that participate in it and doesn't believe that the participants are it or that it itself is the participants."[xxvii] He

recognizes the existence of true realities and the deficiency of sensible things in being like those realities; at the same time, he treats his perception as a *means* to get closer to the realities, instead of considering it as the reality itself.[xxviii] We should thus aim to become philosophers, instead of becoming the lovers of sights, failing to see what lies beyond our perception, and this gives us one possible way to reconcile the two claims.

Another possible solution is to claim that recollecting is not necessarily the same as knowing. In this regard, the fact that we are capable of *recollecting* Forms does not necessarily mean that we are simultaneously capable of *knowing* them. This view is consistent with Socrates' remark in *Phaedo* that everybody recollects Forms, yet not everybody has knowledge of them.

> A man who has knowledge would be able to give an account of what he knows, or would he not?
> He must certainly be able to do so, Socrates, he said.
> And do you think everybody can give an account of the things we were mentioning just now?
> I wish they could, said Simmias, but I'm afraid it is much more likely that by this time tomorrow there will be no one left who can do so adequately.
> So you do not think that everybody has knowledge of those things?
> No indeed.
> So they recollect what they once learned?
> They must.[xxix]

His remark relies on the premise that one must be able to give an account of what he knows. Since presumably no one can give a precise account of Forms, especially at birth, yet since everyone seems to recollect Forms from the moment of birth when he or she starts perceiving the sensible objects that are resembling Forms, it is safe to conclude that knowing, in this context, is different from recollecting. This idea can be summarized as follows:

1. One who has the knowledge must be able to give an account of what he knows.
2. No one can give an account of Forms (at birth).
3. (By 1 and 2) No one has the knowledge of Forms (at birth).
4. Everyone recollects Forms (at birth).
5. (By 3 and 4) Knowing is not necessarily the same as recollecting.

I added the phrase "at birth" to emphasize the impossibility of anyone giving an account, and hence knowing Forms at that time, yet both Simmias and Socrates seem to agree that not even a grown-up man can give an accurate account of Forms, such as the Equal itself, the Good and the Beautiful. Constantly recollecting Forms throughout his life, he may have some mental grasp of them, but he cannot have the knowledge of Forms as long as he cannot give a precise account.

If recollecting is not the same as knowing, then when can we ever *know* Forms? The answer to this question can be found in the different roles of body and soul described in *Phaedo*. Socrates emphasizes multiple times that the soul reasons best by

itself without associating with the bodily senses. In other words, the soul can only acquire the knowledge of Forms when it is completely dissociated from the body or when it departs from the body through death.

> It really has been shown to us that, if we are ever to have pure knowledge, we must escape from the body and observe things in themselves with the soul by itself. It seems likely that we shall, only then, *when we are dead*, attain that which we desire and of which we claim to be lovers, namely, wisdom, as our argument shows, not while we live; for if it is impossible to attain any pure knowledge with the body, then one of two things is true: *either we can never attain knowledge or we can do so after death*.[xxx]

As Socrates explains, we can either never attain true knowledge or only do so after death. There are two ways to interpret this statement. One is to claim that we are altogether capable of attaining knowledge after death or not. The other is to claim that some of us are capable of attaining knowledge after death, while others are not. The second interpretation forms a more coherent argument with Socrates' previous claim that only the trained souls can enter the realm of the divine. If we "refrain as much as possible from association with the body," we can join "the company of people of the same kind" departing from the body.[xxxi] Only people of this kind acknowledge the limits of sense perception and the existence of true realities beyond sensible things, and hence constantly practice philosophy to dissociate their souls from the bodies. Only they can acquire true knowledge after death, hence being able to give a true account of Forms.

Socrates did not fear, but rather appreciated the calling of his death, because he was confident that he belonged to this kind. Socrates knew that he would, just like other true lovers of wisdom, be "freed and released from the regions of the earth" and "make [his] way up to a pure dwelling place."[xxxii] By differentiating knowing from recollecting, we may successfully reconcile the two claims about the role of sense perception in the acquisition of true knowledge. In this perspective, physical senses are the essential component of recollection during the present life, but not of the acquisition of true knowledge, allowed only after death.

VI. Conclusion

The Theory of Recollection is an essential step of Socrates' argument on the immortality of the soul and the importance of practicing philosophy in preparation for the afterlife. In order to reach the realm of the divine after being released from the body, the soul must practice reasoning through pure thought and seek for true realities, instead of relying on perception through bodily senses. Sense perception is deceptive in that it alone cannot provide us with the true realities behind what is perceived. By acknowledging the limitations of physical senses, we can use them in the proper way and the proper situations in which we perceive the sensible things, and from such perception, recollect Forms.

This paper has attempted to resolve the outward contradiction between the two main claims of Socrates about the role of sense perception and the acquisition of true

knowledge. Socrates claims that the soul should withdraw from physical senses and use *only* pure thought to attain true knowledge. At the same time, he claims that the soul can recollect true realities, the knowledge of which it had previously possessed, *only* through sense perception. One possible solution allows for the constrained use of physical senses in approaching true knowledge, through which one is permitted to use physical senses only when one acknowledges the existence of true realities beyond perceivable things and uses his perception merely as a means to get closer to the ultimate truth. Another solution differentiates the process of recollecting from that of knowing, thereby suggesting that one can use physical senses to recollect Forms in the present life, but can only know and give an account of Forms after death. By drawing a clear distinction between the roles of body and soul, and their relationship before, during, and after the present life, this paper introduced a possible compromise between the two opposing claims about the Theory of Recollection.

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[i] Ibid., 83b.
[ii] Ibid., 75a.
[iii] Ibid., 67a.
[iv] Ibid., 73d, my emphasis.
[v] Ibid., 76e.
[vi] Ibid., 74e.
[vii] Ibid., 65e.
[viii] Ibid., 74a.
[ix] Ibid., 74a.
[x] Ibid., 74d.
[xi] Ibid., 76b.
[xii] Ibid., 76d.
[xiii] Ibid., 75e.
[xiv] Ibid., 77b.
[xv] Morgan, Michael L. "Sense-Perception and Recollection in the "Phaedo"" *Phronesis* 29, no. 3 (1984): 237-351.
[xvi] Morgan (1984), p241.
[xvii] *Phaedo*, 75b.
[xviii] Morgan (1984), p248.
[xix] *Phaedo*, 74d, my emphasis.
[xx] Ibid., 65b.
[xxi] Ibid., 83b.
[xxii] Ibid., 83b.
[xxiii] *Timaeus*, 47b-c.
[xxiv] Ibid., 47b.
[xxv] *Republic V*, 475e.
[xxvi] Ibid., 476c.
[xxvii] Ibid., 476d.
[xxviii] Socrates suggests that we call the thought of a lover of sights opinion and the thought of a philosopher, knowledge.
[xxix] *Phaedo*, 76b-c.

xxx Ibid., 66e, my emphasis.
xxxi Ibid., 67b.
xxxiixxxii Ibid., 114c.

Folk Psychological Predictive Methods and Inductive Reasoning

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Abstract

That we project the past onto our predictions of the future is a commonly accepted means of behavior prediction within folk psychology and everyday life. It is also a proposed method of behavior prediction given by Kristin Andrews in her piece, *Do Apes Read Minds?* By way of John Stuart Mill's consideration of the dilemmas that arise from induction, supplementary pieces on induction and inference, and cognitive psychology as it pertains to memory perception, I will address:

1. Prediction from the past as it pertains to folk psychology, inductive reasoning and cognitive psychology.
2. Mill's approach to David Hume's problem of induction, and Nelson Goodman's new riddle of induction.
3. Relevant studies within the field of cognitive psychology that pertain to memory perception.
4. The confusion between prediction from the past with prediction from the situation.

I argue that prediction from the past is really just conflation with prediction from the present -- that is, as Andrews calls it, prediction from the situation. I will bring forth examples from cognitive psychology and the topic of memory perception in order to further explain the way in which our own memories predispose us in a way that leaves us unable to recall the past with certitude. There are indeed practical uses of inductive reasoning, but if our use of induction requires a proper recollection of past experiences, we really only have our present understanding of the past to make use of, which is why, as I argue, we predict from the present state of our memories rather than directly predicting from the past. To say that we are using induction, prediction from the past, would imply that we have perfect knowledge of the past when studies pertaining to memory perception seem to say otherwise.

Folk Psychological Predictive Methods and Inductive Reasoning

I. Prediction from the Past

In her book, *Do Apes Read Minds?*, Kristin Andrews proposes four methods by which an individual can predict the behavior of others (Andrews 67-93). These four methods consist of the following: prediction from self, prediction from stereotype, prediction from the situation, and prediction from traits. However, Andrews continues to affirm the commonly held view that we also predict from the past (Andrews 93). That is to say, assuming that the future will pan out in accordance to patterns and habits established in the past, we predict one's behavior in the future.

One could certainly argue for an explanatory pluralist approach to folk psychology in which more than one predictive method is employed depending on the individual and their circumstances. For example, if one is interacting with an individual that they believe to be similar to their self, they might use the method of prediction from self to predict said individual's behavior. If one is to predict the behavior of an individual they do not know well personally, but while still having some knowledge of the individual's traits (e.g. gender, ethnicity, race, etc), it would seem that we are more likely to predict from stereotype as that is all we have to work with. However, prediction from the past does not distinguish itself as a separate predictive method. When one believes that they are predicting from the past, they are conflating their predictive method with prediction from the situation.

