Critical Analyses

Contents

I am very pleased to be able to introduce the second issue of this year's volume of Ethica! This issue

is a testament to the hard work of the Ethica team whose efforts yielded a record number of

submissions, such that we had to divide and conquer! The papers included in this issue were chosen

because they all provide a detailed critical analysis of a singular text or philosopher's work. I would

like to express my gratitude to the authors for their endless patience and perseverance during the long

publication process. You all embody the best of undergraduate excellence.

Emma, Editor-in-Chief

Philosopher-Kings and Political Idealism in Plato's *Republic*

Johanna Alt

Aberdeen University

Socrates' proposal that the city be ruled by philosopher-kings is at the heart of Plato's Republic. Yet, this doctrine may be challenged for several reasons. First of all, it appears that politics does the philosopher injustice by forcing his return to the Cave. Moreover, the arts of ruling and philosophizing require vastly different skills, making the doctrine of the philosopher-kings impractical at best, and illogical at worst by violating the Republic's conception of justice. Secondly, it can be argued that philosophy fails to do politics justice, too. Upon returning to the Cave, the philosopher struggles to find his place in the already complete City, and would have to rule over the citizens, who do not understand philosophy, by force. Therefore, I suggest that the doctrine of the philosopher-kings cannot be reduced to its political value alone, but must be understood in terms of its psychological and rhetorical value, rendering the Republic a powerful warning of utopianism that is still relevant today.

Introduction

Upon finalizing his city-in-speech, Socrates suggests to his interlocutors that the just city be ruled by philosopher-kings. In doing so, Socrates promotes the unification of politics and philosophy based on the premise that ruling is a specialised art. As the ship analogy suggests earlier on (488a-e), most men cannot rule over themselves rationally because they lack a sufficient understanding of reality. The philosopher, on the other hand, knows what is good and just and, therefore, makes for an excellent ruler who is immune to corruption. In this essay, I will elaborate on the viability of this proposal. I shall argue that the doctrine involves several incoherences that ultimately result in politics failing to do philosophy

justice and vice versa. Violence and other unjust means seem required to establish philosophers as rulers, both towards the city and the philosophers themselves. This indicates, I argue, that the doctrine of the philosopher-kings cannot be reduced to its political context alone. Despite, or arguably because of its limitations, the reader may come to appreciate the doctrine as a psychological and rhetorical manoeuvre that converts the *Republic* into a powerful warning against political idealism.

The Injustice of Politics to Philosophy

First of all, there is a sense in which politics cannot do philosophy justice. This is due both to the descent of the philosopher to the Cave and the characteristics required of the philosopher. Throughout the *Republic*, it becomes evident that the philosophers do not want to descend back to the Cave once they have found bliss in contemplating the Forms. They must be 'force[d] […] to take care of their fellow citizens and be their guardians' (520a). According to Socrates, their unwillingness to rule makes them even better rulers, as suggested early on: 'The chances are that were a community of good men to exist, the competition to avoid power would be just as fierce as the competition for power is under current circumstances' (347d). However, Glaucon objects that forcing the philosophers to descend is 'denying them the better life they could be living' (519c). Forcing their return is paying the city its due but doing injustice to the philosophers. Socrates himself suggests solving this problem of the unwilling philosopher by compulsion or persuasion, but this approach is not satisfactory. It disproves the core argument of the *Republic* claiming that the just person is always happier than the unjust one. Caluori puts it this way: 'So it still seems possible that under these circumstances at least some unjust people (i.e. those who continue their contemplation and ignore what they owe to the city) are happier than the just (who do not ignore what they owe to the city and for this reason take on the burden of ruling)' (2011, 3). He suggests solving this contradiction by understanding that the necessity of the philosopher's return is internal rather than external. Instead of being forced to descend by some external force, the

knowledge of the Forms and the Just compels the philosopher to descend. 'If reason is fully developed and informed by the Forms', Caluori argues, 'it motivates one to do what is good and just' (2011, 16). Only someone who had not left the Cave at all and, therefore, not seen and understood the Just, could refuse to return. The full-fledged philosopher is compelled by his own reason to return to the Cave and rule. However, the relevant passage in Plato's *Republic* is not free of language suggesting external force. For instance, Socrates states that 'our remarks, as we force them to take care of their fellow citizens and be their guardians, will be perfectly fair' (520a). Further, he persuades them by reminding them of their debt to the city resulting from the excellent education they have received (520b-c). Indeed, Glaucon admits that the philosophers would not refuse to obey since 'they're fair-minded people, and the instructions we're giving them are fair' (520e). However, this merely suggests their willingness to obey to just external compulsion, but does not necessarily imply internal necessity. Therefore, it is not clear that Caluori's reading reflects Plato's writing accurately. If the philosophers' descent is not internally driven, it remains what Bloom calls 'injustice in the fullest sense of the word: it would be contrary to their good to return' (1968, 407). A fundamental tension between politics and philosophy is created, since the justice of the city seems to be incompatible with justice for the philosopher.

Secondly, this tension comes to light in regard to the philosopher's character. Socrates admits that philosophers will 'be a rare phenomenon' (503d), considering the nature 'they have to have and how rare it is for its various parts to coalesce into a single entity' (503b). It can be argued that philosophizing is too different from ruling as to be done by the same person, since it is either unlikely or logically impossible to find the attributes required for each in one person. Aristotle, for example, implies in his writings that the concept of philosopher-kings is too impractical. Chroust claims that according to Aristotle, 'it was not merely unnecessary for a king to be a philosopher, but even distinct disadvantage. What a king should do was to listen to and take the advice of true philosophers' (1968, 17). Philosophy, then, does have a place in politics, but should not be pursued by the politician. Rosen adds that for Aristotle, practical virtue, including experience, is an essential characteristic for a king, whereas 'the

vision of the Ideas, or anything analogous to that vision, is not required by the statesman' (2005, 228). For Plato, however, both are essential. Aristotle remains Platonic in the sense that he identifies the end of the city with the end of the individual (Chroust 1968, 19). But his search for an ideal state is grounded in empiricism, historical fact and social reality, rather than in an abstract like Plato's Forms. For instance, he objects to the military class consisting of 5000 people and argues that 'in framing an ideal, we may assume what we wish, but should avoid impossibilities' (Politics, 1265a). Chroust argues that this rejection of impracticalities may be one of the insights leading to Aristotle's objection to Plato's proposal that philosophers should be kings (1968 p.18). Aristotle does not deny the importance of philosophy in the process of constructing the ideal city, but differs from Plato 'on the need for philosophy on the part of the rulers of the already constructed city' (Rosen 2005, 228). For Aristotle, the union of politics and philosophy plays an essential role, but the philosopher-king is a mere impracticality that should be avoided.

However, scholars like Annas have argued that the king and the philosopher being the same person is not only impractical but illogical. Annas distinguishes between two conceptions of the philosopher, which are similar to Aristotle's distinction between practical virtue and the vision of Ideas: the practical and the contemplative conception. The practical conception holds that the philosopher's knowledge, no matter how abstract, 'must be practical in the sense that having it makes a difference in experience and particular decisions' (Annas 1981, 261). Ultimately, it enables the just person to act justly in practice. The just person's knowledge, even if it requires the understanding of Form, must be reflected in experience as 'one's understanding of Forms and the Good is shown in the making of rational and grounded decisions' (Annas 1981, 261). The contemplative conception derives from the image of the philosopher as shown in the famous analogies. Here, it is 'the desire to escape entirely from the world of practical affairs' (Annas 1981, 262) that characterizes the philosopher. The acquired knowledge is impersonal since it is 'not what is good for the seeker, or good for others […], but simply and unqualifiedly good' (Annas 1981, 259). It is above human affairs which are considered entirely

inferior from its viewpoint. Therefore, it is unclear how this knowledge, once acquired by the philosopher, can relate to practical affairs. Annas concludes that this discrepancy results from over-ambition on Plato's side since he refuses to 'allow that practical and theoretical reasoning […] ever *could* conflict' (1981, 265). Reason, for Plato, is unitary. Therefore, a person who is good in one aspect of reasoning (e.g. contemplation) must automatically good in the other (e.g. practice). Throughout the *Republic*, however, it becomes clear that this is not the case. The problem of the philosophers' descent back to the Cave, as discussed earlier, is one instance for this. For Annas, this issue is rooted precisely in the fact that the contemplative philosopher, as he is portrayed in the Cave analogy, is not interested in practical concerns like ruling – he needs to be forced or persuaded. Again, it is through this need for compulsion that the incompatibility of politics and philosophy comes to light.

The Injustice of Philosophy to the City

This incompatibility poses a further problem. If ruling and philosophizing are such different tasks, but yet to be done by the same person, the Principle of Specialization (PS) is being violated. This is problematic, since the PS is one of the main aspects that make up Plato's conception of justice. Bloom puts forward the same criticism by noting that the original 'attempt was to found a city in which every member's duty was identical to his self-interest, in which total dedication was possible' (1968, 407). It seems, then, as if philosophy has difficulties finding its place in the city. To quote Bloom, the introduction of the philosopher-kings reveals a limitation of the city's justice, since the city 'cannot comprehend the highest activity of man' (1968, 408). This statement is twofold: The city, firstly, cannot entail philosophy, and secondly, cannot understand philosophy.

In support of the argument that the city cannot entail philosophy, it is interesting to note that the philosopher-kings do not make an appearance when the city in speech is first being constructed. Only once the model is completed at the end of Book 4, Socrates introduces the philosopher-kings in response

to Glaucon's question of 'whether this political system is viable' (471d). According to Steinberger, the philosopher-kings become part of a different project – 'the project not of discovering the idea of the city but rather of trying to determine how empirically existing cities can be most practicably reformed to reflect that idea best' (1989, 1215). It is a concept that is being introduced to the already well-rounded city from the outside, quite literally, when thinking about the image of the Cave. Steinberger argues that in the original just city ruling is a craft (*techne*), which can be thought of 'as a matter of production or fabrication based on specifiable and teachable rules or procedure' (1989, 1209). However, this is very distinct from Plato's conception of philosophy. Ruling in the sense of *techne* can be done by the guardians, only the conception of ruling introduced by Plato after the completion of the city-in-speech requires a philosopher. But if 'Plato's clear assertion, that the guardians of the *kallipolis* should also be philosophers, is in fact a logical impossibility' (Steinberger 1989, 1217), one may come to ask whether philosophy is not, in a sense, doing injustice to a city that seemed complete without it.

The argument that the city cannot understand philosophy originates in the fact that the artisan class is the largest part of the city's population. This class is more desiring than rational and it does not naturally accept the philosophers as their rulers. When Socrates puts forward his proposal for the philosopher-kings, Glaucon expects him to be physically attacked by 'hordes of people' (474a). Socrates defends his position by explaining that people merely have the wrong perception of philosophy because of its bad reputation. However, the Cave analogy makes obvious that even if the citizens were confronted with a true philosopher, they would see him as a 'fool' or even try to 'kill him' (517a). The artisan class, not possessing wisdom, does not have the capacity to understand the value of the philosopher and, therefore, would have to be ruled by force. Rosen comments that were the philosophers to rule and 'carry through the demands of wisdom and compel the citizenry to be truly just, the result is injustice and unhappiness as well' (2005, 229). Thus, philosophy would be doing the city literal injustice by ruling or installing itself via unjust means such as banishing 'everyone over the age of ten into the countryside' (540e). In conclusion, a conflict of interests on both sides makes the unification of politics

and philosophy problematic. Another way to put this is that philosopher-kings are an incompatibility both in nature (*phusis*) and convention (*nomos*): Their character is not a natural occurrence and they cannot come to rule without violating the convention.

The Psychological and Rhetorical Meaning of Plato's Philosopher-Kings

However, it is important to keep in mind that the ultimate aim of the *Republic* is to explore justice. Earlier in the dialogue Plato defines justice as each person or part obeying to PS and agreeing to be ruled by the rational part, both politically and psychologically. With his proposal for philosopher-kings, then, Plato is fleshing out the latter part of this definition. The scholarly debate around the philosopher-kings has mainly revolved around the political domain. However, it is important not to neglect what Waterfield calls the 'Soft *Republic*', which is the metaphorical layer of the dialogue that uses political terminology 'to describe the inner state of the individual' (1994, xvi). The 'Hard *Republic*', on the contrary, is the 'overt discussion of political and other external issues' (1994, xvi). Arguably, the Soft *Republic* is more central to the dialogue than the Hard *Republic* in many regards. For example, the *Republic* clearly starts off with the quest for justice in the individual, not justice in the state. It is only on this basis that politics is introduced as a metaphorical seeing aid, since morality might 'exist on a larger scale in the larger entity' and might 'be easier to discern' (368e). The end, however, is to 'see if the larger entity is reflected in the features of the smaller entity' (369a). Further, Plato insists that the political viability is not paramount because 'the purpose of our enquiry is not to try to prove that perfect morality or immorality could ever actually exist' (472d); rather, the imaginary city is created as a paradigm to understand the ideal of justice. Of course, as Waterfield puts it, 'the political proposals will appear unrealistic or even unsavoury at times: they may not be destined for the real world, but their primary function is to illustrate the workings of the human mind' (1994, xviii). The doctrine of the

philosopher-kings is one example for this. They function well as a metaphor for the rule of the rational part in the soul, but remain questionable in a political context.