II. Mill on Induction

The foundations of inductive reasoning take a fairly hard hit from Hume's proposed problem of induction. However, John Stuart Mill, presenting and acknowledging a similar problem, explains why this problem is not reason enough to cling to inductive skepticism. Rather, Mill attempts to also put forth a solution of sorts to this problem rather than just leaving the matter open ended. This attempt to present a solution of sorts is what distinguishes his writing on induction from that of Hume's. In Uniformity and Induction, John Graves addresses both the differences between Hume and Mill, but also the solution Mill puts forth. "While Hume did wish to show the impossibility of reaching absolute certainty about matters of fact, Mill realized that theoretical skepticism was useless for science" (Graves 303).

Like Hume, Mill addresses this bold assumption about what he calls the "uniformity of the course of nature." Mill states, "This universal fact, which is our warrant for all inferences from experience, has been described by different philosophers in different forms of language; that the universe is governed by general laws; and the like" (Mill 200). According to Mill, said assumption that general laws governing the universe will remain constant into the future, is at the heart of induction. Mill's approach to the fallibility of inductive reasoning, however, does not give Mill reason enough to do away with inductive reasoning altogether, nor does it allow inductive

skepticism to take over. It is in this way that Mill distinguishes his stance on induction from that of Hume's. Inductive reasoning is not only natural, but also necessary. Things become difficult when we are unable to recognize if our use of induction is justifiable or not. Mill references the weather, dreams, and other phenomena that are clearly not bound to consistency:

> Nobody believes in the succession of rain and fine weather will be the same in every future year as in the present. Nobody expects to have the same dreams repeated every night. On the contrary, everybody mentions it as something extraordinary if the course of nature is constant, and resembles itself in these particulars. To look for constancy where constancy is not to be expected, as, for instance, that a day which has once brought good fortune will always be a fortunate day, is justly accounted superstition (Mill 203).

These examples pertaining to the weather and our own dreams would seem like obvious examples of inconsistency that we would be reasonable in expecting. But what about the inductive grounds of scientific reasoning? According to Mill, one of the best options available to us in the present is to assume that the scientific method and reliance on predictive success yield some sort of knowledge that is useful and reliable. To assume otherwise would leave the scientific community at a stand-still hoping for the acquisition of a less fallible means of truth acquisition, a means that might never actually materialize. We must work with what we have (Mill 204). Graves also illuminates Mill's consideration of deduction and its uses in scientific reasoning. Mill was not trying to develop a system of logic in the modern sense of a formal system of axioms and rules of inferences for proving theorems deductively. He sought rather to provide an 'organon', in the same sense as Aristotle or Francis Bacon - an instrument for effective reasoning in the sciences, and indeed, for reasoning on moral questions. Thus he does not add to the formal theory of the syllogism, but asks instead what role syllogistic reasoning might play in science (Graves 302). Mill's proposed approach to deductive reasoning, as a means of more accurately predicting the future, illuminates this problem of induction that must be considered by folk psychologists who assert that prediction from the past is a valid form of behavior prediction. It is these very problems posed by inductive reasoning that should be considered when evaluating our ability to not only accurately predict from the past, but our ability to accurately recall the past.

III. The Practicality of Past-Based Prediction

Established patterns of behavior seemingly make it easier to predict future behavior. It is assumed that through identifying habits and/or patterns, our predictions concerning the future will rise out of these established habits and/or patterns. This mode of prediction has a certain level of practicality to it. For instance, if a woman has been physically abused by her partner, she would most likely be advised that if she stays with said partner, she is likely to suffer physical abuse again in the future. If we understand domestic abuse to be cyclical, then it would be hard to argue that she

should stay with her partner and not hold her partner to past behavioral patterns that her partner has exhibited. Given the woman's dire circumstances, one could easily make practical use of what appears to be prediction from the past. As we do not yet have access to knowledge of the future, we are seemingly left with only the past to guide us forward. This practicality of inductive reasoning has been brought against Hume. John Watkins, in his piece, "The Pragmatic Problem of Induction," addresses this issue of practicality and the use of inferences while not failing to acknowledge obstacles that come with it.

> Hume took it for granted that certain regularities have obtained in the past, and spoke confidently of the observation of constant conjunctions. A critic might have taken him up on this. Shouldn't he have been more skeptical here? Do we really know that every raven so far observed has been black? Do we really know that all emeralds observed before have been green? Can we be sure that the laws of nature have held sway down to the present? Hume would no doubt have conceded that we have no perfect assurance about such matters. But he might have added that if we suppose ourselves to have some reliable knowledge about the past, then the interesting problem arises: would be we entitled to make any inductive use of that knowledge? (Watkins 20).

While one could easily explain the reasoning in their use of prediction from the past, the issue of accuracy must be addressed in order to justify the use of this predictive method. An explanation of 'why' should not be confused with proper justification. But we still must grapple with the question of whether or not we are really using induction, or if we are actually projecting our present and perhaps skewed knowledge of the past onto the future.

IV. The New Riddle of Induction

Nelson Goodman brought forth new concerns with inductive reasoning in what he calls, "The New Riddle of Induction." Goodman believes that Hume only addressed one part of the problem of induction, that being the source of the inferences we make. Addressing Hume's account of the problem of induction, Goodman states, "Hume's account at best pertains only to the source of predictions, not to their legitimacy; that he sets forth the circumstances under which we make given predictions -- and in this sense explains why we make them -- but leaves untouched the question of our license for making them" (Goodman 60). However, Goodman, like Hume, stresses this disconnect between cause and effect that comes from a priori judgments. "The problem of the validity of judgments about future or unknown cases arises, as Hume pointed out, because such judgments are neither reports of experience nor logical consequences of it. Predictions, of course, pertain to what has not yet been observed. And they cannot be logically inferred from what has been observed; for what has happened imposes no logical restrictions on what will happen" (Goodman 59). It is here that I can present the problem and/or riddle of induction as it pertains to the folk psychological method of

prediction from the past. There is no disconnect here between Hume and Goodman's usage of the word "prediction" and the way in which folk psychologists have employed the word - both pertain to the act of inference.

Goodman, in his writing on induction, is perhaps most well known for his distinction between *lawlike* generalities and *accidental* generalities. According to Goodman, these are features of a hypothesis and it is the features themselves that determine our ability to confirm said hypothesis (Goodman 72). He continues to provide an example of each generality. "That a given piece of copper conducts electricity increases the credibility of statements asserting that other pieces of copper conduct electricity, and thus confirms the hypothesis that all copper conducts electricity" (Goodman 73). This is an example of what Goodman would call a *lawlike* generality. He continues to say, "But the fact that a given man now in this room is a third son does not increase the credibility of statements asserting that other men now in this room are third sons, and so does not confirm the hypothesis that all men now in this room are third sons" (Goodman 73). Both of these examples given by Goodman are examples of generalities, but the latter example is of an *accidental* generality. This gives rise to our next dilemma -- how might we go about distinguishing generalities that are *lawlike* and those that are *accidental*? One could examine the qualitativeness of a predicate --- 'qualitativeness' meaning that which does not depend on time or space, thus making said predicate *lawlike*. Or we could deem a predicate to be 'locational' and thus *accidental* -- a predicate that depends on time and space (Goodman). But the line between these two becomes blurred. This is where another problem with inductive reasoning arises. It is necessary to establish whether or not the generality of a hypothesis is *lawlike* or not, as according to Goodman, induction only works with lawlike principles. If we are unable to distinguish the two, induction becomes useless (Goodman).

Our inability to distinguish between lawlike generalizations and those that are accidental becomes apparent with Goodman's "grue" example. "Grue" can be defined as a color that is neither fully blue, nor is it fully green -- a mixture of the two. For instance, the statement, "all emeralds are green," seems to be a lawlike generalization as the predicate, green, appears to be qualitative. But if we were to say, "all emeralds are green up until time *t*, after time *t*, they are grue." This suddenly turns "green" into a locational predicate as the emerald's color is now relative to time *t*. So seemingly any predicate could be used in a way that is qualitative or locational. It is through this example that Goodman drives his point home. If we cannot definitively state whether a predicate is 'qualitative' or 'locational,' we are left unable to determine whether or not the hypothesis makes a *lawlike* or *accidental* generalization, and thus we are unable to be sure of whether or not induction will work from our given hypothesis. This "riddle" of induction poses an obstacle to our ability to justify inductive reasoning and thus our ability to predict from the past.

V. Justification, Accuracy, and Memory of Perception

To predict from the past would imply that in this moment, we are fully capable of accurately recalling the past. Cognitive psychologist Elizabeth Loftus, a specialist in

memory, addresses the way in which we are prone to incorrectly "remembering" the past. From the 1970s on, cognitive psychologists have studied the way in which past events become confused with misinformation that has been received between the time that the event took place and where we are in the present (Loftus 60). Not only is it possible to partially misunderstand a past event, but entirely false memories can also be created (Loftus 60). Loftus, along with Michele Nucci, and other collaborators, ran a study in which their subjects were shown video clips from crime scenes that included a bank robbery, a warehouse burglary, a liquor store holdup, and a domestic dispute (Loftus 61). A week later, these subjects were given a quiz on the events that took place in these video clips. However, these quizzes also included questions about an event that these students did not witness, a drug bust. Loftus and Nucci came to the following conclusion:

> This study shows that people can be led through suggestive questioning, to believe that they have witnessed an event two weeks before that they in fact never witnessed. Nearly two-thirds of the subjects were willing to report that they had seen a drug bust and to offer some description of it. The elements of their description can often be traced to other truly witnessed events, revealing an interesting feature of false memories -- namely, they often contain elements of "truth" (Loftus 62-63).

Given that memory serves as a bridge to our past, the complications that come with accurately remembering the past should be concerning. Daniel Schacter, a psychologist from Harvard University, established the seven "deadly sins" of memory. Out of transience, absent-mindedness, blocking, misattribution, suggestibility, bias, and persistence, he honed in on the "sin" of misattribution, as it is one of the most common "sins" faced in everyday life by the average person. He defines misattribution as something which "involves attributing a recollection or idea to the wrong source" (Shacter 1835). In this study, Shacter provides an example from the case concerning Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma bombings of 1995:

> After the tragic 1995 bombing of an office building in Oklahoma City, law enforcement officers quickly apprehended a suspect called 'John Doe 1', Timothy McVeigh, who was eventually convicted of the crime. But the officers also conducted a failed search for a second suspect called 'John Doe 2' who, they believed, had accompanied McVeigh when he rented a van two days before the bombing. An artist's sketch of John Doe 2 depicted a young square-faced man with dark hair and a stocky build wearing a blue-and-white cap. A witness who had seen McVeigh rent his van also recalled seeing John Doe 2 with him. But it was later discovered that the witness had actually seen a man who fit the description of John Doe 2 at the body shop the day after he saw McVeigh there. The witness misattributed his memory of John Doe 2 to the wrong episode, leading to needless confusion and wasted effort (Schacter 1836).

After examining similar cases presented by Schacter, it would seem that memory of perception poses an obstacle to those who argue that prediction from the past is not only possible, but also quite common. But it should now be clear that we do not purely predict from the past, as our memory stands less like a bridge and more like a barrier between the past and present. Novelist Jonathan Safran Foer stated that, "Everything is illuminated in the light of the past" (Foer). This is an idea that has stuck with me throughout the entirety of this project. But perhaps it is quite the opposite. Perhaps the past is seen in light of how we, and our memories, exist within the present.

VI. Present Perception and Prediction from the Situation

Andrews states, "One of the simplest ways we predict a person's future behavior is to generalize it from that person's past behavior in a similar situation" (Andrews 93). Andrews continues to give the example of starting her car -- from the past experience of her car starting, she can conclude that it will continue to start in the future. But whether or not the car starts, is this not dependent on a variety of variables that can and will vary from one situation to the next? For instance, given normal weather, my car will normally start up. Prior to last winter where sub-zero temperatures became the norm, my car would always start up in the cold. But I soon came to realize that I could not assume that my car would start up in February the same way that it did in November or October. Now I am required to examine the situation before I can give a more accurate prediction of whether or not my car will start.

Prediction from the situation, simply, is to predict future behavior from what we have access to observing in the present -- including our memories. I would like to think that if a friend of mine fell off of a ship, that I would dive in and attempt to save them. Surely, we would all like to think that we rise to the occasion to help our loved ones. But whether or not I would I actually do that is hard to say when I am removed from such a situation. Any thoughts I have now would more or less be an idealization of who I would *like* to be and not necessarily be indicative of who I actually am. When removed from the situation, it is hard to perceive what that situation might be like -- how frightening the waves might look, how high up the ship's deck is from the surface of the water, etc. I cannot perceive that situation in a way that would allow me to make an accurate prediction when I am far removed from said situation. My past habits might show that I am a loyal and reliable friend, but there is no way to guarantee this into the future as our means of induction do not yield apodictic certainty.

VII. Conclusion: Prediction from the Past as Prediction from the Situation

To say that we are predicting from the past is to misunderstand what it means to predict from the situation. Prediction from the past would entail perfect knowledge and recollection of the past. If our knowledge of causes is skewed, skewed without us possibly even realizing it, it does not seem possible to jump forward to knowledge of effects when we are standing on such shaky ground with our knowledge of the past and knowledge of the causes. The situations we predict from do not just consist of that

which is external, but also that which is internal -- the way our minds and memory exist within a situation is critical when accurately recalling the past. How we recall the past is largely dependent on the state of our memory in the present, and everything that has entered our mind from the observed past event until now.

If one agrees that induction cannot work without a hypothesis that consists of a *lawlike* generalization, and if we cannot, with certainty, distinguish generalizations that are *lawlike* from those that are *accidental*, we cannot properly make inferences and thus we are not justified in using inductive reasoning in a way that pertains to prediction from the past. Making use of inferences may seem useful in some situations, such as the woman facing domestic violence. But even in that case, perhaps the woman does not realize that she is being abused until much later. Her decision to eventually leave the relationship based off of past events would seem to rely on what she knows now of what abuse entails and her present ability to connect her own experiences with this knowledge. Likewise, victims of domestic violence will stay with an abusive partner out of their inability to recognize that they are being abused - they cannot recall their past abuse experiences properly and see them for what they are. Prediction from the past is just prediction from where we are externally and internally situated in the present. Everything is illuminated in the light of the *present*.

We must come full circle now and reconsider Kristin Andrews' assertion that human and nonhuman primates have a theory of mind that allows them to predict from past experiences. If even humans are not capable of recalling their memories of the past in a way that is accurate, we must ask how it could be at all possible that non-human primates could be capable of doing so. That we predict from our present disposition, rather than through a complex analysis of our past, is a *kill-joy hypothesis,* striking down Andrew's assertion that prediction from the past is not only common, but possible.

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Neutrality's Much Needed Place In Dewey's Two-Part Criterion For Democratic Education

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Abstract

This paper examines methods provided by both John Dewey and Amy Gutmann. Dewey's method involves categorizing experiences and values amongst individuals. Gutmann's method involves neutrality through equality of information and presentations. My question revolves around how to create a fairer democratic education system that allows individuals to critically analyze every-day information. My analysis and conclusion combine the two methods to form a better method and solution. The solution is that values and experiences need to be learned through unbiased neutrality in order for individuals to form unbiased social groups that make up society. This implies that some of our current social groups possibly have a wall of ignorance about them that doesn't allow for fairness in a democratic education.

Neutrality's Much Needed Place in Dewey's Two-Part Criterion for Democratic Education

Introduction

       In *Democracy and Education* Dewey presents a vision of how a public education system should be structured so as to best satisfy the needs of the citizens in a democracy. To pursue this vision, Dewey introduces a method for categorizing different forms of society. Dewey uses this categorization scheme to help understand what distinguishes democratic societies from other forms of group living. By understanding democracy's special characterization, Dewey hopes to be able to better outline a vision of education that is perfectly suited for democracy.

       Dewey's two-part criterion is significant to a democratic society because in a democracy we exchange time and actions with so many different individuals on a day-to-day basis. Think about all the exchanges that take place between working, being in school, or just going out to eat; we find and meet tons of different people who share similar or differing values from us. The common values can build bonds in our

communities, which further develop our democratic system. The differing ideas also allow us to develop our democratic system, but with different ideas we learn other points of view and other beliefs. This allows us growth we would not be able to experience elsewhere if we just encountered the same beliefs constantly. Dewey's criteria directly correlate to these thoughts because we now have a tool that can properly measure these exchanges. We have the means of recognition that allows us to spot common interests and values not just amongst ourselves, but other individuals too.

Dewey's first criterion concerns all of the experiences that put together the growth of an individual. This is measurable because we can see how individuals in a democracy are different and comparable to individuals in other societies. Dewey's second criterion is explained as the exchange of experiences between individuals in society. We can use both of these criteria to essentially place forms of government on a scale measuring what common values and mutual interests individuals in that government have. Dewey explains that democracy is exceptionally special on this theoretical scale because we have more liberties, which allow individuals to pursue what they wish in life. Although we have different interests, this freedom to be different from each other is in fact a common value we have.

Below is textual information provided by Dewey, and it is the first mention of his two-part criterion. We have Dewey loosely explaining the importance of his criteria and why they are needed in a society not only for control but also for characterization:

> A society which makes provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life is in so far democratic. Such a society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder (241-242).

Dewey even describes a "gang" of thieves who can hold certain interests in common. They all have a common standard that they want to steal and get money, but they question how consciously and freely they exchange with one another. This is why Dewey shows that the control we present through education can be used to form stronger communities especially in democracy. This strength can allow us to distinguish what common values we need to look for in society to make our democracy succeed.

Here we can look directly at what Dewey envisions when he describes the freedom of association between groups that have common, but limited, interests:

> Now in any social group whatever, even in a gang of thieves, we find some interest held in common, and we find a certain amount f interaction and cooperative intercourse with other groups. From these two traits we derive our standard. How numerous and varied are the interest which are consciously shared? How full and free is the interplay with other forms of association. If we apply these considerations to, say, a criminal band, we find that the ties which consciously hold the members together are few in number, reducible almost to a common interest in plunder; and that they are of such a nature as to isolate the

group from other groups with respect to give and take of the values of
life (234).

Dewey is describing how groups with little in common can fall short of ever
succeeding long term. A gang of thieves is doomed to fail because they can only
cooperate on so many levels as a group. With his two-part criterion we can further
categorize them in comparison to other groups.

In this paper I will explain why Dewey's two-part criterion fails to provide a solid
and satisfying groundwork for fair and unbiased democratic education. This is because
without stricter guidance Dewey's criteria leave room for biased education to take over.
Students can potentially learn from educators who won't present certain information
and a cycle of bias continues. I will present Amy Gutmann's idea of neutrality to make
up for this lack of guidance. Through Gutmann I will show that her ideas of
nonrepression and nondiscrimination complete the groundwork for a democratic
education that Dewey has started. Combining Dewey and Gutmann's ideas will provide
an ideal setup for democratic education and allow for more diverse exchanges between
individuals.