Of course, the Hard *Republic* and its political implications cannot be completely ignored. In fact, many questions raised in this context appear to be deliberately posed by Plato. Waterfield argues that 'as a metaphor, the politics of *Republic* is stimulating and coherent; as a manifesto, it is naïve and fragmentary' (1994, xvi). But it is hard to believe that Plato was unaware of this. What is the doctrine of the philosopher-kings, then, intended to prove? Alongside its psychological meaning, the proposal carries rhetorical value. It can be understood as a warning that perfect justice can never be achieved politically, at least not without committing tremendous injustices both to the city and the philosopher. According to Bloom, the striving for such 'political idealism is the most destructive of human passions' (1968, 410). The character of Glaucon makes this even more visible. Glaucon is a dangerous character who embodies exactly this passion: he is politically ambitious and appears immoderate at times. For example, he is the one introducing savouries to the first city because he does not want human desire to be limited (372c-e). Being very driven, he keeps asking about the viability of the ideal city. This is linked to the danger of political idealism in so far as in the course of the *Republic*, 'Glaucon's desire to see his city come into being has caused him to forget to ask whether it is good for man or not' (Bloom 1968, 389). Again, it is worth noting that Socrates introduces the philosopher-kings in response to Glaucon's pressing question of viability. If the ideal state were to be realized, firstly, philosophers would have to become kings or vice versa. Christian, therefore, believes the image of the philosopher-kings to be 'a rhetorical trick, a way station in Glaucon's journey from political ambition to spiritual peace' (1988, 81). For instance, one central aspect of the philosopher-kings is that they are good rulers, but do not want to rule. Thus, Socrates firstly implies that it is better to wait until one has achieved wisdom and is forced to rule by compulsion. Secondly, he implies that the king being a philosopher is an essential requirement for the viability of the city which is so important to Glaucon. Therefore, it can be argued that proposing the doctrine of the philosopher-kings is Socrates' attempt to tame Glaucon's political

ambitions and to push him towards philosophy first. The *Republic* as a whole can then be understood to 'moderate the extreme passion for political justice by showing the limits of what can be demanded and expected of the city' (Bloom 1968, 410) and, simultaneously, to show 'the direction in which the immoderate desires can be meaningfully channelled' (Bloom 1968, 410).

Conclusion

I have argued, then, that the unification of philosophy and politics is at the heart of Socrates' proposal for philosopher-kings. On the political level, this unification faces many incoherencies. It is unclear why the philosopher would return to the Cave and whether forcing him to rule would be just. Further, the combination of characteristics required of the philosopher-king seems both impractical and illogical. From the perspective of the state, it seems unlikely that the city can fully entail philosophy. In addition, the rule of the philosopher-king over the people seems to be achievable only through unjust means. I have claimed, however, that like most other aspects of the Hard *Republic*, the doctrine of the philosopher-kings cannot be reduced to politics. Rather, it is part of a complex dialogue that aims to explain the workings of justice in the human soul through the use of political metaphor. In the psychological sense, the doctrine argues for the rule of the rational part over the desires of the soul. This is precisely the direction into which Socrates wants to push Glaucon. He wants to tame his interlocutor by moderating his political ambition in leading him towards philosophy, justice, and away from political idealism. In the larger sense, then, the *Republic* becomes a warning of utopianism and, as such, has been praised as 'the greatest critique of political idealism ever written' (Bloom 1968, 410).

References

Annas, Julia. 1981. *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Aristotle. *The Politics of Aristotle*. Translated by Benjamin Jowett. 1885. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Bloom, Allan. 1968. "Interpretive Essay." In *The Republic of Plato*, edited by Allan Bloom, 305-437. New York: Basic Books.

Caluori, Damian. 2011. "Reason and necessity: The descent of the philosopher kings." *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 40: 7-27. https://digitalcommons.trinity.edu/phil_faculty

Christian, William. 1988. "Waiting for Grace: Philosophy and Politics in Plato's Republic." *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue canadienne de science politique* 21, no. 1: 57–82. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3228153

Chroust, Anton-Hermann. 1968. "Aristotle's Criticism of Plato's 'Philosopher King'." *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 111, no. 1: 16-22. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41244350

Plato. *Republic*. Translated by Robin Waterfield. 1994. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rosen, Stanley. 2005. *Plato's Republic: A Study*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Steinberger, Peter J. 1989. "Ruling: Guardians and Philosopher-Kings." *The American Political Science Review* 83, no. 4: 1207–1225. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1961665

Waterfield, Robin. 1994. "Introduction." In *Plato*. *Republic* edited by Robin Waterfield, xi-lxii. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The Voices of the Oppressed: An Exploration of the Virtues of Epistemic Resistance

Davie (Yijian) Zhou

University of Pennsylvania

This article discusses two virtues that victims of epistemic injustices can develop to counter epistemic injustices. They are the virtue of epistemic disruption and the virtue of epistemic universalization. The article gives a definition of the two virtues and elaborates on their nature and how they can be developed.

Introduction

In *Epistemic Injustice*, Miranda Fricker notes there are distinctive kinds of injustices that can be done to our capacity as a knower, which she calls epistemic injustices. Fricker then suggests that we should develop certain virtues in our epistemic practices to avoid inflicting epistemic injustices upon others, such as the virtue of epistemic justice and the virtue of hermeneutical justice. But Fricker only gives an account of the virtues that the people who inflict epistemic injustices should develop to work against them. The epistemically oppressed, in some cases, also have the agency to work against epistemic injustices. There is a set of virtues, which I will call virtues of epistemic resistance, that the epistemically oppressed can develop in cases of epistemic injustices. I will discuss two virtues of epistemic resistance -- the virtue of epistemic disruption and the virtue of epistemic universalization. I will first sketch the definition of the virtues and illustrate them with examples and then proceed to discuss how the virtues can be developed.

Testimonial Injustice

Testimonial injustice is a kind of epistemic injustice that occurs when the hearer gives the speaker's testimony a lower credibility than it deserves because of negative identity-prejudicial stereotypes. By a negative identity-prejudicial stereotype, Fricker means "a widely held disparaging association between a social group and one or more attributes, where this association displays some resistance to counter-evidence owing to an ethically bad affective investment" (Fricker 2011, 35). When a white police officer, due to his negative stereotype of black people, does not trust the testimony of a black person despite the strong evidence he provides, he is inflicting testimonial injustice upon the black person. It is important to note for Fricker the influence of negative identity-prejudicial stereotypes can go undetected-- people can hold no prejudicial belief yet still inflict epistemic injustice—because a stereotype is an image we hold in mind and influence our patterns of judgment in a subtle way. For example, a feminist might still give female politicians' words lower credibility than they deserve because of the prejudicial images she keeps after she acquired them during her teenage years, even though her beliefs have evolved.

Fricker urges the hearers to develop the virtue of testimonial justice, which enables them to reliably neutralize prejudice in the hearer's judgment of credibility. Given most people cannot escape the influence of the prevalent negative identity-prejudicial stereotypes of the society, Fricker thinks to develop this virtue one first needs a reflexive critical social awareness, which means the self-understanding that one's credibility judgment is subtly shaped by negative prejudicial stereotypes. When the hearer possesses this awareness, she will correct the credibility that she gives to others' testimonies by self-consciously adding more credibility to her judgment to the level that would have been given were it not for prejudice. After multiple corrective experiences, the hearer does not need to self-consciously correct her credibility judgment, or as Fricker puts it, "the requisite social reflexivity of her stance as hearer has become second nature" (Fricker 2011, 108). The virtuous hearer will possess what she calls "virtuous testimonial sensibility", a prejudice-free epistemic perception that

spontaneously moves the hearer to give the correct credibility judgment by naturally arising emotions, such as feelings of trust (Fricker 2011, 72).

I find Fricker's account of how people come to have a reflexive critical social awareness unsatisfying. Fricker thinks people come to suspect prejudice in their credibility judgment through "sensing cognitive dissonance between her perception, beliefs, and responses, or whether through self-conscious reflection" (Fricker 2011, 38). To use Fricker's paradigm example, when the feminist who does not have sexist beliefs but still holds sexist stereotypes watches female politicians speak on the same stage with male politicians, she might sense a dissonance between her belief and her perceptual judgment. She perceives the female politician as less credible despite her belief in gender equality. She then comes to realize that her testimonial sensibility is subtly influenced by prejudice and starts to correct her credibility judgments consciously. The hearer does not always come to this awareness on her own -- it can be caused by a speaker who demands that the hearer gives a reappraisal of her testimony. For example, a young female lecturer asking her senior male colleague to pay more attention to what she is saying or a black suspect repeating his testimony to a white police officer to gain more trust.

Examining these cases, we can locate a virtue that the speaker, in cases of testimonial injustice, can cultivate to work against the injustice inflicted upon them. The possession of this virtue requires the speaker to reliably make the hearer restore correct credibility to the speaker's testimony. I call it the virtue of epistemic disruption because the speaker who possesses this virtue will disrupt the automatic and unreflective mode of accepting information that the hearer normally uses and urges her to use to evaluate the credibility of the testimony more. I will use the example drawn from the life story of the most famous female sniper in history, Lyudmila Pavlichenko, to further illustrate the nature of this virtue.

The Virtue of Epistemic Disruption

Lyudmila Pavlichenko was a famous Soviet Union female sniper when she served in the Red Army during the early stage of the fighting on the Eastern front. After she was injured, she was ordered by Joseph Stalin to go on an international tour to sway public opinion in favor of a second European front. Even though Pavlichenko attracted a great deal of attention in the United States, she observed that Americans found it unbelievable that women were apt in military affairs due to the negative identity prejudice that the public held for women. Therefore, her experiences about the military front were given deflated credibility. At one meeting, Pavlichenko said to a room packed with male journalists, "Gentlemen, I am 25 years old and I have killed 309 fascist occupants by now. Don't you think, gentlemen, that you have been hiding my back for too long?" (Ghodsee 2021, 37). The room was silent, and then the journalists burst into applause. Pavlichenko said it partly because she wanted to motivate the American public to fight, but also because she was demanding that the journalists gave the correct credibility to her testimony relating to military affairs. She reminded them that she is an accomplished soldier, and that this is what is relevant in judging the credibility of what she says about the military front, not her gender. Pavlichenko demonstrated this virtue because she successfully made the male journalists neutralize their sexist prejudice and restore the right credibility to her judgment.

Like the virtue of testimonial justice, a virtuous testimonial sensibility is also required for the development of this virtue. She has to know the correct credibility that is due to her testimony to realize that she is suffering from testimonial injustices. The speaker might fail to obtain the virtuous testimonial sensibility due to the internalization of negative stereotypes against them in society. W. E. B. DuBois notes how black people who live in a white supremacist society can readily acquire what he calls "double consciousness", which means "the sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused pity and contempt" (DuBois 1903, 2). Though DuBois develops this concept to articulate the experiences of black Americans who live in a white supremacist society, I find it helpful to describe the experiences of other

groups who suffer from negative stereotypes. Because of one's double consciousness, or the internalization of negative stereotypes, one might give a deflated credibility to one's own testimony. The way to attain a virtuous testimonial sensibility for the speaker is similar to Fricker's description of how a hearer can obtain virtuous testimonial sensibility: one needs to become aware of one's internalization of negative stereotype and corrects one's credibility judgment of oneself through multiple experiences. For example, a female philosopher might find that both she and a male philosopher have talked about the same point during a conference, but she finds that when he expresses the idea, it sounds more credible, so she discovers that she has internalized the negative stereotype. She then starts to give what she says more credibility and gradually corrects her prejudiced testimonial sensibility.

In some cases, albeit less common, the speaker will give an inflated credibility to her own testimony, because the prevalent negative identity prejudice in the society does not seep into the subculture that she is associated with. Instead, the subculture has a different set of stereotypes, which makes the speaker give an inflated credibility to her testimony (one can think of Nation of Islam, a black supremacist organization). In these cases, the process that one develops a virtuous testimonial sensibility is similar to the one described above, albeit one needs to deflate one's credibility given to one's own judgment.

Even though attaining a virtuous testimonial sensibility is enough if one's goal is to possess the virtue of testimonial justice, it is not enough for the speaker who wishes to possess the virtue of epistemic disruption. We can imagine cases in which the speaker attains virtuous testimonial sensibility but feels reluctant to urge the hearer to restore the correct credibility to her testimony. There are multiple reasons for it. For example, the hearer might ignore the request from the speaker or insist that she is not inflicting epistemic injustice. The speaker is then harmed a second time by epistemic injustice. Therefore, the speaker needs to regularly practice demanding hearers to restore the correct credibility to her testimony so that in the end the motivation that discourages one from doing so disappears. In

other words, one needs to develop a virtuous moral sensibility that spontaneously moves one to carry out the correct action through constant practice, just like one develops a virtuous testimonial sensibility after multiple corrective experiences.