Wall of Ignorance Caused by Dewey's Criteria

Although we share common values and ideas with others, there are
characteristics in all our beliefs that set us apart from others. In *Democracy and
Education*, Dewey argues that our education system sets the foundation for any sort of
development that we'll encounter, whether in schools or elsewhere. Dewey's two
criteria function in education as measurements that develop children's beliefs and
values. Dewey believes that just through these two criteria alone we can measure how
comparable students in society are to one another. These two criteria connect to
education by way of figuring out what children have in common to learn. We can
measure what interests and values children have in common and place them where
they need to be. Specifically, in a democratic society we trust that educators can provide
specific information to children and that they learn that information. We examine these
measurements and hope that children are learning material that is not biased. Perhaps
this is not always the case

Experience is valuable because it leads to growth, and without growth we as a
society will go nowhere in future progress. This is fine because it's true. The second
criterion just goes far enough to say that everyone you encounter has something to
offer in terms of growth. We go day-to-day meeting and exchanging information with all
sorts of people. This is also true and this is also fine. But there is a persistent problem
with the second criterion. Dewey's criteria are designed to help us categorize different
forms of society by distinguishing them by the growth of their individuals, as well as the
values that make up their society. But it seems impossible to accept the idea that these
two criteria are enough to ensure that education will provide a fair and adequate
opportunity for growth.

Imagine a small town in the United States that is just made up entirely of the
same families that have lived in town for many generations. Supposed this small town is

made up of conservative families. The school system will become isolated and stagnant in a sense because of its lack of new families and individuals that could bring different ideologies like liberalism, socialism, nationalism, centralism, etc. There are no new values being taught and the exchanges between these people all stay the same. There are no other ideologies being taught because everyone already believes the same thing, so why learn something new? This happens and this is why Dewey's criteria aren't good enough for schools in a democracy. Dewey would probably want there to be other ideas, but would say the exchanges between individuals are fair because they're still "growing" through experiencing others. The problem is that these experiences are filled with the same common interests; these aren't new experiences. We need to allow for guidance in presenting other ideas. We have to account for opportunities that allow for diversity not only in individuals, but also in ideas. We learn from diversity. With just Dewey's criterion, there is room for growth, but there's no guarantee that individuals *have* to take other opportunities that would further develop them from what they already know or believe. In areas or people that have little diversity of beliefs, thoughts, and ideas, Dewey's criteria don't provide enough evidence for how to open them up to anything different than what they already know.

It seems to be the assumption that education happens to be the tool that opens the door to the capacity to learn. Dewey assumes that education will take care of introducing new ideas to students without any other guidance. I'm not entirely convinced that this is good enough. We can't assume that educators can and will do that. There needs to be a more concrete answer as to how and why education can dissolve our inability of learning from other social groups. There has to be some sort of guidance through education where we are forced to learn about as many sides of an idea that are currently available. Instead of a narrow society where conservatives teach conservatism, we would have stricter guidelines where we have educators teaching anarchism, conservatism, communism, socialism, religious ideologies, and anything else. This example isn't just for ideologies, but for most subjects that happen to have more than one possible side to them and have some sort of repressed information associated with them. Anything that could possibly have a wall of ignorance needs to be torn down. I believe I have found the tool that does this ignorance tearing: neutrality in education.

Neutrality's Place

Neutrality is what I believe Dewey is lacking. Students need to be open to critical thinking when it comes to education. If we base growth only off of exchanges in experience, then that might not be good enough. Experiences happen regardless of what education would provide. We must provide opportunities for students to see other sides of any and every idea, and these potential opportunities are what Dewey has left out of his grand scheme of education in a democratic society. We need to combine Gutmann's neutrality with Dewey's two-part criterion to create a more structuralizing process for society.

Neutrality is an idea that's presented in Amy Gutmann's *Democratic Education*. Her definition of neutrality is a lack of bias that should be established through

education. Meaning that there should be a respect for each idea and the people developing those ideas. Educators should teach each subject without giving their own bias about what they believe, and teach differing ideas than what has already been presented. Neutrality is the balance of material that is to be learned: that both sides of a subject will be learned some how or another. For example, political ideologies would be taught fairly. Students would learn both capitalism and communism along with all ideologies in order to establish that students can have every option of a topic available to them.

The lack of bias is more clearly defined as nonrepression and nondiscrimination. Both of these terms are used in a school system to establish equality and fairness. Nonrepression refers to abolishing any sort of disfavor towards racial minorities or any group that could be repressed. Nondiscrimination refers to the requirement that all educable children be educated in a way that is satisfactory for the success of future stability in society as far as an education system can do so. Nonrepression is a fair idea because we would abandon any repression towards people or subject material so that information would be able to be expressed equally. Nondiscrimination is also fair because we allow everyone an equal chance to learn and participate in education. As neutrality cuts out any bias that might be established from educators, nonrepression works to secure that no specific group's ideas are repressed from being taught. There's critical value in learning about ideas that have been put aside because of bias. Nondiscrimination's connection to neutrality can be thought of in a similar way. Nondiscrimination ensures that ideas and groups won't be selected against in schools. Certain ideas won't have a bias against them anymore, and students who want to and need to learn will all be taught accordingly. With both of these ideas that make up neutrality, there's a respect given to every individual that the school system establishes to allow for fairness and equality in education.

Here are Gutmann's own words on nonrepression and nondiscrimination for further explanation of their importance. It's important to remember that respect for the individual in schools not only helps their education, but also helps build the structure of a democratic education:

> Repression has commonly taken the more passive form of discrimination in schooling against racial minorities, girls, and other disfavored groups of children. The effect of discrimination is often to repress, at least temporarily, the capacity and even the desire of these groups to participate in the processes the structure choice among good lives. Nondiscrimination can thus be viewed as the distributional complement to nonrepression . . .
> Nondiscrimination requires that *all* educable children be educated adequately to participate as citizens in shaping the future structure of their society (Gutmann, 341).

As previously stated, neutrality is the idea that the education system and it's educators don't discriminate or repress any group(s) that potentially make up any side of any subject material that could possibly be used to educate students. Neutrality can set up guidelines that allow for an incredible lack of bias in schools. This lack of bias is

what will make Dewey's two-part criterion a far superior outline for democratic education. Dewey's criteria never lay out a specific way that different social groups are supposed to intermingle and meet other social groups to establish these growth-building exchanges. If we don't allow for a wider sphere of experience we shouldn't expect our society to grow.

In the direct evidence below, it seems Dewey is even asking for something like neutrality and just can't place his finger on it. He explains the importance of understanding and flexibility in education:

> A society which makes provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms and which secure flexible readjustments of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life in so far democratic. Such society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder (Dewey, 241-242).

Here Dewey leaves the door wide open for why neutrality is needed in his two-part criterion. Neutrality is the last piece to Dewey's puzzle. We cannot expect the two criteria Dewey has laid out for us to satisfy maintaining diverse social relationships, and we cannot understand what Dewey pictures as social control solely through education without knowing Gutmann's neutrality better.

Neutrality allows us to learn of other's values as well as other values we can find in certain subjects. It's hard to imagine every single subject known, and it's difficult to imagine people trying to learn it all. However, that doesn't mean that we shouldn't try and broaden minds to go further into discovering other sides of what they already know or what they could potentially know. We have to at least have an equal playing field when going into education to be able to learn how to critically analyze what students are to be presented with.

If we don't allow discrimination and repression in our education system, not only for individuals of different social and ethnic groups but also for different ideas of thoughts on a subject that might be unpopular or less known, then we can produce students who are so well versed in thought that our society as a whole will be much better off as a democracy. This is because we will be able to keep reproducing neutrality generation after generation.

Conclusion

Between Dewey and Gutmann, I believe there is a complete and functional guideline for creating a democratic education that's based on fairness and balance. The members of a democratic society should be able to critically apply not only the information they've learned from their educational system, but also the skills of critical analysis they've learned. The mutual respect gained through neutrality should provide children with the hope of replicating nonrepression and nondiscrimination each generation to keep building onto the structure of a democratic education. Dewey's two-part criterion promotes experiences as growth and that we should have others learn

from one another to constantly keep improving themselves and learning. Gutmann's neutrality made up of nonrepression and nondiscrimination allows for equality and fairness when introducing individuals into education systems as well as for topics in education to get a fair shot at being taught by educators, and learned fairly by students.

It seems entirely rational to accept that we need the guidance of educators as well as the entirety of the world's environment to shape all of our beliefs, but that we need to critically observe all the options we might not know about because we've had a wall of ignorance placed around us for so long. This seems acceptable to reproduce generation after generation as a continual standard to hold democracies to. It also seems to be reasonable that this will preserve different ideas and thoughts we have left in the dust because of how we educate the youth now. Dewey's two-part criterion system is not a bad idea at all; it is just incomplete without Gutmann's neutrality on education. Together they make a stronger whole that is more appealing to the future success of any democracy.

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Knowledge is Knowing Frankenstein isn't the Monster, Wisdom is Knowing Frankenstein is the Monster: An Exploration on Mankind and Monstrosity

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Abstract

Humans construct their identity by constantly measuring themselves against and creating themselves around culturally ingrained systems of rules governing the social, the political, and perceptions of the physical. I call a system of rules a "syntax." When a syntactical system is broken, a monster is born. Our monsters are the litmus and definition of our selves. Using Michel Foucault's *Abnormal* lectures to inform my theory of the self as "syntax," I posit that it is essential to understand the monster in order to exert social change and it is essential to understand what a monster *is* in order to understand oneself.