In addition to the virtuous moral-testimonial sensibility that I just sketched, the speaker also needs to develop certain skills to attain this virtue, because merely having acquired the right habit of feeling is not enough. There are cases in which the speaker is motivated to ask the hearer to restore the correct credibility judgment but fails to do so because of the lack of necessary skills. Skills, as defined by Zagzebski, are what serve virtues by "allowing a person who is virtuously motivated to be effective in action" (Zagzebski 1976, 113). For example, a fair person who is a teacher will be motivated to learn the skills for fair grading, and a compassionate person who is a nurse will be motivated to learn how to comfort bereaved patients. There are at least two required skills. The first skill is the ability to reason about the hearer's mental states, which is commonly called the theory of mind, to infer what needs to be said to make them restore the correct credibility to one's testimony. If Pavlichenko demanded a reappraisal for her testimony in a different way and said, "Gentleman, I am the soldier of the Soviet Red Army", she might fail to move the male journalists to give her testimony the correct credibility, given the negative image that the American public has towards the Soviet Union. She emphasized instead the impressive number of fascists she manages to kill given her young age and the fact that none of the journalists in the room had gone to the battlefield, because she knew these are the crucial factors to get the American male journalists to recognize her authority. The second skill is the communicative skill. It is not enough for Pavlichenko to know that mentioning the fact that none of the male journalists have combative experience will make them change their credibility judgment. She needed to say it in the right way. She brilliantly used a rhetorical question -- "Don't you think, gentlemen, that you have been hiding behind my back for too long?" -- to make this point. Before I move on to discuss the second virtue, I wish to discuss the question of whether this virtue belongs to moral virtue or intellectual virtue to better illustrate its nature.

Similar to the virtue of testimonial justice, this virtue is also a hybrid intellectual-moral virtue. Intellectual virtues generally are virtues that have the possession of knowledge as their ultimate ends, such as open-mindedness and intellectual courage (Zagzebski 1976, 167). Zagzebski points out that there are intellectual virtues that are less obviously related to the possession of knowledge but should be best characterized as having the advancement of knowledge of the human race as their ultimate end, such as intellectual inventiveness. I think this virtue, when construed as an intellectual virtue, should be put in the latter category. Virtue of epistemic disruption works against negative identity prejudice that blocks the advancement of knowledge. This virtue can also be construed as one of the moral virtues, which are virtues that have the possession of goodness as their ends, because this virtue has epistemic justice as its end (Zagzebski 1976, 167). To show that this virtue is indeed hybrid, I ask the reader to imagine two characters: the adamant truth-teller, who only has the advancement of knowledge for the human race as an end when he displays this virtue, and the self-respecting conversationalist who only has the attainment of epistemic justice as the end. In the first case, the adamant truth-teller will remain silent on the numerous cases in which his testimony gets deflated credibility because the testimony does not serve the purpose of the advancement of knowledge. The self-respecting conversationalist may avoid speaking in some cases to avoid getting into a situation in which she is not sure if epistemic justice is attainable even though she knows she has something important to say in that case. In both cases, the speaker cannot be said to possess this virtue, because they do not reliably demonstrate it across circumstances.

Contributory Injustice

In order to discuss the virtue of epistemic universalization, I need to briefly summarize Fricker's account of hermeneutical injustice so I can explain the situation in which this virtue is needed. Fricker thinks one suffers from hermeneutical injustice when one fails to understand one's important

experiences owing to structural identity prejudice in hermeneutical resources, and this failure of understanding brings significant disadvantages (Fricker 2011, 155). Fricker uses the case of Carmita Wood to illustrate hermeneutical injustice. Wood, a female employee who suffers sexual harassment at the workplace, feels unable to understand her experience because sexual harassment is collectively ill-understood due to the structural gender inequality in hermeneutical resources, and her inability to understand her experience causes her to feel depressed. I choose not to discuss virtues associated with hermeneutical injustice because I think hermeneutical injustice is not as prevalent as Fricker thinks it is. People whose important experiences get obscured will tend to seek out each other and generate alternative localized hermeneutical resources in opposition to the public hermeneutical resources. As Simone de Beauvoir has described in *The Second Sex*, in a patriarchal society, women "join forces to create a counter-universe whose values prevail over male values…They compare their experiences: pregnancies, births, their illnesses, or those of their children, household tasks, each became essential events in human history" (de Beauvoir 2015. 584-585). Even though the important events of women's lives, like pregnancies and household tasks, are collectively ill-understood, they gather together to generate localized hermeneutical resources in opposition to the public hermeneutical resources.

Therefore, I think what Kristie Doston calls contributory injustice is more commonplace in our epistemic practices: it occurs when the hearer willfully refuses to "recognize or acquire requisite alternative hermeneutical resources" besides structurally prejudiced public hermeneutical resources (Dotson 2012, 32). For example, when a victim who suffers from marital rape tells the male psychiatrist her suffering, the psychiatrist is committing a contributory injustice against the speaker if he only uses the public hermeneutical resources, in which marital rape is ill-understood due to structural gender prejudice, to grasp what she is saying. He could have discovered localized hermeneutical resources, produced by married women, that are more appropriate to use this circumstance. It is possible for him to learn the appropriate localized hermeneutical resources by inquiring other married women if they had similar experiences, reading works that advanced concepts like martial rape, etc.

The Virtue of Epistemic Universalization

The virtue that the epistemically oppressed need to develop is what I call the virtue of epistemic universalization. The possession of this virtue requires the speaker to reliably succeed in transforming localized hermeneutical resources of the marginalized group into public hermeneutical resources. Some have proposed similar concepts, such as the virtue of "world-making" or the virtue of "moral invention" but I call it epistemic universalization to emphasize that the local hermeneutical resources already exist, and what needs to be done is to universalize the local resources (Srinivasan 2019, 127; Bremner 2022, 521). I will illustrate this virtue with a contemporary example. Cornel West, during one of his public speeches, noted that after 9/11 all Americans felt unsafe, unprotected, and subject to hatred. Then he went on to point out this is what it means to be Afro-American, who had been acquainted with these kinds of experiences throughout their life (the black community calls it "niggerization"). He suggested that we changed the public hermeneutical resources about racism and call anti-black racism "anti-black terrorism" to better capture the Afro-American community's lived experiences. Since the term terrorism belongs to the common hermeneutical resources, the word "anti-black terrorism" can be grasped by the American public while it also captures what the concept "niggerization" signifies.

I think the main challenge in developing this virtue is to possess the skills of turning localized hermeneutical resources into public hermeneutical resources. There are two primary skills that people who are motivated to possess this virtue will want to have. The first is the creative skill of inventing new conceptual or linguistic tools. As Srinivasan points out, the newly introduced concept must not be too strange to be unintelligible but not too familiar to lose the critical force (Srinivasan 2019, 150). In the case of West, "niggerization" will be too unfamiliar a word, but "anti-black violence" will be too familiar so that it loses the critical force. The second is the political skill necessary for pushing current institutions responsible for creating public hermeneutical resources, such as media, universities, political and legal institutions, etc. to adopt the new concepts that the members of the marginalized group invent. It will be futile if one tells the new conceptual and linguistic tools only to those around

him; to turn them into public hermeneutical resources, the institutions responsible for regulating public hermeneutical resources need to be willing to adopt this concept. The skills might include how to organize a protest to push the legal institutions to adopt the new language, how to build social networks to reach more willing participants, etc. Therefore, as Bremner correctly points out, this virtue is a political virtue as well as a moral and an intellectual virtue (Bremner 2022, 532).

Conclusion

In conclusion, I have sketched two virtues of epistemic resistance, which are virtues that can be developed by the epistemically oppressed in cases of testimonial injustice. They are the virtue of epistemic disruption and the virtue of epistemic universalization. The virtue of epistemic disruption can be developed in cases of testimonial injustice, and the possession of this virtue requires the speaker to reliably succeed in making the hearer restore the correct credibility to her testimony; the virtue of epistemic universalization can be developed in cases of contributory injustice, and the possession of this virtue requires the speaker to reliably transform localized hermeneutical resources into public hermeneutical resources. I hope by sketching what the virtues of epistemic resistance look like, we can grant the people who demonstrate these virtues the recognition that they deserve, and more importantly, we can strive to become them.

References

Beauvoir, Simone de. 2015. *The Second Sex*. Erscheinungsort nicht ermittelbar: Vintage Classics.

DuBois, W.E.B. 2008. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fricker, Miranda. 2011. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ghodsee, Kristen. 2021. *Red Valkyries: The Revolutionary Women of Eastern Europe*. New York: Verso.

Srinivasan, Amia. 2019. "VII—Genealogy, Epistemology and Worldmaking." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 119 (2): 127–56. https://doi.org/10.1093/arisoc/aoz009.

Vaccarino Bremner, Sabina. 2022. "On Moral Unintelligibility: Beauvoir's Genealogy of Morality in the *Second Sex*." *The Monist* 105 (4): 521–40. https://doi.org/10.1093/monist/onac015.

Zagzebski, Linda Trinkaus. 1996. *Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vaccarino Bremner, Sabina. "On Moral Unintelligibility: Beauvoir's Genealogy of Morality in the *Second Sex*." *The Monist* 105, no. 4 (2022): 521–40. https://doi.org/10.1093/monist/onac015.

Zagzebski, Linda Trinkaus. *Virtues of the mind: An inquiry into the nature of virtue and the ethical foundations of knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

White Innocence: Or, Why We No Longer Want To Be Innocent

A critical presentation of Gloria Wekker's White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race

Floris Ruinard

Leiden University

Gloria Wekker's book White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race has solicited a vigorously polarised response from different corners of Dutch society: ranging from praise for its acute analysis of institutional racism in the Netherlands, to critique for its supposed attack on the Dutch and their traditions, Wekker's book seems to have struck both a chord and a nerve. In order to decipher why a book such as Wekker's is able to elicit such strong divergent responses, this essay purports to unearth the book's central thesis and aims to critically examine its place in a post-colonial society. Navigating between a naively progressive ('woke') and anxiously conservative ('bigoted') reading of her work, this essay maintains the Marxist critique that Wekker's book, while contributing to a well-needed recognition of Dutch colonial 'spectres', essentially fails at cognising the underlying power dynamics at work in the liberal democracy. Traversing Wekker's short-sightedness, this essay maintains that in order to truly understand current public and political debates surrounding post-colonialism and race, both in the Netherlands and abroad, it is necessary to recognise the various race-transgressing privileges which people such as Wekker and her proponents also possess.

1. Introduction

Gloria Wekker is a Surinamese-Dutch anthropologist specialising in gender studies, Caribbean studies, and the study of sexuality, ethnicity, post-colonialism, and critical race theory. Wekker is most well-known for her study of racism in the Netherlands and her work in intersectional feminism. Wekker

has been living in the Netherlands on-and-off since 1951, and is currently employed as a professor at Utrecht University. In 2017 she also became part of the electorate and think-tank of Dutch political party 'BIJ1', an activist party which pursues 'radical equality and economic justice' (BIJ1 2023).

Wekker's book *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race* (pub. 2016) is arguably the most striking work in her oeuvre. Especially in the Netherlands this work solicited considerable response and critique, both in a positive and negative sense. This strong response may be attributed to the fact that in the book, Wekker presents a highly critical perspective on Dutch history and society with respect to race and racism. Wekker argues that, against the idea that the Dutch are 'innocent' and 'colour-blind', which according to Wekker is the prevalent Dutch perception of self, Dutch society and its institutions are (still) to a great extent permeated by racism. For Wekker, this racism is present not only in a local sense, but is also structurally embedded in society and its institutions. Through her analysis of 'whiteness', the Dutch colonial past, and intersectional problematics, Wekker constructs the central thesis that "an unacknowledged reservoir of knowledge and affects based on four hundred years of Dutch imperial rule plays a vital but unacknowledged part in dominant meaning-making processes, including the making of the self, taking place in Dutch society" (Wekker 2016, 2). Inspired by Edward Said's *Orientalism,* Wekker refers to this reservoir of knowledge and affects as the Dutch 'cultural archive'.

In being critical of the Dutch nation and its 'whites', especially with regard to such a sensitive topic as racism, Wekker has managed to elicit not only uncritical support, but also resentment and hate. This essay will aim to lay out the way in which Wekker reaches the main thesis of her book in order to evaluate what a balanced but nonetheless critical view of her work might look like. This evaluation entails not assuming everything Wekker states as a truth simply because it fits a trendy progressive narrative, while at the same time refraining from resorting to a defensive stance of resentment just because a controversial aspect of Dutch society is put under the magnifying glass.