Knowledge is Knowing Frankenstein isn't the Monster, Wisdom is Knowing Frankenstein is the Monster: An Exploration on Mankind and Monstrosity

Walt Whitman may have sung the body electric, but when it comes to exploring monsters, it appears that any purview of the field is more a singing of the body eccentric. Monsters are liminal creatures that are created out of institutional and societal constructs that govern conceptions of human bodies; they are embodied forms of a societal system of syntax. These syntaxes are conceptual, unarticulated rules. Humans constantly navigate and explore culturally informed spheres that compose their identity: the physical, the social, and the political. When one of the three syntactical systems that define the body are altered in a way that is not permitted by the constraints by which institutional societal systems enact and define themselves, a monster is born. We create our monsters and our monsters create us, as their

aberrations are what compose the parameters of our societal systems. Michel Foucault articulated the monster's relation to society and power in his *Abnormal* lectures, and stated that it is a "fundamental figure around which bodies of power and domains of knowledge are disturbed and reorganized" (Foucault, 1999, p. 62). Through an exploration of societal, physical, and political syntactical aberrances, one can uncover and alter deeply entrenched systems of knowledge and power that dictate what it means to be a human.

Syntax is the term used for the system of grammar that governs how any language communicates ideas. There must be a system of syntax applied and implicit to every form of human communication for it to be sensible to anyone other than the originator. I posit that it is possible to conceptualize the way humans interpret, create, and articulate ideas about their bodies, their selves, their society, and the power structures that influence and inform all these concepts, as highly complex and interlocking systems of "grammars": a syntax that categorizes how the self and others can be conjugated and changed and still make sense. Syntaxes are internal laws that convey how we can be articulated to each other, as Foucault says: "The frame of reference of the human monster is, of course, the law" (Foucault, 1999, p. 55). These laws can be intuitive or only articulable after conceptual unpacking. For example a physical monster may be a physical monster because it has two heads (humans have one), *or* because it deviates from an ingrained norm dictating the appearance of a specific social-cultural group (a hairy woman or the exotic "other"). A social monster may be a monster because it preys on its fellow man (like the vampire), or because it upsets syntaxes governing how the self may operate in society, such as the witch, which represents female power in a patriarchal environment. Internal (self-imposed) and external laws create physical, social, and political monsters, and inform human perceptions of monsters, dictating what is and is not permutable or even permissible. "Devices of power, {as} analyzed by Foucault, are constantly crossed by lines of escape" and these lines of escape are syntactical laws broken or obliterated (Nuzzo, 2013, p. 56). The existence and the action of the self creating itself around, against, and due to the societal institutions that exert defining pressure on the self by creating laws, seems to me to create a sort of "system program" or operating system language known as a syntax.

This idea of performative formative syntax is similar to the ideas of the "body as language," as espoused by literary theorist Terry Eagleton. Eagleton interprets Ludwig Wittgenstein's idea (found in his 1958 piece *Philosophical Investigations)* that "if you want to see the soul, you should take a look at the human body" to mean the body is "as a form of practice" (Eagleton, 2014, p. 11) . The body and the way society views the tangible body (which is a massive part of monstrosity) is the practiced form of the "soul." I interpret the soul to mean the societally situated self's reaction to, and thus definitions of and adherence to, the syntax governing the self. When the syntax of self is practiced in a way that is an aberrant from the societally defined syntaxes, then the self becomes a monster. This is seen in every variation of monster, from the case of the hermaphrodite to Frankenstein's monster. (The hermaphrodite practices itself as both male and female and thus in a dual gender syntax not allowed by Western society

conventions, and Frankenstein's monster practices himself as a man but is made of parts from many men and thus is also not permissible by the syntaxes typically governing the self). Eagleton also argues that "practice constitutes the life of the body rather in the sense that meaning is the life of the sign;" a statement that I find is useful to unpack, and also partially to refute in relation to my idea of self-syntax (Eagleton, 2014, p. 11). Practice of the body is wholly constrained by the meaning of the signs of the self and society; the two feed into and create each other. But I also feel that meaning is not so much the life of the sign as much as the life of the sign creates the meaning, as seen in the case of monsters. A monster interacting within the various avenues and facets of the social, political, and physical syntax creates and remakes the way its life is experienced, as do we with it, and so it is not the meaning that is the life of the sign, it is the life of the sign that is the meaning. Wittgenstein's concept[1] that "practice constitutes the life of the body," is a succinct definition of my idea of self syntaxes that dictate where and what and how the body's life will go due to the practice of social, political and physical system of syntaxes that mandate how the body will act .The life of the body may have signs that interact in a way that cannot be encapsulated by syntax or the signs may be transmitted through the life of the body that is not permitted by syntax. Thus that is how one creates a monster such as in the case of a two-headed boy or a person who behaves in such a way that the sign of their gender is in conflict with how their syntax dictates the life of their body will go. Syntaxes are the rules that create the practice or conjugation of self, and thus it is the life of Frankenstein's monster in relation to syntaxes or the life of an indefinably gendered person in relation to defining syntaxes that creates a hermaphrodite. The life of the sign creates the meaning just like the practice of the body creates the life. Eagleton goes on to say that an adult is able to state their emotions and be understood because they have "a body that has become articulate by being incorporated into a culture" (Eagleton, 2014, p. 11). By speaking the self in a system that is built by (and thus defined by) syntaxes, the body is articulate and able to be understood. As long as a person can speak and exist inside the social, political, and physical syntaxes of one's culture, a person is understandable and not a monster.

These syntaxes/laws governing the self and others can be as simple as a statement like "all humans have one head" to as complex as a nuanced hierarchy of where and when women can occupy spaces in the public sphere. They are the ways we convey the meaning and message of our world to ourselves and others, and are acquired mostly through acculturation and language acquisition, just like the way a child learns the rules of language. The formation and cementing of syntaxes may be somewhat fluid like the gradual changes in a language, but will always stay consistent

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[1] I would add to Eagleton's point that the practice of body is analogous to the life of the sign, and posit (like ethicist Seyla Benhabib) that selves are concrete and that "the life of the sign" or societal/cultural/physical markers are large components of the body's meaning and that the physical manifestations of socio-cultural traits and unavoidable aspects of biology (whether it's race, gender, or disability) have a large bearing on the way the syntax of the self and of others is perceived, interpreted, and created (Benhabib 174).The sign itself gives life to the meaning, and meaning defines and limits the life of the sign, ergo: monstrosity is created when the sign and the meaning cannot co-exist within a self syntax.

within the context of themselves and their basic rules. For example, humans should have one head. Women are not men. To upturn and speak new syntaxes is to create monsters. The crux of monsters in a syntactical sense is that they are not sensible or even present *in* the syntaxes of self and thus they are terrifying. By exploring and exposing engrained syntactical schemas, one can then gain a more nuanced knowledge of society's composition and more accessibility to dismantling oppressive institutions that enforce monstrosity upon outsider groups, whether it be the Inquisition persecuting socially demonized Moors and Jews in Medieval Spain, or the repugnance that those with distorted, too many, or too few appendages can face. "The monster is the major model of every little deviation," and thus for every marginalized group exists a monster as its mascot (Foucault, 1999, p. 56). One can only contest and reject the designation of monstrosity as an outsider group when one knows exactly what syntactical aberrance they have committed, and an exploration of the creation and perpetuation of monsters facilitates that rejection. Ludwig Wittgenstein viewed language as "nothing other than *praxis*: irreducible and heterogeneous socio-cultural verbal practices, in which we are immersed, and into which we are more or less continually being 'reinitiated'" and with this angle one can understand syntax (manifested by language to create the self and the perception of others) as linguistic praxis, the two informing each other implicitly and intimately, and interacting to define monsters (Martins, 2010).

The three different types of monsters can be categorized into three groups defined by which syntax they disrupt: the political monster, which disrupts the social body/syntax of power and state and how we perceive governing power and our place in it, the social monster, which disrupts the syntax surrounding how we relate to each other and perceive our place in society, and the physical monster which disrupts the syntax that creates ideas about what a "normal" body looks like. When a social, political/legal, or physical law is disrupted, (whether it is metaphysical, judicial, or social) a monster is formed because a syntax defining the core nature of what the self is and is not, is disrupted (Foucault 63).

For the sake of brevity this paper will focus on social and physical monsters. However, first a few clarifications on the political monster are necessary. Foucault considers kings to be political monsters, as their basis for the legitimacy of their laws springs from outside the societal contract and is self-defined. "The first monster is the king" (Foucault 94). The ruler does not refuse to follow the social contract; he or she acts as if they are entirely outside of it. This sort of purposeful disengagement and isolation of self from the institutionally enforced and affirmed rules of government individual to society creates monstrosity since it defies definition and articulation in the political syntactical systems that situate the self as a unit/participant and influencer in the government of their world. The adherence to laws is necessary, whether it is a sense of internally consistent rules for what the self means in a political context, or a literal adherence to civil laws[2].