To be able to construct a critical view of Wekker's work, the way in which she argues for the book's central thesis will first be presented. This starts by analysing her conceptualisation of the paradox between 'white innocence' as the dominant Dutch form of self-representation and the imperial 'cultural archive' which, as a sort of repressed unconscious, is purported to negatively influence the way in which the Dutch view and treat people (and especially women) of colour. After understanding how this central paradox is argued for, a critique will be given, not of the argumentation behind Wekker's thesis, but rather of the effect of Wekker's thesis; what does it accomplish, how, and for whom? This critique will be shown to entail a Marxist uncovering of a paradoxical and ideological element in Wekker's work as a social phenomenon itself. The proposed critique will also be argued to explain why the form of critical thought found in Wekker's *White Innocence* is met with such divergent response from different corners of society.

2. Context and Aim of *White Innocence*

Wekker's work in *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race* can be categorised as postcolonial and intersectional feminist thought. Building upon Said's concept of the cultural archive, Wekker employs a 'scavenger methodology' in order to portray how the Dutch cultural archive is constituted. With this scavenger methodology, Wekker makes "…use of insights from gender and sexuality studies, discourse and narrative analysis, post- and decolonial theory, and psychoanalysis. [She works] with interviews, watching tv and reading novels, analysing e-mail correspondence, [her] own and others' experiences and organisational structures, rereading historical texts, and doing close readings of various kinds, to eventually and jointly be able to sketch a picture of the cultural archive, the dominant white Dutch self and its representation" (Wekker 2016, 26).

In the introduction to her book, Wekker clearly delineates its structure and presents several sub-theses which are, in some way or another, connected to her central point. Wekker aims to uncover three central paradoxes in white Dutch self-representation: "The dominant and cherished Dutch self-image is

characterised by a series of paradoxes that can be summed up by a general sense of being a small but ethically just nation that has something special to offer to the world" (Wekker 2016, 5).

2.1 Three Paradoxes of Dutch Self-Representation

The first paradox is that, although being a nation of migrants, with one in six people possessing migrant ancestry, the majority of Dutch citizens do not want to be identified with migrants. This paradox is strongly related to the notion of a migrant as someone with a visible difference in skin colour, as opposed a 'white' migrant whose migrant status is seen as less significant. Wekker states that the dominant representation of 'Dutchness' is a white person with Christian values, and people who do not fit this image inhabit a disadvantageous position. At the hand of examples and anecdotes, Wekker sets out to present the way in which the Dutch self creates hysterical, excessive, and repressed projections of the black, migrant, and refugee 'other'.

The second paradox of Dutch self-representation has to do with its image as innocent victim of German occupation. Wekker argues that the focus on the Dutch nation and its people as victims in the WWII period overlooks the injustices and crimes that the Dutch committed in Indonesia around the same period. At the same time, out of every European country besides Poland, the Netherlands is the country from which the highest percentage of Jews were deported. This questions the image of the Dutch as courageous shelterers and saviours of Jews.

The third and final paradox of Dutch self-representation is the up-until-recently formidable discrepancy between the Dutch imperial presence in the world and the absence of this history in education and public discourse. Calling the fact that the Netherlands was a formidable imperial nation thoroughly invested in slave trade a 'best-kept secret', Wekker notes that the Dutch treatment of this history mirrors the treatment of its postcolonial citizens: both are not taken seriously, their histories being swept under the rug.

2.2 Three Central Concepts Relating to Dutch Racism

Relating to these three paradoxes, Wekker presents the three central concepts she employs in her book: innocence, the cultural archive, and white Dutch self-representation. Innocence, according to Wekker, describes a part of the dominant Dutch way of being in the world. This is accompanied by racial 'colour-blindness', the idea that the Dutch do not discriminate based on race because they no longer even see or notice differences in colour. Furthermore, the Dutch innocence is one which, with regards to race, operates in a layered and contradictory fashion. The denial of racism and racial inequality is combined with an active rejection of evidence which shows otherwise, whereby the claim to innocence becomes exactly the condition for maintaining ignorance of racial inequalities. This 'veil of innocence' thus effectively maintains a blind spot in many Dutch people with regards to the racism present in themselves and in Dutch society. Wekker states that in all her chapters she is concerned with the way in which this innocence is accomplished and maintained.

The second main concept Wekker employs is the concept of the cultural archive. The cultural archive is described by Wekker as an ideal but nevertheless forceful 'repository of memory' which is purported to influence how we think or feel about, for example, people with a 'different' skin colour. Wekker compares the cultural archive to Bourdieu's concept of habitus: "history turned into nature, structured and structuring dispositions that can be systematically observed in social practises" (Wekker 2016, 20). An important aspect of the cultural archive is that it determines power relations, privileging some and subordinating others, without the subjects of these relations necessarily being conscious of it, as a sort of second nature which escapes consciousness. Wekker portrays the Dutch cultural archive as the varied forms and manners through which the history of four-hundred years of imperial rule expresses itself in Dutch society, and attempts to trace "imperial continuities back into a variety or currently popular cultural and organisational phenomena" (Wekker 2016, 20).

The third and last important concept Wekker employs is the concept of 'white Dutch self-representation'. Contrary to popular conceptions of Dutch identity, Wekker argues that racial

imaginations play a central role in determining the Dutch self. Although the guise of race and racial difference is almost never recalled among the grand narratives that are said to constitute the Dutch nation and its identity, Wekker states that in the construction of the European, and therefore also Dutch self, colonialism played a major role as it provided a plane on which the self could be differentiated from a distinct 'other'. The racial 'other' can therefore be seen as the structuring exception which constitutes the apparent universality of European and Dutch identity.

In the chapters that follow, Wekker employs the above three concepts in combination with her scavenger methodology in order to gradually show how the aforementioned sub-theses or paradoxes can be found in society. In this way, Wekker's central thesis that Dutch society, contrary to its innocent image, contains a deeply racialised element becomes more plausible.

3. Why We No Longer Want to Be Innocent

Wekker's plea for an attentiveness to the ways in which racial history and racial imaginations have historically remained underexposed fields of study, how they have effectively been censored and 'swept under the rug', is overall convincing. When one reads Wekker's remark that it would be miraculous if four hundred years of Dutch imperialism (and thus institutionalised racism and subordination) did not somehow cause a lasting impact on the way the migrants and descendants from those same colonies are viewed and treated today, one wonders why such an observation was only able to formulate itself as late as the year 2016. At the same time, the fact that it has taken so long for this aspect of self-consciousness to develop is testament to the acuteness and veracity of what it is that we are now becoming more and more conscious of. In this sense, we could say that the guise of Dutch innocence always already contained within it the seed of its own unmasking. Analogous to a psychological defence-mechanism, the Dutch white innocence is the outward self- concealment of a what Wekker calls an underlying 'racial grammar'.

Nevertheless, it is questionable whether Wekker is able to locate the true root of the dynamic between outward innocence and inner racism and its current shift. Wekker seems to take colonialism and its corresponding racism as a starting point, but fails to explain or take into account what the colonial conquest itself was a symptom of. This makes her vision lack a critical complexity. While Wekker is acutely perceptive to the racially laden ideological framework which veils over Dutch society, she does not seem to be aware of the ideological intricacies of her own position. It will be shown that, lacking this awareness, Wekker is doomed to repeat exactly those dualistic and moralistic forms of thought and sensibilities which enabled the colonists to paint themselves as good and righteous and the colonised 'other' as malicious and barbaric. Only now the tables have been turned: the victims of slavery and colonialism have become 'good and righteous', and the innocently racist whites have become the malicious and barbaric other. It will therefore be argued that Wekker's thinking thus essentially remains stuck within the same framework of thought that enable the inequalities and antagonisms she purports to battle and overcome.

3.1 At the Root of Racial Dynamics

In Wekker's vision, there are two sides to the story: on the one hand, we have the white colonial perpetrators who embody an absolute evil, and on the other, we have the innocent coloured victims who embody the side of the good. Wekker subsequently seems to divide the Dutch citizens of today in either of these two camps according to the colour of their skin or their willingness to inhabit a position of harmless passivity in the camp opposite to them.

What Wekker seems to forget is that the white colonial conquest and its corresponding racism and subordination were in themselves already symptoms of power relations within the metropole itself; it was only the cultural-economically privileged members of society who had any say in how the colonial conquest played out and where its spoils ended up. Furthermore, besides a propensity for

unbridled racism, subjugation and exotic sexual adventures, the Dutch desire for Capital and vain prosperity must ultimately be recognised as the fountainhead of its colonial history. All the racist side- and after-effects of this colonial presence may then be conceived 'merely' as symptoms of this same Capitalist impulse: by dehumanising the exotic other and using them as a slave, more work could be done and more Capital could be accumulated. The birth of a defining feature of Capitalism can after all be traced back to the early 17th-century Amsterdam market, where a primitive form of shares (called 'actions') could be bought for treasure and trade expeditions; the same expeditions which would gradually turn into those colonial enterprises the effects of which are now studied by Wekker. (de la Vega, 4)

Wekker's implied duality between the two imaginary camps of white colonial perpetrators and innocent coloured victims can thus be traced back even further to the class distinction between the economically and culturally privileged bourgeois and the expendable working-classes who made the accumulation of exotic Capital possible in the first place. If it is true that Wekker overlooks the significance of this integral class division, her critique must be deemed ideological itself. Ideological, because it functions to conceal a deeper dynamic of economic and intellectual inequality. As a consequence of this, we must be very attentive to how the deeper dynamic of class division is allowed to silently remain in operation within the framework of Wekker's critique.

3.2 The Presence of Class Division in Current Race Debates

In carefully 'listening' to the way in which class division operates within Wekker's work, we may advance the thesis that by criticising Dutch innocence and presenting inherent racism as an object of guilt, Wekker is catering to a dynamic by which the white middle and upper-middle classes are allowed to displace the guilt of their economic privilege with the guilt of their supposed social privilege in order to preserve their prosperous and decadent lifestyles.

Evidencing this thesis, one might point to the way in which a story such as Wekker's elicits an astonishingly diverse response amongst the different economic classes of society. Wekker herself states that the Dutch defence-mechanisms against racist accusations and growing protests in favour for a figure such as Zwarte Piet points to the importance for the Dutch to maintain a justified and innocent idea of themselves (Wekker 2016, 166). Nevertheless, when we look at the people who most vehemently support Zwarte Piet and most actively deny racial guilt, we discover that these groups consist mostly of white lower-classes, cultural-economically and/or intellectually disadvantaged. It is not difficult to conceive why this is the case: confronted with yet another token of their supposed cultural and intellectual inferiority, adding to an already fragile repressed insecurity about their lack of cultural-social competence, the white lower-classes are now explicitly portrayed (although often correctly) as racists and bigots by those same people who once functioned as the lightning rod of their insecurities.[1]

On the other hand, cultural-economically privileged whites, instead of taking up a defensive stance against the accusations that are levelled against them, seem all too happy to declare themselves guilty. The admittance of moral guilt by the privileged classes fulfils both a personal and a public role: on a personal level, guilt about a fundamentally decadent and vain lifestyle can be replaced with guilt about being white, and on a public level, white guilt causes both distraction and detraction from the underlying economic conditions which can be conceptualised as the actual cultivators of racial and social inequality.

Analogous to the gesture of being-guilty and being-sinful performed in the Abrahamic religious traditions (which in public setting was only allowed to be performed by —or under the supervision of— those who held superior ranks), we see how an admittance of guilt or sin can in itself be a symbol of an existing power relation. As an implication of the framework Wekker perpetuates, only privileged whites

---

[1] A Lyndon B. Johnson quote comes to mind: "If you can convince the lowest white man he's better than the best coloured man, he won't notice you're picking his pocket. Hell, give him somebody to look down on, and he'll empty his pockets for you." (Moyers 1988)

are allowed to be guilty, while people of colour are, by definition, condemned to their innocence and therefore robbed of the ability to express guilt. At the same time, the voice of the lower-class people of colour and lower-class whites is either not taken seriously or not even present in the debate. All in all, these types of dynamics constitute just the same form of supremacy which was already present within the pre-colonial metropole: the supremacy of the economically, culturally and intellectually privileged.

4. Conclusion

To conclude, we might applaud Gloria Wekker for her acute analysis of a societal contradiction which definitely deserved to be put under the magnifying glass. This is the paradox that while the Dutch imagine themselves as an innocent and 'colour-blind' nation, racism and racial inequality has remained to a great extent present through the expression of the Dutch 'cultural archive'. Wekker gives a convincing picture of the way in which the Dutch colonial past, as a sort of spectre, still haunts social and institutional dispositions and practices. Nevertheless, Wekker's analysis, as a critique of the ideology of 'white innocence' and the division between white and black, overlooks the deeper-rooted division of class, already present in the pre-colonial metropole, of which racial inequality could be said to be a symptom. As a cause of this, Wekker's critique could be said to be ideological itself. In an unfortunate stroke of irony, a lack of awareness as to her own intellectual and now also cultural and economic privilege could have possibly sealed the shrouding fate of Wekker's project. In order to truly overcome distinctions of value and reach radical equality, if such a thing is even possible or desirable, it might be necessary to raise more awareness as to the way in which the contemporary progressive debate, which focuses mainly on identity and outward appearances, clouds underlying dynamics of economic, cultural, and intellectual class.