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[2] An example of the distress and implied monstrosity that comes out of the removal of self from power constructs is seen in Foucault's early example of the recalcitrant serial rapist early on in his

The social monster is a monster that is representational of a broken social norm that comprises the societal syntax that defines one's place in society in relation to others. This kind of monster is fluid, and its power changes as its presence is enacted on and upon by society. The Person of Color was initially a monster for the Western World, (as seen in the fantastic early descriptions of African inhabitants by explorers, and the white man a monster[3] for the people enslaved. Pliny the Elder, Augustine of Hippo, and theologian Ratramnus all spoke seriously of "Cynocepheli" (dog-headed men) in African regions, proving that there was a definite societal zeitgeist (if not syntax) that held that the people of Africa were not the societal definition of "human." This idea is continued in Herodotus' and Pliny the Elder's accounts of the Blemmyae (men with heads in their chests) that were said to inhabit North Africa. The foreignness of the inhabits of Africa became monstrosity to Westerners once their Otherness became viewed as a direct violation of the social sense of self due to an intense conflation of various socio-political religious Western institutions making up Pliny's, Herodotus' and other natural historians' milieu. Medieval texts such as illuminations of the twelfth century Arnstein Bible (which were influenced by early explorer's reports of strangers in strange lands) depict this situation of monstrous others from the perspective of Western social syntax. The Arnstein Bible has elaborate and fantastical illuminations of new cultures (the "Monstrous Races") which, in the illustrations, all implicitly point to the chaos and confusion of the Western World's attempts to assimilate the 'new' continents found (Wright 10). The cynocephalus and centaurs found in the margins of the Arnstein Bible's pages indicate that the Western world did not have the language yet to discuss and assimilate these other cultures, and so they made them monsters. The social syntaxes of what it means to be "man" in the Western world invariably meant Western and thus the African and Eastern populaces were estranged outside the social syntax. Asma postulates this concept of foreignness as monstrosity and says that since "knowledge is a kind of power," post-colonialist scholars like Edward Said viewed the "early anthropology of the ancients as a thinly veiled attempt to create an 'us versus them' political dynamic," and thus manipulate the knowledge of foreign countries into something monstrous. (Asma, 2009, p. 38). It is easier to convince men to invade a country if they believe they are only stealing land from monsters. Social monsters inform the culture they are situated in, as they are, by definition, birthed by and are "embodiments of a certain cultural moment" (Cohen 4). As Cohen puts it: a monster's "destructiveness is really deconstructiveness" and one can even wager further that in a monster's destructiveness also lays demonstrativeness, as looking at a monster is one of the best ways to decipher the tenuous and hidden web of one's culture in which one is subjectively situated (Cohen 14).

"Abnormal" lecture series. The rapist refuses to answer his name in court, "and it is the silence of the criminal monster, or the refusal of the individual to answer his or her identity that is most threatening. For Foucault, it this refusal of identity that is the most threatening" (Wright 147).

[3] The Mahabharata actually speaks of a foreign "large eared" tribe with ears that were so freakishly large that they could sleep in them. This tribe is "presumably" Westerners (Asma 32)

Monstrosity can also arise from biological deviations. Physical syntax interruptions are fascinating because with a change of overarching syntax, which is dependent on the dictations of social institutions being enacted on the physical body and tangible conceptions of embodiment and self, one can see the body differently: one goes from freak show monstrosity to medical curiosity to unfortunate human. (The idea of the life of the sign giving a sign its meaning and meaning of a sign giving life to a sign bears repeating here.) The monstrous body does not change; our syntaxes do. A physical monster, or a monster that is constructed from perceptions of "abnormal" physiology, seems to have largely transformed from monster to object of pity over the course of history. An example of this is the journey that intersex has taken from prodigious to pathology (Pender 150). Foucault, as earlier mentioned, felt that the origin point of monstrosity was the disruption or total disregard for man-made laws that influence mental heuristics and vice versa (as seen in the king as monster.) This seen in the idea of a "hermaphrodite" (which is monstrous) versus the eventual transformation to "intersex," which is clinical and within the system of permissible physical syntax since its clinical definition also includes explanations of what physically happened and how. The changing of syntaxes, caused by societal institutions being themselves changed, caused intersex individuals to be viewed as abnormal but by no means monstrous. Monstrosity is dependent on the limits of knowledge, and the way knowledge and its power inform syntaxes of self and how syntaxes of self inform knowledge/power. The idea of what is merely abnormal and what is monstrous can be more easily conceptualized as a series of institutionally articulated norms and signifiers that exist in several bell jars of syntax-contained systems that all reinforce each other and keep out any forces that are outside. Monstrosity is looking in, but separate from, the set of rules defining the physical system. When a system of syntax is shattered, (like in the case of the hermaphrodite) the natural and often unknowable world rushes in.

Hermaphrodites presented a problem to most of the Western Classical and Modern world because there was no existing laws or language to talk about a body that existed outside of a society that could only conceptualize two independent sexes. In the West, hermaphrodites were "executed, burnt at the stake, and their ashes thrown to the wind" throughout history in a ritualized execution to delineate the boundaries of the other (Foucault 67). Hermaphrodites are "the mix of two kingdoms" but residents of none (Foucault 66). It is possible that the presence of the female co-mingled with the male in the hermaphrodite was problematic because it suggested equilibrium of the genders and negated patriarchal institutions. This is seen in many of the legal texts surrounding medieval trials of hermaphrodites, where most of the anxiety and fear came from concerns that the hermaphrodite would use their liminal state to achieve benefits associated with both genders and thus "cheat the system" in a sense, or that they would switch back and forth between the genders, or that they would continue to willfully eschew definitions altogether. As Asma states: "One aspect of the monster concept seems to be the breakdown of intelligibility," and thus that a person is a monster when one cannot perceive the logic or legality of what a person is (Asma 10).

Despite their transformative power of being undefinable and therefore free to self-define, hermaphrodites (later conceptualized as intersex) were considered

monsters. Western institutions somewhat altered themselves to accept that gender could be more of a spectrum than a binary. This came about due to early Modern discourse about sexuality, which took place in a strange tug of war between a silence of straightforward sexual language and a movement to reclaim sexual language in order to convert it to the language of the clinical (Foucault 71). Through the manipulation of language and, by that extent, the manipulation of one's sense of self, humans were able to see gender in a new way where there was not language to describe it before. The process was slow, and Foucault asserts that most hermaphrodites remained "monsters… whose monstrosity nonetheless escapes the convictions and sentencing that were previously the rule" (Foucault 71). The physical factors were no longer the monstrous part of a hermaphrodite; it became a matter of breaking laws of the legal code. They became "defective structures accompanied by impotence," and thus monsters no longer. Errors can exist inside a system because at least an error is easily explained by what went wrong versus what should have occurred according to procedure, but foreign elements cannot. The abjection that society and the self face vanishes once one can explain why there is discomfort and rejection in the face of the alien Other. It is like explaining a joke - when one explains why it is funny, it is no longer funny. When one explains why a monster is terrifying, it no longer possesses the same power.

Foucault postulates that society views monsters with a legal frame of reference (Foucault 55). His view of monsters was of a "legal notion," a syntactical aberration whose exact divergence can be traced, the hole in the ripped fabric of society (and its larger underpinning of nature) located. To Foucault, there was a sense in the senselessness of the monster. Its form of monstrosity could always be explained by the nature and location of the injury to the syntactical body. This can be seen in the example of the witch, as discussed above. A monster is a monster because of the rarity of a true rupture in the syntaxes that we make ourselves up by, and the extremity of limits that a thing must push in order to overturn laws that define what is possible and permitted (Foucault 56). Monsters are mostly ineffable, a creeping dread under a bed or unspecified menace inside the woods. They are powerful sites of societal articulation because they derive their own self-made voices because there is no one else that is able to describe and define them. The issue is that when one attempts to describe a monster, one typically ends up saying what it is *not,* and not what it *is* since the monster is an aberration outside of the rules that construct the conceptions of what it is to be a human operating inside of a complex set of syntaxes. Frankenstein's monster is not syntactically a human, so then what is he? Folk wisdom often repeats that monsters like Frankenstein's monster are signs and portents of malignant things to come, as evidenced by even the word's etymology: "monster" comes from the Latin verb "monere," as in to warn. I posit that monsters are portents but are indeed signs: signs of syntax broken. Monsters reveal cultural conceptions because they exemplify what is not permitted. People conceived of as monsters, like hermaphrodites, in reality are forced to display their syntactical wounds openly and in order to survive must heal the wounds into scar tissue of a new syntactical system consisting of self and self newly situated in society. Monsters can be interpreted as portents, but their bodies in practice are signs

calling for maintenance and reinforcement of syntactical systems of self. Within these rules of ourselves, exist the conventions and mechanisms to communicate what we define ourselves as to our self and others. Frankenstein cannot communicate what he is (indeed, most of the angst of his story is his quest to be understood but the rules that make up what he is are too strange to be comfortably integrated into the context of society's syntactical system) and thus he is a monster since he is unable to assimilate his strangeness into something that reliably follows rules set forth by institutions of Victorian science and religion about what the self is. "It is the failure of Victor Frankenstein and society in general to provide a place {for Frankenstein's monster} in the human family that turns the creature into a monster (Asma, 2009, p. 11)." Just as we are "constructed," by syntaxes implanted by society, so is the monster (Asma, 2009, p. 11).

Perhaps it is not the monster itself we fear, but instead what the monster can alter about the institutions that compose the basic definitions of our meaning. Society situates the self in bell jars: tight definitions of ourselves in our society. I find the metaphor of bell jars apt because they are glass objects placed over fragile things to preserve them. As indicated in this paper, the syntaxes that compose the self can be very fragile indeed. The monsters peer into this glass cage and their reflection and presence highlights that we exist within an artificially constructed world. Monsters give society meaning, they are sites of articulation that point to themselves and say that this is the exact point where society cannot safely look. By this inscribed signage system of the monstrous body, they create us as much as we have created them, from out of each Other comes each one of us. We are not afraid of monsters because they are monsters, syntactical aberrations from the heuristics that construct ourselves and our lives; we are afraid of them because we are afraid of the manifold ways we can be ourselves, and afraid of acknowledging anything other than our own present possibility. To return to Walt Whitman's "I Sing the Body Electric:" "And if the body does not do fully as much as the soul? / and if the body were not the soul, what is the soul?" The physical nature of the body contributes much to the idea of monstrosity, but it appears that it is the internalization of the rules that govern how one is to be embodied as human, the functional soul, that truly renders a man a monster or a human being.

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The Euthyphro Dilemma and Utilitarianism

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Abstract

In this paper I reexamine the Euthyphro dilemma to determine the principles underlying its critique of divine command theory. From this analysis, I claim that the Euthyphro dilemma can be fruitfully applied to other systems of ethics. As an example, I examine the Utility Principle which undergirds Utilitarianism. I argue that the Utility Principle is metaethically insufficient as the basis for our moral duties because it is good neither necessarily nor independently. The result is that Utilitarianism must be rejected as the definition of morality, though we may retain it as one of the good's criteria.

The Euthyphro Dilemma and Utilitarianism

Introduction

The Euthyphro dilemma has long stood as an obstacle to a conception of morality as divine fiat; but though much has been made of the dilemma in relation to Divine Command Theory (DCT), I believe that it has implications which are more far-reaching than just one system. Underneath the Euthyphro dilemma's scrutiny of God's moral decrees, there lies an analysis pertinent to the wider field of metaethics. In what follows, I argue that, just as the Euthyphro dilemma questions the legitimacy of God's commands as the originating point for moral duties, so it may question other systems' foundational goods. By applying the Euthyphro dilemma to Utilitarianism as an example, I conclude that that system's undergirding metaethic fails. And since Utilitarianism is of the same structure as other ethical systems, we should expect that they are all similarly vulnerable.

One caveat before moving on: in this paper I assume that our moral intuitions, generally, are helpful guides to understanding ethics; I am in agreement with epistemologist Roderick Chisolm's statement that "we do know, pretty much, those things we think we know,"[4] and I believe this includes our moral knowledge. Consequently, I will be working under the assumption of moral realism: we do have mind-independent moral duties which we can get right or wrong. I for one am comfortable aligning myself with a position so closely attuned to

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[4] Roderick M. Chisholm, The Foundations of Knowledge (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1982), p. 113.

our moral common sense, but I forewarn the reader here in case she does not share this intuition that moral talk is about something true or false.

The Euthyphro Dilemma

  The Euthyphro dilemma is widely known. Originally employed by Socrates in the context of polytheism, it stands in objection to systems of ethics that are reliant on God's decrees.[5] In its modern iteration, the Euthyphro dilemma works by revealing two unacceptable positions that the Divine Command Theorist must choose between. These two 'horns' of the dilemma are that either (1) the command of God *identifies* morality, or (2) the command of God *creates* morality. If (1) is true then the theist must hold that morality is good apart from God, and that God functions in a purely epistemic capacity by giving morality his endorsement. But if that's the case, then God is hardly the greatest of all possible beings which theists understand him to be, for given (1) even God is subservient to some transcendent good. The other horn is equally problematic, as (2) implies that God fabricates moral duties out of thin air, and thus God could have instituted any silly or evil thing to be moral. As William Alston puts it, "If God should command us to gratuitously inflict pain on each other we would thereby be obliged to do so."[6] Since that is absurd—and gives us little reason for obeying the particular morality the deity happened to select—the second horn of the dilemma must be rejected and the theist cannot maintain that morality is ontologically dependent on divine fiat. The result of this dilemma is that the Divine Command Theorist must show either that (1) or (2) are somehow acceptable after all, or that there is some alternative option which may allow the theist to avoid the horns altogether.

Unpacking the Analysis

  So far we have the standard description of the modern Euthyphro dilemma—but we may delve deeper still. Underpinning this critique is an analysis that tests each system's status as ontological or epistemological through an evaluation of its foundational principle. In other words, the Euthyphro dilemma asks whether a system is itself the moral reality or just an instrument for coming to know certain aspects of what the moral reality prescribes.

  This dichotomy between what is real and what is merely instrumental for knowing portions of reality is the implicit point of conflict between systems of ethics, because it is really just another way of examining which system is *true*. If an ethical system has a relationship with morality which is ontological in nature, then that system is equivalent to morality, just as obeying God's commands would be equivalent to morality were divine decrees morality's source. If, however, a system's relationship is epistemological, then that system is only a helpful criterion for discerning whether or not certain acts are moral—but it is not morality itself. Such an epistemological system might be analogous to a mother who, unable to otherwise convince her son of the danger of wandering into the woods, tells him that there are monsters there

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[5] Plato, *Euthyphro*, 10a-11a.
[6] William Alston, "What Euthyphro Should have Said," in *Philosophy of Religion: A Reader and Guide, edited by William Lane Craig et al.* (New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 2002) 285.

which will eat him. The mother's instructions induce the appropriate actions from the child (he stays away from the woods) but achieves that behavior for reasons that are disconnected from reality. Or again, such a system might be like the high school physics teacher who explains Newtonian physics as a complete description of the mechanics of the universe, leaving her students unaware of the exceptions in that model that have been evident since Einstein's theory of relativity. Epistemically-based systems of ethics are useful ways of guiding individuals in the moral life, but they are not ultimately sufficient or complete descriptions of what morality is.[7]

It is the goal of every system—whether consequentialist, deontological, or character-based—to show that its relationship with morality is ontological rather than epistemological, because each system is claiming that it *is* morality and not just a signpost to morality. This is born out in the Divine Command Theorist's rejection of the second horn of the dilemma: the system is morally and theologically impotent if God merely points us toward the good.

How does the Euthyphro dilemma help in examining whether or not a system succeeds as the ontological basis for morality? For starters, it immediately narrows the field of discussion to the foundation of a given ethical system. It doesn't ask whether particular, derivative principles of right living are acceptable, but whether the basis of the system itself is acceptable (which, in the case of DCT, is God's mandates). We're not concerned with, for example, whether or not the Biblical prohibition against adultery is a proper command, because that particular principle obviously isn't intrinsically true—it's true, given DCT, by reference to the higher authority of God's will. By going right to the basis of an ethical system, we may ask what sorts of attributes that foundation must have in order to have an ontological relationship with morality.

Regardless of the content of a given system's foundational principle, it will take the form of a definition of moral goodness. For DCT the foundational principle is 'Moral goodness is obeying God's decrees.' For other systems, the principle might be 'Moral goodness is acting to promote maximal happiness' (Utilitarianism) or 'Moral goodness is acting with a good will' (Kantianism). The foundational principle, then, just is moral goodness on that system. But if a given system's foundational principle just is moral goodness, then it follows that the principle must have all of its properties in common with moral goodness.

What kinds of properties does moral goodness itself have? The attribute most significant to our discussion is *intrinsic goodness*. In Socrates' argument with Euthyphro he pointed out that moral goodness itself (or piety, to use his language), is loved because "it is such as to be loved" not "because it is loved," which is to say that it is good intrinsically, not extrinsically.[8] This makes sense. If some good were such only by reference to an external principle, then it is that external principle which would be the true good. Thus, the foundational

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[7] Some might find this distinction peculiar or even absurd. For if a person is doing actions that are moral, how could that not just be what morality is? Such a response misses that it is possible to do a correct act without doing it for the right reasons, or to do it for reasons that will not always be appropriate. Thus children who obey their parents out of love for them are moral in a way which mercenary children bought by promises of Santa's gifts are not, and why adults who act rightly out of deference to their upbringing are morally inferior to adults who develop their own understanding of why they ought to live rightly. It is important not just to know which acts are right, but also what the basis for their rightness is.

[8] Ibid.

good for any ethical system must be intrinsically good. Or, more helpfully, it must be a self-sufficient good: a good that is essentially, necessarily, and independently good.

We see then that one horn of the Euthyphro dilemma is reducible to a question about the ontological relationship between a system and moral goodness, which at its core, is further reducible to a question about the self-sufficiency of that system's foundation. If the foundation is self-sufficient, the ontological relationship between that system and morality is secured. If not, the system is relegated to a purely epistemic role.

A Foundational View of Ethics

The goal, then, in evaluating the ontological status of a system is determining whether its foundational good is independent and necessary—both conditions are required for self-sufficiency. This evaluation puts pressure on the whole structure, because the rest of the system depends on the foundation. Systematic ethics, by their nature, identify almost all moral obligations as contingencies that rely on an ultimate self-sufficient principle.[9] Such a principle is reputedly good by its nature and serves as the anchor point from which all other duties originate. In fact, the rest of the system is really just an extended explication of the foundational principle. If we were to find that the anchor point is *not* independent or necessary, then we should reject that whole system. Without an intrinsically good foundation, the whole structure has no metaethical basis, for it posits the absurdity of a dependent and contingent chain of duties that is ultimately groundless. It has left unanswered the vital question *upon what* these duties are contingent.

To further clarify this point, imagine that moral obligations in systematic ethics are like a layered pyramid, at the top of which are those duties that are smallest in scope, specific to certain situations. These 'small' obligations are wholly dependent on the lower layers to provide the contextual conditions under which they hold. So, for example, speeding is not always wrong (as for emergency vehicle drivers) but rather only under certain circumstances dictated by some more foundational principle. The key to understanding this structure is realizing that each successive layer gives a basis for the next one, telling us *why* that particular duty or principle holds. For example, my general duty not to enslave others has claim on my actions because of the more fundamental moral principle which states that I must respect the autonomy and dignity of others. This layering will go on to the bottom of the pyramid, at which point we must find one of two things: a self-sufficient principle, or yet another dependent principle. If the latter is found, then the chain of moral obligations is left incomplete, for there is nothing to adequately ground the previous layers, and thus the whole chain fails to properly obligate us. But if there is a self-sufficient foundation, that principle will be the necessary basis for moral goodness, and it will itself be good wholly without reference to anything external to itself. This independent good will anchor the entire system.

It is this foundation that the Euthyphro dilemma targets by calling into question the self-sufficiency of God's commands as a foundational moral principle. Obedience to God's command isn't *necessarily good*, because we can imagine circumstances in which agents could

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[9] This is obviously in contrast with ethical theories such as particularism which can't meaningfully be called 'systems' at all.

rightfully disobey being commanded to murder or rape. And if we can conceivably judge God's command to be immoral, then obedience to it also doesn't seem *independently good*, because we would have to be judging according to some higher principle to which God's commands must comply.[10] It's easy to see why this critique has been so disturbing to Divine Command Theorists: if God's command fails the test for independence or necessity, then that would imply total system failure.