References

BIJ1. 2021. "Grondbeginselen." Over ons. Last modified January 6, 2021.

    https://bij1.org/grondbeginselen/ (Dutch only)

Moyers, Bill D. 1988. "WHAT A REAL PRESIDENT WAS LIKE." *Washington Post,* November 13,

    1988.

de la Vega, Joseph. 1688. *Confusion de Confusiones.* Translated by Barry E. Supple. Cambridge:

    Harvard University Press.

Wekker, Gloria. 2016. *White innocence: paradoxes of colonialism and race*. Durham: Duke

    University Press.

Plato's Sun, Line, and Cave

Rebecca Hanna

University of Aberdeen

In the 'Republic' Plato seeks to define the essence of justice, as articulated through the voice of Socrates. Plato aims to establish that embracing justice, both for its intrinsic value and its resulting consequences, is integral to achieving happiness. In the first four books of the 'Republic' Plato draws parallels between the individual and the city-soul. From this analogy he posits that justice can be defined as the harmonious state of an individual's soul. Where such harmony acts as the catalyst for the emergence of all other virtues in the community or individual. However, this definition of justice rests upon unexamined assumptions about the city's inherent goodness. In recognition of this, Plato employs a series of allegorical images, including the Sun, the Divided Line, and the Cave, collectively illustrating that justice necessitates a profound understanding of the Good. This paper aims to explain these images and show how they aid Plato's account of justice by developing Socrates' defence against Thrasymachus' account of justice. Lastly, it will evaluate Socrates' defence by appealing to the limitations of the images.

Introduction

In the 'Republic' Plato – through Socrates – attempts to define the nature of justice (dikaiosuně) (Waterfield 2008, xii) and prove that "anyone who expects to be happy should welcome [justice] both for its own sake and for its consequences" (Waterfield 2008, 358a). After appealing to the city-soul analogy in the first four books of the Republic, Plato suggests that justice is the harmonious state of a person's soul (Waterfield 2008, 442c-d) since it is "the principle which makes it possible for all other

qualities to arise in the community [or individual]" (Waterfield 2008, 433b). However, this analogy rests on several unanswered assumptions about the city as a paradigm for goodness (Annas 1981, 110). For example whether the city really is good – this cannot be assumed since "our knowledge of *the* Good is inadequate" (Waterfield 2008, 505a). Thus, Plato gives an account of 'the Good', through the images of the Sun, Divided Line and Cave. These images are used together by Plato in order to state that the *kind* of knowledge one must have to be truly just is knowledge of the Good (Waterfield 2008, 505a). An explanation and critical analysis of these images will show how they aid Plato's account of justice by developing Socrates' defence against Thrasymachus' account of justice.

1. Explanation

1.1 Philosophers vs Non-Philosophers

Plato differentiates the philosopher from the non-philosopher to show that philosophers should rule (Waterfield 2008, 484b-487a). He does this by establishing the thesis that there are degrees of reality, falling into three bands, and that each of the three bands of reality forms the domain of a different cognitive state (Waterfield 2008, xlii). In order for us to identify something, it has to have some quality or attribute, e.g. hardness. So, at one extreme exists a quality-less thing, where our mental response would be one of incomprehension. At the other extreme exists knowledge– since knowledge is a cognitive state involving certainty, it is only if something eternally possesses an attribute that we can *know* it (Nussbaum 1997, 21). In between the two extremes exist beliefs since they have a range of relative clarity and certainty. Therefore, knowledge is what *is* whereas an opinion is both what *is* and what *is not*. Anything that eternally possess an attribute can be called a form, it is the *idea* of things that exist in the visible realm (Dillon & Zovko 2012, 72). Each form is only one but our experience of the form is many, hence "only the form is, while particulars both are and are not" (Annas 1981, 208). Plato suggests that philosophers obtain knowledge whilst non-philosophers obtain beliefs (Waterfield 2008,

480a). This is not because only philosophers have the *capacity* to acquire knowledge but rather because philosophic virtues differ from ordinary virtues – the philosopher loves knowledge as a whole whereas virtues of others depend upon weighing up personal advantages and disadvantages (Waterfield 2008, xxxv).

1.2 The Good & The Sun

Plato proposes that there exists something more fundamental than justice; something that illuminates justice. This form is the Good (Waterfield 2008, 502d-506d). The Good is the form which anything that is moral or just gets it value and advantage from (Sachs 2007, 505a). Thus, there is no value in having expert knowledge of justice if one does not possess knowledge of the Good, since it is from the Good that we can gain knowledge about anything else. Hence, it is insufficient for Plato to define justice before knowing whether it is good. Therefore, the fundamental education for the philosopher (those who should create the nomos in the city) is the study of the Good (Waterfield 2008, 505a-506a). Socrates himself recognises that his own knowledge of the Good is inadequate and so he cannot give a full account of the Good (Waterfield 2008, 506b-e) but agrees to point out its nature through various images/analogies, beginning with the Sun.

The image of the Sun illustrates the distinction between forms and particulars. The image suggests that just as the many particulars are visible but the one form is intelligible, so the Good is to things known as the Sun is to things seen (Dillon & Zovko 2012, 300) i.e. the Good gives the things we know their truth which makes it possible for human beings to have knowledge. Sight is distinctive from the other senses since it needs a medium – light. Light is provided by the Sun, making sight possible since we can only see things clearly to the extent that they are illuminated for us by the Sun (Annas 1981, 246). The Sun, supreme in the visible realm corresponds to the Good, supreme in the realm of intellect. The Good enables the objects of knowledge to be known by the mind, akin to objects of sight which

are seen by the eye (Rosen 2005, 195). Further, the Sun causes things not only to be seen but to grow and to come into being. Thus, the Good gives the objects of knowledge not just their knowability but their reality, though it is itself 'beyond reality' (Annas 1981, 246). Moreover, like in the absence of the Sun one is unable to see, when subject to darkness, the mind has beliefs rather than knowledge (Waterfield 2008, 508d). This image is thus devoted to the natural light of the Sun and the supernatural light of the Good.

1.3 The Divided Line

In the image of the Divided Line, Plato makes distinctions between different kinds of knowledge-appropriate to the intelligible realm and belief-appropriate to the visible realm (McAleer 2020, 196). The Line is split up into two sections; the visible realm (which is a smaller section) and the intelligible realm (which is a larger section). The section sizes represent levels of clarity; the larger the section, the greater the clarity (Waterfield 2008, 509d). Thus, displaying that the forms which belong in the intelligible realm are both more real and epistemically clearer than the particulars which are objects of belief and belong in the visible realm (Waterfield 2008, 509d). These sections are then divided into two more sections by the same ratio as the entire Line was divided. The visible realm is divided into 'images' – "eikones" – which is apprehended by the mind's imagination – "eikasia" – and 'things' which are apprehended by "pistis" – belief/trust (McAleer 2020, 198-199). Images can be thought of as shadows or reflections whereas things can be thought of as objects, animals, and humans. The intelligible realm is divided into 'mathematical objects' apprehended by 'thinking', "dianoia", and 'forms', "eide" which is apprehended by 'knowledge', "noĕsis" (McAleer 2020, 200). Despite the intervals in the Line which appear to create harsh divisions between the realms, one can also see the Line as a continuum; a journey of mental states to which the end goal is knowledge of reality, that is the Good. This image thus draws a correspondence between our cognitive faculties and the parts of the line (Rosen 2005, 269). Mcleer

suggests that Plato's focus here is largely epistemological rather than metaphysical, although metaphysics looms closely in the background. Thus, one can think of the Line as an "epistemological companion to the metaphysical elevator" where one rises epistemologically from belief to knowledge and metaphysically from material particulars to the form of the Good (Mcleer 2020, 196).

1.4 Analogy of the Cave

The Cave is an image that is meant to exercise our imagination – it belongs to the bottom of the Divided Line. The Cave is about the human condition, specifically the relation between what it is to be human and the need for education (Santas 2006, 43). The Cave itself represents the city. Socrates describes prisoners in the Cave, who represent us (Waterfield 2008, 515a), with fire behind them. They are bound so they can only see the shadows, the city's nomos, on the wall in front of them cast by puppets held up by puppet masters, the poets and law-givers, on the wall behind them (Waterfield 2008, 515a). The Sun, the Good, is located outside of the city/Cave but the sunlight is diffused into the Cave (Waterfield 2008, 516b). There exist two parts to the Cave analogy, (a) the ascent (Waterfield 2008, 514a-519c) and (b) the descent (Waterfield 2008, 519c-521b).

(a) The image describes a prisoner breaking free from their bonds – representing philosophical education which breaks them free from the bonds of the nomos – and an ascent up to the Sun which gives them a fuller sense of reality (Waterfield 2008, 515c-516c). The prisoners think that the shadows are all there is to see; if released from their bonds and forced to turn around to the fire and the puppets they become bewildered and are happier left in their original state (Waterfield 2008, 515d). They are angry with anyone who tells them how pitiful their position is. Only a few can bear to realise that the shadows are only shadows cast by the puppets; and they begin the journey of liberation that leads past the fire and out of the Cave to reality (Annas 1981, 254). At first they are dazzled here and can only bear to see real objects indirectly– representing forms studied indirectly e.g. mathematics (Kouremenos

2018, 8). When their eyes adjust they look at them directly in the light of the Sun, and can eventually look at the Sun itself (Waterfield 2008, 516b).

(b) The prisoner would be compelled to return to the Cave to educate/rule those inhabitants. They return because of duty, despite the liberated prisoner being aware that returning to the opinions of those in the Cave would only worsen their quality of life (Waterfield 2008, 519d). The role of the education is to turn one's mind [soul] so that the mind can apprehend the Good; turning away from the world of *becoming* to a world of *being* – "that's what education should be, the art of orientation" (Waterfield 2008, 518d). It is not that the mind does not already have the capacity to know the Good but it is disorientated.

2. Supporting Plato's Account of Justice

The images explain statements that Socrates made earlier on in the 'Republic'. Whilst contemplating the images, one is reminded of Socrates' attempts to disqualify Thrasymachus' reports of justice since it denies the intrinsic goodness of justice. Consider Socrates' claims made against Thrasymachus' account; (A) Rulers seek the good of their subjects, not themselves (Waterfield 2008, 342e). (B) The best are not tempted by the rewards of ruling so they must be compelled to rule (Waterfield 2008, 346e-347d).

Claim (A) has been explained by differentiating the virtues of the philosopher to the non-philosopher; love of knowledge means love of the whole (Waterfield 2008, 474c). Plato develops this point by giving the example of mathematicians, who take for granted things like odd and even and various figures (Waterfield 2008, 510c). They treat their hypotheses as 'starting-points' (Waterfield 2008, 510d) and draw conclusions from them. Unlike their mathematical counterparts, the philosopher does not treat a hypothesis as an unassailable foundation but rather as something that stands in need of a 'logos', a justification (McAleer 2020, 201). It is not that mathematicians are too lazy to justify their

hypotheses, but that they do not feel the need to do so, since their assumptions seem so obviously true. But so long as the foundational hypothesis is unaccounted for, what follows cannot fully count as knowledge, "for even if your starting-point is unknown, and your end-point and intermediate stages are woven together out of unknown material, there may be coherence, but knowledge is completely out of the question" (Waterfield 2008, 533c). Socrates implies here that mathematicians can give valid arguments – arguments whose conclusions must be true if their premises are true (Mcleer 2020, 9) – but since their conclusions are conditionally true, the mathematician will never know if those conclusions are sound until they justify the hypotheses—the 'ifs'—on which those conclusions ultimately rest (Mcleer 2020, 202). In contrast, it is the philosophers need for justification which demonstrates their love for knowledge as a whole and it is education on this type of knowledge which makes the Good known to the philosopher in as much clarity as possible (Waterfield 2008, 510c-511d). Hence, since only philosophers know what the Good is, only they know what is good for their subjects, setting them apart as fit rulers.