Utilitarianism's Foundational Good

We turn now directly to Utilitarianism as the primary example for an alternative application of the Euthyphro dilemma. Utilitarianism is that cluster of consequentialist ethics that share in common the use of happy or pleasant outcomes as the foundation for their moral principles and obligations. It is to this collective anchor point that we must turn our scrutiny, asking whether or not Utilitarians have a foundation that is both independent and necessary.

To answer this question, we must first clearly discern what Utilitarianism's fundamental principle is. In its classic form, Jeremy Bentham stated that "the principle of utility is… that principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever; according to the tendency which it appears to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question…. To disprove the propriety of it by arguments is impossible."[11] Similarly, John Stuart Mill's version of Utilitarianism was one which "accepts as the foundation of morals 'utility' or the 'greatest happiness principle'" and which "holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness; wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness."[12] Later, Henry Sidgwick wrote that Utilitarianism is "the ethical theory, that the conduct which, under any given circumstances, is objectively right, is that which will produce the greatest amount of happiness on the whole." More recently Peter Singer has described a form of "interest" Utilitarianism guided by the principle that the good is following the "course of action most likely to maximize the interests of those affected."[13] Though each of these accounts offers subtle nuances that emphasize different aspects of the utility principle, there is a common core from which we can derive a general principle. Broadly, I take the following (or something very like it) to be the foundational utility principle upon which all of Utilitarianism rests:

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[10] It's worth noting here the similarities and difference between this point and that made by G.E. Moore's famous "Open Question." Moore argued that we could meaningfully ask the question of any ethical system "Is it good?" which was supposed to show that it couldn't be the good by definition (and therefore moral properties are irreducible). My argument is not Moore's. I am not concerned with arguing from the mere concept of the definition, but rather arguing from the insufficiency of the definition in holding up in all circumstances. It is not merely that these moral foundations *could* be questioned conceptually, but that when we do question them we find that there are at least some examples in which they fail, and so they are inadequate definitions of the good. See G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 66-68.

[11] Jeremy Bentham. "An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation," in *Today's Moral Issues: Classic and Contemporary Perspectives,* ed, Daniel Bonevac, (McGraw-Hill Humanities, 2009), 40-41.

[12] John Stewart Mill, op. cit., 46.

[13] Peter Singer, *Writings on an Ethical Life* (Harper Perennial, 2001), 16.

Utility Principle (UP): An agent achieves moral rightness in any particular case if and only if he or she promotes the happiest possible outcome that agent could have produced.

What it means for an agent to "promote" happiness will depend on the particular brand of Utilitarianism. Ethicists have varyingly selected actions, intentions, virtues, or rules as the locus for consequential evaluation. But whether the Utilitarian ethic is put in terms of performing acts, submitting to tendency-rules, exemplifying virtue, or having the right intentions, all of these will be morally good or morally bad because of their relationship to outcomes. In Utilitarianism, consequences are ethically primary.

As an example, we can see the way in which (UP) grounds duties in an agent's condemnation of murder. A Utilitarian would denounce murder because it causes overwhelming suffering. Causing overwhelming suffering is in turn wrong because it brings about some state of affairs other than the most possible happiness the actor could have caused, and that is a violation of (UP). Thus, specific duties (such as the duty not to murder) ultimately find their grounding in one very general, self-grounding principle.

A Critique of the Utilitarianism Foundation

Now then, does (UP), or something like it, really work as the foundation for ethics? Or to put it in the terms of the Euthyphro dilemma, *is morality just following (UP) or does (UP) merely identify morality for us*? Here are two primary obstacles which prevent us from answering in favor of (UP): the problem of improvement and the problem of counter-examples.

The problem of improvement shows that (UP) isn't independently good. To see how, imagine some possible world in which (UP) were perfectly followed—call it 'Utility World.' Interestingly, Utility World should be impossible to improve, since it is just (UP) enacted on a universal scale. Our theoretical world is guaranteed by definition to contain the maximum amount of moral good. But is Utility World perfect? No, it seems that it isn't, because we could easily think of ways to make its 'perfection' better.

Before improving on Utility World, first suppose for simplicity that it is a world in which only five persons ever lived, and that despite their numbers these five maximally followed (UP) so that they live as happily as is possible for them. Now, suppose that the five citizens of Utility World had two equally happiness-producing choices. They could either each pitch in to work for their survival, or they could enslave one of their number to do all of the work. If they choose to enslave someone, the slave's discomfort will be equal to that of the collective should they have divided the work equally. In this way, both choices will produce the same amount of happiness and misery. Note also that in Utility World, because of the limited population size and short history, every act sets the rule for how much pain or pleasure an act will tend to cause, so that here rule-Utilitarianism collapses into act-Utilitarianism.

Now, suppose that the citizens opted for slave labor. In that possible world (UP) remains perfectly enacted. Suddenly, however, there appears an opportunity to improve on Utility World. If the decision were altered so that the group had elected for a fair labor system, that would be a better world, for it would possess not only actions which perfectly promote happiness but also actions which are just. This, however, should not be possible, for if we can improve on the fully implemented (UP), then we are judging it to be improved by some other

standard. But if we are judging (UP) by some other standard, then (UP) is dependent on that standard, which means it is not independently good. Furthermore, there are other goods besides justice that we could add to Utility World for its improvement. Arthur Holmes points out that if two acts yield the same utility, but act A involves breaking a promise while act B does not, "the utilitarian would have no basis for preferring A to B or B to A, despite the fact that common morality would opt unequivocally for B."[14] The point is clear: if (UP) really were independently good, we should not be able to find ways to improve any action that perfectly follows it. But we can find such improvements, so (UP) isn't independently good.

The second problem for (UP) concerns the existence of the classic counter-examples such as the Utility Monster, the experience machine, the transplant dilemma, and the problem of sadists. Each example describes a peculiar situation in which utilitarianism seems to dictate an act which is morally absurd. The absurdities appear because these examples describe situations in which happiness and pleasure are at odds with other kinds of values, such as justice or truth (for example, the Utility Monster thought experiment describes a being who takes enormous pleasure out of torturing humans such that, for him, the most happiness-promoting act is always to torture, and for everyone else the most happiness-promoting act is to let him).

To each of these counter-examples the Utilitarian might reply that their deeply hypothetical nature prevents us from taking them seriously. Utilitarianism works in real life, and these far-fetched exceptions only prove the rule. Kai Nielson, for example, was little worried by non-actual counter-examples, writing that:

> I allow, as a consequentialist, that there could be circumstances, at least as far as logical possibilities are concerned, in which [injustice] would be justified but that, as things actually go, it is not and probably never in fact will be justified…. The consequentialist is saying that, as the world goes, there are good grounds for holding that judicial killings are morally intolerable, though he would have to admit that if the world… were very different, such killings could be something that ought to be done. [15]

Nielson concedes that in some worlds injustice would be justified, but that we needn't worry about this because that would probably never be the case in our actual world. This concession, however, cannot be made without undermining (UP), for it admits that in some possible worlds (UP) would lead to moral absurdity. But if (UP) is supposed to be the foundation for all of Utilitarianism's moral duties, then it must be necessarily good, and thus it should hold up by definition in every possible world. Further, if (UP) only holds in particular circumstances, such as our actual world, then we require some further principle to know under which circumstances it applies; but (UP) would then be dependent on that higher principle and thus could not be self-sufficient.

Suppose though that the Utilitarian is willing, in response, to make a much stronger claim about (UP): that even in possible worlds where it would lead to moral absurdities (UP) is still right for the people of that world, and that the resulting injustices only seem wrong to us

[14] Arthur F. Holmes, *Ethics: Approaching Moral Decisions*, 2nd edition (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 47-48.
[15] Kai Nielsen. "A Defense of Utilitarianism" in *The Moral Life: An Introductory Reader in Ethics and Literature*, 4 edition, ed. Louis Pojman and Lewis Vaughn (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 240-241.

from our current moral vantage point. The difficulty here, however, is that adhering to (UP) even through the moral absurdities it produces in other possible worlds makes Utilitarianism rather radical in our own actual world. After all, if (UP) holds in all situations no matter how egregious, then the Utilitarian is committed to seriously accepting the moral priority of the Utility Monster or the experience machine *even if these occurred in our actual world.* It doesn't help to argue that these examples are far-fetched and theoretical. (UP) must hold in every possible scenario. If these counter-examples work in any world, then the Utilitarian is committed to moral absurdity. It seems far more reasonable to concede that (UP) isn't good necessarily, and that it is not thick enough to stand as our only moral guide in all situations.

Conclusion

To summarize, the Euthyphro dilemma targets the foundation of Divine Command Theory (God's decree) and then questions whether that foundation stands in an ontological or epistemological relationship to moral goodness. If the former, then God's command has no substantive connection to morality; if the latter, then the Divine Command Theorist is committed to the self-sufficiency of their foundational principle. This claim to self-sufficiency is risky, as a self-sufficient principle must be immune to both improvement and readily available counter-examples (e.g. what if God commanded rape?). Since such improvements and counter-examples exist, God's decree (and thus DCT as a system) cannot stand in an ontological relationship to morality, and is thus false. Using Utilitarianism as an example, I've argued that the same move can be made against at least one other major ethical system: (UP) is the foundation of Utilitarian morality, and there exist counter-examples showing that (UP) cannot be equivalent to moral goodness, so (UP) and Utilitarianism are not related ontologically to moral goodness. Thus, if my argument is correct, Utilitarianism suffers the same plight as DCT.

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