Claim (B) is evidenced in the Cave analogy since the philosopher is compelled to return to the Cave to rule despite the fact that "there's nowhere else their minds would ever rather be than in the upper region" (Waterfield 2008, 517c). Further the philosopher returns to the Cave not for his/her own benefit but for the benefit of the whole. This is demonstrated when Socrates states that philosophers "spend most of their time doing philosophy, but when their turn comes, then for the community's sake they become involved in its affairs and slog away at them as rulers (Waterfield 2008, 520b-c)". This is something they do as an obligation, not as a privilege (Waterfield 2008, 540b)." Plato explains that it is their reluctance to rule that makes them adequate rulers, whereas, "imposters" only want to be rulers for the honour and the rewards of ruling rather than for love of truth (Waterfield 2008, 490a). This is the same for other 'real crafts' as Socrates pointed out to Thrasymachus, for if crafts were beneficial to their practitioners, why would they get paid? This suggests that no true craft, such as ruling, is beneficial

to the practitioner so they have to be persuaded to do it via a "wage". For a ruler this "wage" is not to be governed by someone worse than himself (Santas 2006, 203).

3. Critical Analysis of Plato's Account of Justice

The explanation of claim (A) assumes that knowledge and wisdom are equal. The jump from mental state to practical outcome is made known when Socrates explains that philosophers have all the essential practical virtues to rule because of what they love (Waterfield 2008, 485c). Socrates clarifies this by stating "we can agree that they're in love with reality as a whole, and that therefore their behaviour is just like that of ambitious people and lovers… they won't willingly give up even minor or worthless parts of it (Waterfield 2008, 485b)." This is to say that love of knowledge means love of the whole and if one truly loves the whole then these virtues will be present. However, Plato never explains the link between knowledge of the Good and the identification of good things, thus we cannot conclude that the philosopher life is a just one. What this means is that Plato nowhere explains how the particulars participate in the form itself. One could call the relation of something to a form 'partaking of the form': it results in things mysteriously 'resembling' the form according to which it is described-mysteriously, for a form is completely unlike anything participating in it (Kouremenos 2018, 9). Aristotle criticizes Plato in Nicomachean Ethics, stating that it is absurd for the object of people's strivings to be something unattainable in the world of particular actions, a form separate from particular good things (Scott 2015, 8-9). If we are not told how the particulars partake in the form itself then how can one distinguish in everyday life the difference between sensible and foolish identifications of good things? Thus, if one does not know *why* justice partakes in the form of the Good then one cannot differentiate in the visible realm which norms of justice are actually good and which are not. Therefore, philosophers may have knowledge of the Good in the intelligible realm but from this premises one cannot also assume that they have wisdom on how it applies to the visible realm in which they are to rule.

It is in terms of the distinction between the practical and contemplative conceptions of the philosopher, and his assimilation of them, that we can best understand claim (B) (Annas 1981, 266). Given the practical conception of the philosopher, there is no obvious reason why they should be unwilling to rule: previous training will have developed that knowledge which best fit a person to decide better than others (Annas 1981, 266). The philosopher's reluctance comes from the contemplative conception of the philosopher (Annas 1981, 266). However, they none the less go because they owe it to the city for their privileged upbringing (Waterfield 2008, 520a-c); rulers who do not want to rule are better than those who do (Waterfield 2008, 520d). Thus, they do not go down because it would make them happier, but they do so, for under any other rule they would simply suffer (Waterfield 2008, 590c-d). They go down to the Cave because it is objectively best, not for any particular group of individuals but as a collective. Thus, their motivation is very abstract; they are not seeking their own happiness nor that of others. They are merely doing what is impersonally best because their judgements are made in light of the impersonal Good, which is *good*, not good relative to anything (Annas 1981, 267). This tension between happiness of the parts (individuals) and happiness of the whole has been problematic since the city was initially founded since the question of why *I* should be just arises again (Waterfield 2008, 358a). Perhaps the Platonic forms are too impersonal to provide a persuasive answer to this question.

Conclusion

The Sun, Divided Line, and Cave images are used together to demonstrate that to be truly just one must have knowledge of the Good, since the Good gives the objects of knowledge not just their knowability but their reality. These images aid Plato's account of justice by reintroducing various claims made by Socrates earlier in the dialogue – that rulers seek the good of their subjects, not themselves and that the best are not tempted by the rewards of ruling so they must be compelled to rule. Following from this,

the images better defend the intrinsic goodness of justice thus disqualifying Thrasymachus' reports of justice. However, the limitations of the images make some of Plato's conclusions tedious, especially since the discussion of the Good is purely metaphorical and impersonal. As discussed, philosophers may possess knowledge of the Good in the intelligible realm, but this does not guarantee that they further have wisdom on how it applies to the visible realm in which they are to rule. The impersonality running though this narrative by Plato makes it difficult to see how the images answer a key question, if not *the* key question running through the 'Republic', 'why should *I* be just?'.

References

Annas, Julia. 1981. *An Introduction to Plato's Republic.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dillon, John and Zovko, Marie-Elise. 2012. *Platonism and Forms of Intelligence.* De Gruyter, Inc.

Kouremenos, Theokritos. 2018. *Plato's forms, mathematics and astronomy.* De Gruyter, Inc.

McAleer, Sean. 2020. *Plato's Republic: An Introduction.* Open Book Publishers.

Nussbaum, Martha. 1997. *Plato's Republic: The Good Society and the Deformation of Desire.* Library of Congress.

Plato. 1993 2008. *Republic.* (R. Waterfield. Trans.) Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Plato. 2007. *Republic.* (J. Sachs. Trans.) Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.

Rosen, Stanley. 2005. *Plato's Republic: A Study.* Yale University Press.

Santas, Gerasimos. 2006. *The Blackwell Guide to Plato's Republic.* John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Scott, Dominic. 2015. *Levels of Argument: A Comparative Study of Plato's Republic and Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics.* Oxford Scholarship Online.

Love and Meaning

Andrew Graziano

Rice University

This paper embarks on a philosophical exploration of the nature of meaning and its profound implications in the context of love. The exposition unfolds through five interconnected points, challenging Susan Wolf's Fitting Fulfillment View as presented in Meaning in Life and Why it Matters. It calls for a paradigm shift in philosophical conceptions of meaning, advocating for an understanding that places the individual at the core. While acknowledging the importance of an objective standard for assessing meaningful activities, it aligns this objectivity with one's character and abilities, recognizing meaning as an inherently individual quality. The paper introduces the concept of the "mechanisms of meaning", highlighting the interconnectedness of love, individual character, and abilities in the creation of meaning. By proposing that the very act of loving is a crucial catalyst for meaning, the paper invites a more authentic and comprehensive understanding of meaning—one that transcends the dichotomy between the personal and the objective.

Introduction

In contrast to philosophical perspectives that emphasize external outcomes or communal connections through participation in activities as the sole sources of meaning in an individual's life, this paper contends that meaning arises from internal transformations prompted by the act of loving. This internal metamorphosis, nurtured by fostering love for the activity, becomes the catalyst that infuses life with meaning. By illuminating the profound interaction between the internal processes of loving and the resulting meaningfulness, this perspective provides a distinctive understanding of meaning—

one grounded in the transformative power of internal experiences rather than external validations or outcomes. In this paper, I explain five fundamental points related to the true nature of meaning, and its implications in love. First, I seek to demonstrate that the challenges inherent in Susan Wolf's Fitting Fulfillment View, from her book *Meaning in Life and Why it Matters,* underscore the need for a relational component as a prerequisite in any philosophical conceptualization of meaning. In refuting Wolf's assertion that objectivity in meaningful projects is externally determined, I contend that it is instead internally contingent upon one's physical and mental capacities, as well as character. This contrasts with the prevailing perspective championed by Wolf and other philosophers, which emphasizes external factors such as the community as determinants. Second, I contend that projects and activities lack intrinsic meaning or triviality inherent to their nature; rather, their meaningfulness or triviality is contingent upon one's character and ability. In this context, I expound upon the significance of possessing meaning as a quality in one's life. Third, I argue that, as love must be a constituent of any relationship where meaning is present, the nature and expression of one's love are intricately linked to individual character and abilities. Fourth, I delve into an exploration of the intricate processes underlying the acquisition of meaning through engagement in activities and projects. Finally, I address five potential objections against this new view and evaluate its implications for our broader understanding of meaning and meaningful projects.

Wolf's Fitting Fulfillment View of Meaning

Susan Wolf's Fitting Fulfillment View from *Meaning in Life and Why it Matters* posits that an individual's life attains meaning through engagement in certain types of projects and activities. According to Wolf, a life is meaningful "when its subjective attractions are directed toward things or goals that are objectively worthwhile" (Wolf 2012, 34-35). It is crucial to note that, for both Wolf and

the purpose of this essay, a meaningful project does not inherently possess intrinsic goodness; rather, it provides an overarching purpose to one's life.

Wolf's perspective introduces two indispensable criteria for deeming an activity as meaningful. Firstly, the activity must evoke enjoyment or pleasure, yet this alone does not suffice; a meaningful activity must also carry an objective worth. Take, for example, an individual who discovers profound satisfaction, and whose life is in total service to their pet goldfish (Wolf 2012, 16). While the subjective attraction is present, it is not directed towards a clear objective value. This illustration underscores the nuanced interplay between personal fulfillment and the need of externally recognized significance in Wolf's criteria in the pursuit of meaning. Furthermore, Wolf accentuates the pivotal role of love in meaningful activities, arguing that meaning arises from the affection toward objects worthy of love and positive engagement with them (Wolf 2012, 5-6). Imagine someone who spends all night sewing their daughters Halloween costume (Wolf 2012, 5-6). Such an action is not completed out of a sense of duty, out of an idea that it is the best action for the world, or for an egotistical sense of satisfaction. Instead in this instance, love acts as motivation for acting for the good of the other.

Love for a trivial pursuit, however, does not impart meaning to one's life. Wolf posits that meaningful activities must be non-trivial, exemplified by a man who enjoys making handwritten copies of War and Peace or a woman whose world revolves around her love for her pet goldfish. Trivial activities lack inherent worthiness as they often do not engage one's genuine interests or contribute to personal or collective well-being (Wolf 2012, 8-9). Wolf's argument suggests that without this fundamental worthiness, such activities fall short of conferring meaningfulness (Wolf 2012, 8, 12). Instead, Wolf contends that meaningful activities are "larger than oneself" and inherently other-oriented, encompassing either community involvement or connection (Wolf 2012, 18). Take, for instance, playing basketball in a community league where individuals come together to enjoy a sport in common with one another. The act of playing goes beyond the personal interest in the game but develops community bonds and friendships of the community. According to Wolf's perspective, this kind of activity, which

is "larger than oneself" and serves a collective purpose, aligns with the notion of meaningfulness, as it transcends individual interests and fosters a sense of shared responsibility and connection.

A Problem with The Fitting Fulfillment View of Meaning

Wolf's analysis, while delving into the mechanics that render an activity meaningful, conspicuously lacks a relational component on the objective side of the Fitting Fulfillment View. The absence of this relational element poses a twofold challenge: it prevents a comprehensive account of meaning and gives rise to inherent contradictions within the view. To illustrate the gravity of this issue for Wolf's view of meaning, consider a child with severe mental disabilities who spends most days quietly sitting. One day, the child's mother gives them a toy to play with, which immediately captivates the child. Over time, the child becomes more attached to the toy, growing increasingly social not only during playtime but also in the presence of others while engaging with the toy. The child's love continues to grow, and the toy becomes akin to a best friend. It is evident that the child's life has become more meaningful due to their relationship with the toy.[2] While the subjective side of the Fitting Fulfillment View is satisfied, given the child's attraction to and enjoyment of the relationship with the toy, the objective side remains unfulfilled. According to Wolf, a meaningful activity must "contribute to something larger than himself" (Wolf 2012, 19). In this instance, the child's relationship with the toy serves no grander purpose than personal enjoyment and self-development. If the child's activity with the toy does not contribute to something larger than themselves, yet it unquestionably adds meaning to their life, we must either reject Wolf's Fitting Fulfillment View or introduce a supplementary component to address this aspect of meaningfulness.

---

[2] This example has come from my own experience with my sister who has severe mental disabilities and had a similar experience to the above example.

The Relational View of Meaning

The preceding example involving the child with severe mental disabilities introduces a challenge to Wolf's Fitting Fulfillment view, highlighting an ambiguity arising from Wolf's omission in explicitly addressing how an object becomes "worthy of love". Given the Fitting Fulfillment view's strong reliance on community and the separate concept of inherent triviality, it would be logical, according to Wolf's explanation of meaning, to expect that someone unable to engage in activities deemed meaningful by their community would find no meaning in "trivial" pursuits they actively participate in and love. Paradoxically, these activities, although unconsciously regarded as inherently trivial by the broader community, hold personal significance for the individual.[3]

In her attempt to maintain the objective component of meaning, Wolf mistakenly attributes the community or the activity itself as the criteria for determining which activities one can derive meaning from. However, this position proves untenable, proven by her own example of an individual meticulously copying War and Peace. The perceived lack of meaningfulness stems rather from the fact that, for an individual without significant cognitive disabilities, such an activity lacks worthiness of love in relation to the copier's abilities and character. In essence, the worthiness of objects or activities for love, and consequently their meaningfulness, hinges on their alignment with the participating individual's cognitive and physical capabilities and character. This perspective challenges the notion that meaning is externally imposed by societal standards, emphasizing instead an internal evaluation based on individual capacities and character.[4]

In instances where an activity is acknowledged as meaningful, an individual's abilities intuitively serve as an objective internal metric determining whether they can genuinely find subjective attraction to it. For instance, an individual afflicted with ageusia, a neurological condition impairing the sense of

---

[3] Wolf's examples of the copier of War and Peace or the Goldfish caretaker come to mind as examples of such trial activities unworthy of love (Wolf 2012, 41).

[4] In "Character and Agency", Wolf defines character as "the complex of those dispositions and tendencies that reflect and express our distinctive ways of seeing the world" (Wolf [forthcoming], 11).

taste, would not find the activity of wine tasting meaningful. As meaning is contingent on one's abilities, the individual's inability to fully experience and appreciate the flavors of wine prevents the activity from holding genuine meaning for them. Importantly, this person would not argue that wine tasting is inherently worthless; rather, they would recognize that their own abilities preclude them from finding value in it.

My relational understanding of meaning also addresses the challenge posed by the example of the child with severe mental disabilities' inability to establish a meaningful relationship with their toy. If meaning is contingent upon one's abilities, it becomes evident that a person with severe mental disabilities can form meaningful relationships with activities aligned with their cognitive ability. Notably, these activities differ from those that a non-cognitive adult may find meaningful. In the context of severe mental disabilities, where cognitive abilities may significantly differ from societal norms, meaningful engagements with activities must be evaluated within the framework of the individual's capabilities. This challenges conventional notions of meaning by highlighting the subjective nature of the experience and underscoring the importance of aligning activities with the individual's cognitive capacity to foster genuine and meaningful connections. In this context, the essence of meaning emanates from the authentic relationship between the individual and activities that resonate with their cognitive abilities. The specific mechanisms behind how meaning is created will be explored later in this paper.

Comparing the relationship between a disabled child and their toy to that of an adult without mental disabilities with the same toy reveals that the adult cannot genuinely love the toy. The child's distinct cognitive perspective, influenced by their mental abilities, allows for a nuanced form of love in their interaction with the toy, a dimension of love that would elude an adult with different cognitive capacities. A comprehensive theory of love and meaning should consider individuals' capacities and personal inclinations, as these aspects influence how a person perceives the world. If we accept that love is a necessary component of meaning, as Wolf argues, and simultaneously assert that what one can

love is related to their abilities and character, it follows that what one finds meaningful is intricately tied to their abilities and character. This implication elucidates why we hold meaning in such high regard and why meaningful activities and relationships carry immense significance for individuals.

The Non-Triviality of Love

A relational component in meaning sheds light on the intricate relationship between love and philosophical meaning. Wolf's Fitting Fulfillment view misinterprets the dynamics between individuals and seemingly trivial activities by positing that a trivial activity is inherently devoid of meaning, regardless of the person engaging in it. Contrarily, within my relational view of meaning, inherent triviality loses its significance, attributing an activity's triviality to an individual's character and abilities. The triviality of an activity is only trivial in relation to the actor and does not extend past them. It is important to note that according to Wolf the triviality of an activity is not something which a community decides but is something inherently connected to the activity itself. For instance, imagine not only that Sisyphus finds pleasure in his activity, but a community enjoys watching his efforts as a sport. Her view contends that even if one finds joy in such an activity, its intrinsic trivial nature prevents the generation of meaning (Wolf 2012, 43-44).

The relational component's understanding of triviality extends to the relationship between love and meaning. Consider, for instance, a man who dedicates his free time to creating handwritten copies of War and Peace, finding immense joy in the activity. In the Fitting Fulfillment view, the absence of meaning in such an activity is linked to its inherent triviality, creating a mystically perceived void. This mysticism prompts questions about both the relevance and significance of meaning when the bestowal of meaning is mysteriously deprived in such an activity. If an activity could evoke emotions like joy, but society deems it as not meaningful, it implies that meaning might be reduced to society's approval of certain activities rather than a vital classification of a reactive attitude necessary for one's life.

This realization leads us to understand that triviality first inhibits love and therefore prevents meaning. In instances where an activity or object is considered trivial, love, rather than meaning, is notably absent. This understanding makes sense on the individual level. If an individual finds the process of meticulously creating handwritten copies of War and Peace trivial, then they will not be able to fall in love with that activity. This nuanced understanding of love's role in meaning offers a more coherent explanation than Wolf's understanding for two primary reasons.

Firstly, the process of loving an activity is inherently challenging, and since love is a prerequisite for meaning, it logically follows that meaningful activities are difficult to attain. Activities commonly regarded as meaningful, such as raising children, reading, or mastering an instrument, demand significant effort, and sometimes financial investment. Similarly, meaningful human relationships require a comparable degree of dedication, effort, and commitment for love to be present. This implication explains why we hold meaning in such high regard and why meaningful activities and relationships carry immense value for individuals. If one could easily gain meaning from any activity, then it would be dispensable.

Secondly, the assertion that triviality can impede love and consequently hinder the creation of meaning in an activity leads to the somewhat controversial yet intuitive implication that our ability to love is intricately tied to our character and abilities. Consider an individual who, due to ageusia, cannot experience the taste of wine. Regardless of their efforts or intentions, the individual lacks the necessary ability for the activity—to love the experience of wine tasting. Consequently, the categorization proposed by Wolf, designating certain objects as "worthy of love", appears redundant: objects deemed "worthy of love" are essentially those capable of being loved. If an object is deemed unworthy of love, it inherently cannot be loved.

While the primary focus of this paper is on the impact of one's abilities on their relationships, it is crucial to note that one's character, as Wolf describes it in *Character and Agency*, is equally

significant. For instance, if we imagine someone with a disposition to despise physical exercise, not due to any physical or mental ailments or disabilities, but because their disposition prevents them from forming a relationship where love can exist, it is unsurprising that they cannot establish a meaningful connection with an activity like marathon running.

Mechanisms of Meaning

Gaining meaning from an activity is a subtle process that hinges on cultivating a unique and affectionate bond with the activity, a process requiring effort, dedication, and commitment. Consider someone approaching a piano for the first time, pressing a key without any prior experience. At this initial stage, even if they intend to be a dedicated pianist, it would be hasty to ascribe immediate significance from this musical encounter. However, as the individual commits to regular practice, gradually developing a fondness and love for the piano, the subsequent journey of progressing, learning, and ultimately playing various musical pieces begins to infuse their life with profound meaning.

The power of this dedicated cultivation essentially underpins meaning in a relationship or activity. It transcends the mechanical act of playing the piano, incorporating an evolving connection, the investment of time and energy, and the growing affection for the instrument, all contributing to the meaningfulness of the experience. The process serves as a source of enrichment, fostering personal growth, skill development, and an evolving appreciation for the artistry involved. Thus, a relationship or activity achieves genuine meaningfulness not solely through engagement but through intentional and sustained effort invested in its cultivation.

My relational understanding of meaningfulness better clarifies the mechanisms of meaning as opposed to previous conceptions of meaning. In the relational view I offer, the mechanisms of meaning begins with subjective attraction, aligning with aspects of earlier views. The next step, however, is to enter into a relationship with an activity. If the relationship is one in which love can be present, meaning

can be produced if the relationship is cultivated and developed. At this stage, meaning is produced from the very act of loving. If one can participate in the act of loving with an activity, they can undergo a kind of metamorphosis with both the activity and themselves. Wolf recognizes that when we spend time practicing the piano, we become better at playing Chopin, understanding the musicality of Bach, and recognizing the inherent beauty of the instrument. However, when we are focused on what we produce when we engage in an activity, we fail to recognize what the activity produces in us. The act of loving changes the very individual themselves.

Cultivation, commitment, and dedication are inherent tools in loving certain activities, serving as catalysts for a profound metamorphosis within individuals. The physical actions of pressing keys, moving hands, and hearing sounds has no value removed from the meaning behind these actions. However, meaning does not solely emerge from external engagement but from the internal process of loving. The act of loving becomes a powerful agent, cultivating virtues like patience, beauty, and passion within. Through intentional cultivation of these virtues, individuals undergo a metamorphosis and experience personal growth. Essentially, loving an activity acts as a conduit for internal transformations, with the cultivated virtues contributing to the profound meaningfulness derived from these activities.

The interplay between an individual's character, abilities, and the power of love highlights the necessity of a relational component in understanding meaning. This transformation hinges on harmonizing an activity with one's character and abilities. Pursuing activities incongruent with personal traits, such as appreciating wine-tasting without a sense of taste, embracing marathon running with an aversion to running, or engaging with children's toys as an adult without significant cognitive disabilities, leads to frustration, annoyance, and a futile expenditure of time. These activities are not prerequisites for virtue; virtues like patience can be cultivated through engagements that may not inherently be meaningful. This underscores why such activities, even when enforced, lack meaningfulness. The internal metamorphosis crucial for significance requires genuine love aligned with

one's character and abilities. Consider a scenario where a child's parents compel them to practice the piano for hours each day, an activity without meaning since subjective attraction is not present. If the child does not harbor genuine love for practicing the piano, the enforced engagement does not lead to the depth of commitment, passion, or internal growth experienced by someone who authentically loves the instrument. In this situation, the lack of a true affectionate bond with the activity hinders the potential for the impact that love can have on one's character and abilities.

Meaningful engagement, as argued here, is inherently tied to the experience of love, which cannot be forced but must arise organically from the alignment of the activity with the individual's character and abilities. It is important to recall that one cannot truly love an activity which is trivial in relation to one's character and ability. Sisyphus or the woman who finds great joy from taking care of her pet goldish engage in activities which are trivial for them. Triviality still inhibits them from entering into the metamorphic state from an activity that I mention since it would not provide the appropriate catalyst for such a transformation to take place.

Objections and Responses

One objection might contend that my relational understanding of meaning introduces a hierarchical framework, leaving the possibility of categorizing different activities and individuals based on their character and abilities open. Such a concern revolves around whether my conceptualization of love may limit certain individuals, particularly those with disabilities, in their ability to love or be loved. This aspect delves into the "how" component of the relational perspective—specifically, how different individuals express or engage in relationships and activities involving love. If I assert that a person's capacity to love is relational and contingent upon their abilities and character, it may be misconstrued as implying that individuals with severe disabilities love objects to a lesser extent or in a less meaningful way than those without cognitive disabilities. However, this concern is grounded in two assumptions:

1) the existence of a universal normativity in defining meaningful activities, and 2) the idea that loving or being able to love "better" activities necessarily indicates a greater degree of love. To clarify, the concept of "universal normativity" refers to the assumption that there is a one-size-fits-all or universal standard for determining which activities are universally considered meaningful.

I refrain from asserting any universal normativity among activities, as doing so would be an unproductive endeavor. The worthiness of participating in an activity is strictly relative to the individual, given the inherent uniqueness of each person's character and abilities. Since no two people share the exact same combination of traits or abilities, attempting to compare the meaningfulness of activities between individuals becomes as futile as comparing apples to oranges, especially when considering the relational component to meaning. The richness of meaning is intricately tied to the interplay between an individual's unique qualities, subjective experience, and attractions, rendering any hierarchical comparison of activities between individuals inherently flawed.

Denying the possibility between such a comparison of people's activities logically entails that we cannot compare the degree to which different individuals experience love. People with disabilities can undoubtedly engage in relationships with other human beings that involve profound love; such relationships are by no means trivial. Nevertheless, the manner in which an individual establishes, nurtures, and maintains relationships with others and objects is relational to the other party in the relationship. The dynamics of our relationships with people we love are not uniform. For example, one maintains a loving relationship differently with a grandparent, a spouse, or a young child. However, all these relationships encompass love, and the nature of that love is shaped by the abilities and character of the individuals involved in the relationship.

A second potential challenge to the relational component of meaning arises from the implication that any meaningful activity must involve ongoing cultivation, and that singular occurrences may also be meaningful. For instance, acts like giving money to a homeless person or volunteering at a food bank

are sometimes deemed meaningful, seemingly contradicting the characteristics of love that I propose. If we assert that the characteristics of love, including its challenging, time-consuming, and commitment-demanding nature, are indispensable components of meaningful activities, then it becomes necessary to scrutinize the meaningful significance attributed to singular interactions.

In examining this, one must question whether, in most instances, a singular interaction, such as donating money or volunteering, truly holds meaningful significance. While one may experience a momentary positive feeling or a valuable experience, equating this with the depth of love is imprecise as it lacks the commitment meaningful projects necessitate. Frequently, the phrase "x (one-off) activity was meaningful" is used without a full appreciation of its intended depth. If we maintain that love is an indispensable component of meaning, as Wolf does, and if we assert that love cannot be fully present in a similar one-off experience, it becomes challenging to believe that such an activity could genuinely impart profound meaning to one's life. The characteristics of love, involving ongoing cultivation, deep emotional engagement, and transformative effects, provide a distinct framework for understanding the depth and lasting impact of meaningful activities which unfold over a period of time which one-off activities do not include.

A third potential objection arises in my characterization of love as challenging, time-consuming, and demanding commitment and dedication. Some might argue that parents who discover they are expecting a child experience "instant love" for their child, contradicting the qualities I deem necessary for love. In the case where parents genuinely and instantly love their unborn child, I contend that there is no conflict with my initial characterization. At the moment when parents learn about their child, whether consciously or subconsciously, they commit to dedicating themselves to the child, even if it involves sacrificing their time and energy. A similar realization occurs, albeit over a longer period and in a different manner, when individuals begin to love an activity. For instance, when someone starts to love playing the piano, they are willing to sacrifice their time, even after a long and stressful day of work. However, a critical question arises: do parents find meaning in being parents in that instant of

love? While the immediate response might be no, further consideration reveals that parents indeed may find meaning from being parents in that moment. They undergo a similarly instantaneous process of metamorphosis, transitioning, perhaps, from selfishness to selflessness. However, the meaning which they have from being parents in that movement would be different from the meaning they would experience in forthcoming months and years of being parents. It is important to note that meaning is not a checkbox but a spectrum. Over time, as parents navigate the challenges of raising a child, the process of being parents becomes increasingly meaningful as their disposition develops further.

A fourth potential objection arises concerning the perceived high standard set by the relational component of meaning. Critics may contend that, according to this perspective, individuals could face challenges in developing a profound relationship with an activity to the extent of genuinely loving it, as I describe. This could lead to the conclusion that meaningful pursuits are rare or that the criteria for love are overly stringent. The question then arises: must one abandon their job and wholly devote their life to an activity for it to become meaningful?

The nature of love for an object is contingent upon the relationship between the object, the lover, and the beloved. While it might seem unconventional to assert that an individual genuinely loves an activity like knitting, we need to assess this love in relation to the specific activity. When scrutinizing the elevated standards of love as per my view, comparisons might be drawn to profound forms of love between spouses or parents and children. However, equating such deep affections with the love for an activity like knitting would be akin to comparing vastly different entities. Despite shared elements such as the need for cultivation and dedication, the nature of love in each context remains relative to the activity. One cannot, due to our findings of the nature of love, and should not love knitting in the same manner as they love a spouse. Nevertheless, this distinction does not undermine the substantial effort required to cultivate love and engage in meaningful projects or relationships. The inherent challenge in establishing meaningful relationships explains why activities lacking depth or involving superficial participation do not qualify as meaningful in this framework. While the standards for meaningful

engagement may be high, the unique nature of love in various contexts and the relative criteria for meaningfulness contribute to a nuanced understanding that accommodates a variety of experiences and relationships.

Finally, a potential objection emerges concerning the implications of a relational component of meaning in relation to bad people. Notably, a relational view might allow certain individuals with vicious characters to find meaning in engaging in cruel or evil activities. For instance, a person who is psychotic or insane might derive pleasure from elaborate plans for activities such as serial killing. It is not uncommon for serial killers to describe their intricate and intensive plans, as well as their ability to outwit authorities, as sources of meaning in their lives. Moreover, these complex schemes might even exercise their intellectual abilities. If my relational view is correct, it might suggest that not only are these activities meaningful to some individuals but also that they contain genuine love. This notion appears intuitively unreasonable in common understandings of what a loving act entails and is morally objectionable.

However, this objection is not a reason for rejecting the relational component of meaning presented in this paper. Instead, it is a further characteristic of this view. If one maintains that an individual's character influences what activities they find enjoyable, then what one finds enjoyable is not restricted to "good" activities if one possesses a vicious character. To reject such an idea would be idealistic and disconnected from the realities of the world. However, it does not necessarily follow that a person with a malevolent character could enter into a loving relationship with morally reprehensible activities and therefore find them meaningful. Even if we entertain the possibility that such individuals can love such activities and derive meaning from them (which I do not necessarily endorse), this does not provide justification for excusing their actions. Instead, it only reveals that their characters are badly corrupted and need rehabilitation.

Conclusion

A paradigm shift is necessary in philosophical conceptions of meaning. Previous views of meaning, as exemplified by Wolf's, grapple with the balance between objective and subjective components, neglecting the profoundly personal nature of meaning. While these views acknowledge the potential positive impact of meaning on family, community, and the *polis*, they fail to recognize meaning's inherently individual nature. Meaning is an inherently individual quality and by placing the individual at the core of a conception, a more authentic understanding of meaning is revealed. This does not negate the importance of an objective standard for assessing meaningful activities but rather aligns the objective component with one's character and abilities. In this paper, I argued that any view of meaning ought to include a relational component based on one's character and abilities. The implications of incorporating a relational component reveal five key aspects of the nature of love and the delineation between meaningful pursuits and trivial engagements. These components are interconnected in the creation of meaning and is why I refer to them collectively as the "mechanisms of meaning". The claim that the act of loving is the crucial catalyst for meaning acknowledges love's importance in the creation of meaning. This paradigm invites a more authentic and comprehensive understanding of meaning—one that recognizes the intricate dance between the personal and the objective, transcending the dichotomy that has constrained philosophical discourse in the avenue of meaning.[5]

References

Wolf, Susan. 2012. *Meaning in Life and Why It Matters*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Critical Review of *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*

Lanfranco Leone

University College London

In this paper, I review Thomas Kuhn's seminal work: The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. I focus on Kuhn's presentation of scientific development, where he argues that progress in science occurs through cycles of paradigmatic normal science and paradigm-shifting revolutions. Although I argue that Kuhn's introduction of the concept of paradigms is both functional and useful to our understanding of science and its development, I object to his notion that paradigm shifts are invariably caused by scientific revolutions. I further argue that his framework cannot easily be altered to explain paradigm shifts that occur without scientific revolution.

Introduction

In this paper, I will be reviewing *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, focusing on Kuhn's presentation of scientific development, where he argues that progress in science occurs through cycles of paradigmatic normal science and paradigm-shifting revolutions. After exposition, I shall object that this binary cycle fails to explain cases of revolutionary development within normal science, concluding that this incongruence constitutes a substantial obstruction to Kuhn's theory, due to the difficulty of incorporating such aberration cases into his theory.

Exposition

Deviating from pre-1960s views that science develops cumulatively (Sarton and Stimson 2013, 1), Kuhn argues that science develops through paradigms which involve destructive changes (Kuhn 1962, 66). Kuhn's definition of a paradigm is a notorious morass in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. However, he clarifies in a later paper that we should understand a paradigm as the disciplinary matrix that "constitutes a scientific community of otherwise disparate men", with its principal elements being symbolic generalizations, models, and exemplars (Kuhn 1974, 294-297). Exemplars, being the most critical constituent, are concrete problem solutions that are integral in understanding the fundamental concepts of a paradigm, such as nucleus and cell (Kuhn 1974, 290-307). Examples of paradigms include Geocentrism in astronomy and Einsteinian Relativity in physics. Kuhn argues that almost every scientific field is first pre-paradigmatic, where there are multiple views about given phenomena, supplied by metaphysics, causal observances or historical accident, that have no more than a family resemblance (Kuhn 1962, 12-15). Kuhn goes on to argue that a particular view will eventually dominate the dissension, and result in the conversion of the disparate members into a more rigid definition of the field, establishing the first paradigm (Kuhn 1962, 17-18).

Kuhn then explicates the demarcation between normal and revolutionary science. Normal science is research conducted under a paradigm that has pre-defined legitimate problems and methods for its practitioners (Kuhn 1962, 10). Kuhn depicts normal science as cumulative, where anomalies are solved within the paradigm, until they become recalcitrant. At this point, the paradigm moves into a crisis as normal science persistently fails to solve anomalies. Eventually, the failure of existing rules preludes the search for a new paradigm (Kuhn 1962, 67-68). Akin to pre-paradigmatic tendencies, this paradigm shift is usually partially anticipated and forms after dissension between multiple views (Kuhn 1962, 75), as exemplified by Lavoisier's oxygen theory of combustion in 1778. In the field of combustion, normal science conducted in the Phlogiston paradigm reached a crisis after the rise of pneumatic chemistry and the discovery that metal gained weight when melted. This resulted in many competing theories, such as those of Cavendish, Priestley, and Scheele, until Lavoisier's experiments in the early

1770s would prove dominant, allowing the establishment of normal science within the paradigm of his oxygen theory of combustion (Kuhn 1962, 69-70).

Kuhn calls these non-cumulative paradigm shifts "revolutions", given their parallelism to political revolutions. Like in political revolutions, the existing paradigm is recognised to be inadequate in dealing with problems (anomalies) and thus a crisis leads to the replacement of an institution (paradigm) with an incompatible new one. And like competing political institutions, the choice between paradigms cannot be determined by internal evaluative procedures, within normal science (Kuhn 1962, 92-94). Given the lack of an objective viewpoint, Kuhn develops the concept of incommensurability. Paradigms are incommensurable as their methodologies, terminology and inference patterns are incompatible (Kuhn 1962, 103). The vagueness of this thesis has resulted in an exaggeration of incommensurability's anti-realist connotations, as critics have interpreted Kuhn's thesis to imply the incompatibility of paradigms, such that replacement cannot be called progress, but merely change (Shapere 1964, 391). Kuhn later attempted to clarify that incommensurability does not carry implications of incomparability or anti-realism, that it only entails that there can be no common language between paradigms, which disallows point-by-point comparison (Kuhn 1976, 190-191).

The Failure of the Dichotomy

My analysis of Kuhn's presentation of the development of science is that, while being largely functional, overlooks putative revolutions in science that contradict his dichotomy of normal and revolutionary science. The presence of recalcitrant anomalies and crises are defining aspects of Kuhnian scientific revolutions, such that the difference in changes within normal and revolutionary science is recognised to be "absolute" (Toulmin 1970, 41). This is at odds with substantial changes that fit the description of a revolution, and yet occur within the puzzle-solving work of normal science (Kuhn 1970, 7). An example of such a revolution would be the discovery of the Watson-Crick double-

helical model of DNA. This developmental episode ought clearly to be called a revolution, as it formed many elements of a disciplinary matrix. It provided explicit and effective methodological norms for polynucleotide conformational studies, thus clearly establishing the discovery as an exemplar in the field. Furthermore, it resulted in scale model building and X-ray diffraction verification techniques. Thus, the discovery provided an almost universally accepted and successful basis for the practice of normal science, which should indubitably secure it as a scientific revolution. And yet, it was not the result of recalcitrant anomalies, nor was it preluded by a crisis of competing views, and thus it is an aberration to Kuhn's distinction between normal and revolutionary science.

Although Kuhn's argument does not prohibit the possible existence of such deviant occurrences, he fails to explain them (Stokes 1982, 207-204), and I would argue that, agreeing with Toulmin, his theory would face difficulty in attempting to incorporate such occurrences. Toulmin argues that for Kuhn's theory to explain both normal and revolutionary change would "inescapably" require the unintended demolishment of the distinction between science's normal and revolutionary phases (Toulmin 1970, 41). This seems to me like an inevitable consequence, as to allow revolutions to occur within normal science is to eliminate the defining difference between the two phases of science.

Thus, the occurrence of revolutions within normal science constitutes a substantial objection to *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, as it seems unlikely that Kuhn's theory could be altered to defuse the objection, without losing its defining characteristics. However, Kuhn's theory is nonetheless valuable in its introduction of paradigms to our understanding of scientific development, despite its account of paradigm-shifting being rendered problematic.

References

Kuhn, Thomas S. 1962. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Print.

Kuhn, T. S. 1970. *Logic of Discovery or Psychology of Research?* In Imre Lakatos & Alan Musgrave (eds.), *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*. Cambridge University Press.

Kuhn, T. S. 1974. *Second Thoughts on Paradigms*. In F. Suppe (Ed.), The Structure of Scientific Theories (pp. 459-482). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Kuhn, Thomas S. 1975. *Theory-Change as Structure-Change: Comments on the Sneed Formalism*. Erkenntnis, vol. 10, no. 2, Springer, 1976

Sarton, George and Stimson, Dorothy. 2013. *Sarton on the History of Science*. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press.

Shapere, Dudley. 1964. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. The Philosophical Review, vol. 73, no. 3, [Duke University Press, Philosophical Review],

Stokes, T. D. 1982. *The Double Helix and the Warped Zipper - An Exemplary Tale*. Social Studies of Science, vol. 12, no. 2, Sage Publications, Ltd.

Toulmin, Stephen. 1970. *Does the distinction between normal and revolutionary science hold water?* In Imre Lakatos & Alan Musgrave (eds.), *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge.* Cambridge University Press.

Editor-in-Chief

Emma Harte

Editors

Greg Florez and Ilana Thurgood

Authors

Johanna Alt

Davie (Yijian) Zhou

Floris Ruinard

Rebecca Hanna

Andrew Graziano

Lanfranco Leone

Front Cover Design

Oscar Cawley